

Questionnaire for Candidates for Berkeley USD

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot: Julie Holcomb
2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number)
Berkeley School Board Director
3. What is your current occupation or elected office?
Letterpress Printer/Small Business Owner
4. Are you the incumbent? Yes X No
5. How long have you resided in this district and city? 18 years

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:	Julie Holcomb for Berkeley School Board 2010
Address:	1836 Hopkins Street
City, State, Zip:	Berkeley, California 94707
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OUR ISSUES (18-35 year olds)

Please answer the first four questions in 250 words or less

1. What would you do as a board member to address the growing equity and achievement gaps facing Berkeley's students?

It's true that for about 6 years, the gap was frustratingly stable, but in the last 2 years, we have seen the API scores for all students beginning to increase in our elementary schools, with scores for Hispanic Students rising the most, followed by African American Students, followed by those of white students. Based on interim testing that has taken place throughout the year, gains on State and Federal tests are expected to be dramatic for the BUSD this year. We still have a lot of work to do – achievement for our African American and Hispanic students is still too low, but scores are moving in the right direction, with all scores rising and trending toward convergence. We do have strengths to build on, and I am confident that we can continue to move forward even in the face of continued State cuts to school funding.

I believe the most important effort we can make as schools in addressing the achievement gap is to keep a focus on teaching and learning in the classroom. Every teacher must be effective, and all teachers must receive the training and collaborative support they need to continually improve the quality of instruction for all children. This includes ensuring that teachers are culturally competent, and that classroom management is implemented as a way of engaging and holding the attention of all students, rather than identifying “disruptive” students and separating them from the class.

After school, Pre-school, Summer Programs, and community services are all essential for addressing the achievement gap, and all of these are funded by State and Local government separately from K-12 School funding. The schools must do what they can to coordinate and maximize these services, but we all need the collective political will to shift to one of responsibly meeting the critical needs of children and families.

As a School Board director, I will support

2. Certain local measures on the November ballot directly affect the Berkeley USD. What are your positions on the special tax for residential buildings (Measures H) and on the school bond (Measure I)?

I strongly support both Measure H, the school maintenance parcel tax, and Measure I, the school facilities bond. They both continue current commitments to educate our students in safe and sound schools, and each includes independent audits and a citizens' oversight committee. Tax rates will not be set higher than past levels. The maintenance parcel tax is necessary to maintain our existing investment in our schools and preserve other funds for the direct benefit of the students, and the bond is necessary for needed capital improvements for completing construction of BHS West Campus, increasing capacity for preschool and elementary school classes, expanding science laboratory facilities, expanding career technical education facilities and meeting other critical needs of the schools. I served on the Superintendent's Facilities Committee that developed recommendations for the bond and parcel tax for the consideration of the School Board. Our recommendations were based on input from a wide range of community members, including parents and union representatives. We considered extensive data and weighed diverse priorities to arrive at our recommendation, with great weight placed on the current economic situation and on a desire to plan for the long term in a fiscally responsible manner. In developing language for a 10 year bond measure, it is important to be specific enough that voters know what they are approving and for which the District may be held meaningfully accountable, while allowing the kind of flexibility that is necessary to

optimally meet needs as they may evolve over the term of the measure. I believe the language ultimately approved by the Board of Education does that very well.

3. What are your top three priorities if you are elected to the School Board?
My top three priorities are: to raise academic expectations and achievement for all students by keeping a focus on teaching and learning in the classroom; to expand career-linked education; and to make sure all programs are effective, fiscally sound and sustainable.
4. All public schools in California are facing very difficult budget choices. What will your priorities be if Berkeley USD is forced to make cuts, and what will you do to minimize the need for budget cuts?

For one thing we have to pass Measure H to avoid having to make \$5 million annual cuts to our District budget in future years, in addition to those required by State funding cuts.

While some candidates have indicated that they might advocate for increasing class sizes (laying off teachers) in order to mitigate State funding cuts, this is not a likely option for BUSD under the language of the BSEP (school parcel tax) measure approved by the voters in 2006. That measure requires the District to continue to meet the class size goals stipulated by the Measure, unless the School Board declares a "Severe Fiscal Emergency" by no less than a 4/5 vote, "and when

(a) The Board of Education determines the District's Interim Financial Report to be "Qualified" or "Negative" pursuant to AB 1200 and AB 2756, and the Alameda County Office of Education concurs with this determination; or

(b) The Alameda County Office of Education has "Disapproved" the District's annual budget, or has "Certified" the District's Interim Financial Report as "Qualified" or "Negative.""

It is extremely unlikely that the Board would be able to allow the BUSD to take these steps toward financial insolvency, or that the Alameda County Board of Education would allow it to do so, when cost-cutting measures such as further cuts to the Adult School and other programs or teacher furlough days have not been taken. Allowing the district to file a Qualified Financial Report would have severe negative impacts on the district, such as in raising borrowing costs (i.e.: interest rates we must pay on bonds) and would be hotly contested.

I do not have fixed priorities with regard to budget cuts. I do emphatically support the process that has been in place for the past three years to arrive at a budget in a responsible, transparent, and collaborative manner through the work of the Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee, on which I served for two or the last three years. The Committee is composed equally of union representatives and community members, including representatives from the BSEP (school parcel tax) Planning & Oversight Committee, the BUSD Audit Committee, the PTA Council, and the Berkeley High School Development Group. A School Board member also attends as liaison to the Board. A target number for total cuts that must be made is presented by the Superintendent, along with a list of cuts recommended by District staff, as well as a list of the cuts that were considered but not recommended. Committee members may also propose alternate cuts. Public comment is received at the beginning of every meeting, and members of the public may listen to the discussions. The Committee works to develop a consensus recommendation for the Superintendent, who, having listened to all the proceedings, considers the recommendation of the Committee in forming his budget recommendations to the Board of Education. For the past three years, the Superintendent's recommended budget has closely followed the recommendation of his Budget Advisory Committee, but has not been identical to it. This process is exceptional for a school district in its transparency and provision for public input. It has been of great value for educating the community about the sacrifices and compromises that must be

considered and created a meaningful opportunity for union representatives and community members to exchange ideas and collaborate for the benefit of our children and our schools. I am confident that this process will continue to serve the District well as future budget cuts are considered, and will also be valuable someday when reasonable funding returns to schools and the best use of those funds may be considered.

5. Have you collaborated with young adults in your community work in the past (list specific examples)? How are young adults involved in your campaign? How will you continue to involve young activists in your work after you are elected? Please be specific.

I worked with young adults in the campaign for Measure A and on Laurie Capitelli's City Council campaign. Several high school students are involved in my campaign.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Please describe in detail at least three of your accomplishments that have improved the lives of young adults. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities that apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

As a letterpress printer/business owner for the past 28 years, I have employed many young adults and mentored several of them in starting their own businesses. This experience has directly influenced my thinking about education. I understand that we need to better prepare our children to succeed in life and work beyond high school and college. Expanding career linked education, mentorships and summer employment opportunities for our young people will allow them to gain skills they can be proud of and to inspire each of them to envision a future that will be rewarding and productive.

EXPERIENCE

Please list or describe your current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life. Please explain how your experience would make you an effective advocate for young adults as an office holder. You may attach a resume and/or a list of endorsers here.

2004-2005, 2005-2006, 2006-2007 School Governance Council, Rosa Parks Elementary School
2004-2005, 2005-2006, Rosa Parks Elementary School representative to district BSEP (school parcel tax) Planning & Oversight Committee
1999-2010 PTAs

2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 King Middle School representative to district BSEP (school parcel tax) Planning & Oversight Committee

2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, 2009-2010 C-Chair, BSEP (school parcel tax) Planning & Oversight Committee (I stepped down in February, when I announced my Board candidacy)

2006-2007, 2007-2008, 2008-2009, Chair, BSEP (school parcel tax) P&O School Governance Subcommittee

2007-2008, 2008-2009, Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee

2009-2010 Superintendent's Facilities Committee

2006 Campaign Committee for Measure A (School Parcel Tax)

2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010- Executive Board, Berkeley High School Development Group;

2009-2010 Co-President, BHSDG

I have been an active Little League parent for the last 3 years, and have volunteered for several groups that serve young people, such as Youth Musical Theater Company.

1982– present, founder and owner, Julie Holcomb Printers (www.julieholcombprinters.com)

- **Endorsers, *partial list***

All titles for identification purposes only

- Sheila Jordan, *Alameda County Superintendent of Schools*
- Jacki Fox Ruby, *Former President, Berkeley Federation of Teachers; Former President Alameda County Board of Education, Trustee District 1*
- Joaquin Rivera, *Trustee District 1, Alameda County Board of Education; Former BUSD School Board President,*
- Shirley Issel, *School Board Director*
- Nancy Riddle, *School Board Director*
- John Selawsky, *School Board Director*
- Pamela Doolan, *Former School Board President*
- Steve Lustig, *Former School Board Director*
- Ted Schultz, *Former School Board Director*
- Elizabeth Shaughnessy, *Former School Board President*
- Laurie Capitelli, *Berkeley City Council*
- Susan Wengraf, *Berkeley City Council*
- Gordon Wozniak, *Berkeley City Council*
- Mim Hawley, *Former Berkeley City Council*
- Fred Colignon, *Former Berkeley City Council; Professor Emeritus, City Planning*
- Michele Lawrence, *Former Superintendent of Schools, BUSD*
- Jack McLaughlin, *Former Superintendent of Schools, BUSD*
- David Manson, *Campaign Coordinator, Measure A*
- Charlene Washington, *Executive Board, National Women's Political Caucus, Alameda North; Parks & Recreation Commissioner*
- Dan Lindheim, *Co-Chair, BSEP Planning & Oversight Committee; BUSD Audit Committee*
- Nancy Hoeffler, *Co-Chair, BSEP Planning & Oversight Committee*
- Roy Fisher Doolan, *Former Chair, Personnel Commission*
- Allen King, *Chair, BHS BSEP Site Committee*
- Rosa Luevano, *Former School Governance Council, BSEP Planning & Oversight Committee Representative, Thousand Oaks Elementary School*
- Tracy Hollander, *Former President, Rosa Parks PTA*
- Abigail Surasky, *Former President, Washington School PTA; Former Chair, Washington School SGC; Planning & Oversight Committee Representative; Chair, P&O SGC Subcommittee*
- Cathryn Bruno, *Former President, Rosa Parks PTA, Former President, Berkeley PTA Council*
- Mark Van Krieken, *Former President, BHS PTSA*
- Vikki Davis, *Parents of Children of African Descent*
- Stephen Thomas, *Head of School and Founding Director, The Oxbow School*
- Susan Helmrich, *Former Co-president, Berkeley High School Development Group*
- Alice Waters, *Owner & Founder, Chez Panisse Restaurant and Foundation*
- Mary Friedman, *Former (Founding) Executive Director, Berkeley Public Education Foundation*

Alex Angell, Franklin Avery, Lea Baechler-Brabo, Ellen Barth, Ben Bartlett, Dale Bartlett, Juliet Bashore, Todd Bazakas, Natasha Beery, David Ross Berson, Betsy Bigelow-Teller, Kim Boston, Elizabeth Brosnahan, Amy Brueggemeyer, Patricia Bruning, Gayle Buckles, Jennifer Burroughs, Cindy Chang, Michael Alvarez Cohen, Joan Colignon, Donna Collins, Lafcadio Cortesi, Pam Crane, Robin Dalrymple, Phillip Dedlow, Steven Donaldson, Scot M. Doolan, Betsy Foster, David Frankel, Dale Freeman, Noreen Fukumori, Gwyneth Galbraith, Sean Gallagher, Lawrence Gordon, Pam Gray, Tim Gray, Lawrence Grown, Margie Gurdziel, Karla Herndon, Chris Hudson, Jeff Hunt, Sandra Hunt, Michael Issel, David Kator, Michael Katz, Evy Kavalier, Claudia Kawczynska, Joan Kotun, Diana Kuderna, Catherine Lazio, Leo Levenson, Margret Leventhal, Rabbi Jane Litman, Blanca Manriquez,

Jill Martinucci, Piero Martinucci, Ellie McCance-Katz, Jill McCoy, Lauren McIntosh, Marcy Moriconi, Candy Myers, Gary Parsons, Linda Perry, Tim Perry, Malcolm Plant, Therese Powell, Patricia Rathwell, Margit Roos-Collins, Jim Rowland, Rachel Rush, Katherine Schaaf, Erin Schweng, Peggy Scott, David Snippen, Jon Squire, Michelle Straka, Sharon Tyson, Carole Ungvarsky, Eric Weaver, Pamela Webster, Jo Anne Welsh, Cameron Woo, Wilma Wyss

Institutional Endorsements:

Berkeley Democratic Club (45 of 53 votes cast)
Green Party of Alameda County

Julie Holcomb, Candidate for Berkeley School Board