

Questionnaire for Candidates for Berkeley USD

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot: Priscilla Myrick
2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number) Berkeley School Board
3. What is your current occupation or elected office? Community Volunteer
4. Are you the incumbent? Yes No X
5. How long have you resided in this district and city? 26 years

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:	Priscilla Myrick for School Board 2010
Address:	1563 Solano Ave., #250
City, State, Zip:	Berkeley, CA 94707
Name of staff contact:	Priscilla Myrick
Campaign Phone:	510-644-8160
Campaign Fax:	Same as above
Campaign E-mail:	Priscilla@Myrick4BerkeleySchools.com
FPPC#	1309932

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?
Only 52% of Berkeley High students are proficient in English yet BUSD is one of the best funded districts in the state. We need to more effectively target our resources:
Strengthen, enrich and articulate science, math, literacy and writing curricula K-12
Implement our 16 school site plans designed to increase student achievement
Evaluate programs—fund those that work
Strengthen summer school—bring kids up to grade level before fall
Keep kids in school—reduce truancy
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 fully support Measure H the maintenance parcel tax. It will contribute \$5 million annually to the BUSD operating budget to support the maintenance of school facilities. The school construction bond for \$210 million (Measure I) is not based on any BUSD facilities master plan. There is no guarantee that any of the projects will be built. Bonds are for buildings and do not fund current school operations. The last bond measure promised critical classrooms at Berkeley High that were never built. A better written bond measure should come back to the voters that is based on a long-term facilities master plan that identifies clear facilities priorities to support BUSD's 9,000 students.
3. What are your top three priorities if you are elected to the School Board?
Fiscal: Track down every available dollar to directly benefit students.
Achievement: Implement district plans, evaluate with data and target scarce resources to programs that work in raising student achievement
Facilities/use of bond money: Plan before you build and build what you plan
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?
Thankfully our community supplements state funding with local parcel taxes targeted to class size reduction, enrichment, and facilities maintenance. However, BUSD will face difficult budget choices. Here's what I would do:
Increase revenue by increasing student attendance (BUSD loses \$3.3 million per year in ADA)
Avoid cuts by using technology to improve operations and reduce administrative overhead
If personnel cuts are necessary, try to manage through careful planning and attrition
Above all else, try to make sure every available dollar directly benefits students
5. Have you collaborated with young adults in your community work in the past (list specific examples)? See below. How are young adults involved in your campaign? Supporting me through social networking. How will you continue to involve young activists in your work after you are elected? I invite ALL community members to support the work of public education in Berkeley through Berkeley School Volunteers and BUSD committees.

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.

In 2001 I was shocked at the level of writing skills at Berkeley High and helped start the WriterCoach Connection program and the nonprofit Community Alliance for Learning. The WriterCoach Connection program trains community volunteers, including many Cal students, to coach secondary students in writing skills. The program has supported over 12,000 Berkeley students over the past ten years. I remain a passionate advocate for literacy support for all students.

As a board member, volunteer and supporter of the Berkeley nonprofit Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency (BOSS), I led the annual holiday gift drive where elementary and middle school students learned about the issues faced by homeless families and youth and worked to raise funds to provide holiday gifts for those families housed in shelters and transitional housing. I recently learned that BUSD has almost 700 students that are considered "homeless."

As a Berkeley School volunteer starting in 1995, I worked at Berkeley High with students on service learning projects and at King Middle School as a math tutor. I have demonstrated a commitment to students and public education for over 20 years.

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.

I am the only school board candidate with a 20-year track record of managing budgets from \$30 thousand to \$300 million in both business and community organizations. I am a former CPA, bioscience chief financial officer, and treasurer of nonprofit organizations. I understand the need for oversight, accountability, and effective resource allocation in tough economic times for California education.

I co-founded the successful Writercoach Connection program in 2001 at Berkeley High School. The program helps students of all academic level learn to write. I have worked one-on-one with Berkeley middle and high school students in the classroom every week for the past ten years.

I have developed school site plans to raise student achievement while on the Berkeley High School Governance Council, drafted Berkeley High's Small Schools Guiding principles, and participated on the 2020 Vision Task Force and BUSD Budget Oversight Committee.

My experience in the classroom and in financial management will bring a fresh perspective and results-oriented skills to the Berkeley School Board.

My endorsers include education and community leaders, parents, teachers and activists committed to improving Berkeley schools and the lives of Berkeley youth (all titles for identification purposes only):

Former school board directors Lloyd Lee and Ted Schultz

Shirley Dean, Former Mayor, City of Berkeley

Alan Goldfarb, Former City Councilmember

boona cheema, Executive Director, Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency

Lynn Mueller, Associate Director, Community Alliance for Learning

Susan P. Helmrich, Former Co-President, Berkeley High School Development Group

Karen Flood Neilsen, Former School Site Council Chair, Cragmont Elementary

Patricia A. Kates, Former PTA President, Rosa Parks Elementary

(Visit www.myrick4berkeleyschools.com for endorsers and complete bio)

