

Springfield School Board Candidate Survey

Maryam Mohammadkhani, She/her

**Public funds should be reserved for schools that are governed by a publicly accountable and elected board - How much do you agree with this statement?**

In general, I do not support public private partnerships because private enterprises are susceptible to capture as they lack the structured public oversight that publicly funded institutions are subject to. Charter schools and private schools are not accountable to the public that provides their funding as the public schools are with elected school board members. Private industries subscribe to a set of practices which slowly over time can influence public schools without the parents/community oversight that comes with elections and through transparency (Sunshine/Freedom of Information Act). I have and will continue to do everything that I can as a citizen and as a board member to advocate for protecting, and investing in, public schools.

**Every school should be equipped with the resources to deliver quality education that prepares every child for the future, no matter their color, their background, or their zip code. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

Schools should be equipped with the resources to deliver quality education that prepares children for the future. Period. I don't preface with the word "every" because it's a given, and to suggest otherwise is absurd. The institutional aspirations of the district should be inspirational, and I certainly shall do all that is possible to ensure that there is indeed "no child left behind" and that "every student succeeds."

**School district employees and students should be safe, respected, appreciated, heard, and have the resources they need to succeed. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

What SPS can do is to ensure that classrooms are safe spaces for teachers, consistent with a dedication to discipline policies and practices which support and protect teachers. What SPS can do is to ensure that teachers receive differentiated professional development regardless of their education and experience level, and that they have the resources necessary to advance student learning and achieve success. What SPS can do is to ensure that teachers will be heard, and their input respected, when they raise concerns individually and collectively regarding policies and practices. I have consistently been a proponent of the foregoing measures and will continue to do so.

**The right of workers to join unions to negotiate fair wages, benefits, and working conditions without employer interference should be protected. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

My voting record speaks to my advocacy for fair staff wages, benefits, and working conditions. Currently, the vast majority of our workers belong to labor unions, which has been tremendously helpful in delivering for our entire staff. Union negotiations assist in providing the most optimal working conditions, which then go a long way toward recruiting and retaining the best and the most dedicated employees, which in turn determines how a school functions and how students are served. Without people, there would be no schools. And good schools require the best staff.

**All workers should earn a living wage of at least \$15 per hour. - How much do you agree with this statement**

During my tenure I have supported increasing SPS entry level positions pay to \$15 per hour. There are currently only two employee job codes that pay \$14 per hour starting, and I would support prioritizing an increase in those two codes as we consider the next budget cycle.

**Workers should have access to earned sick time and family leave to care for themselves and loved ones in times of crisis. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

SPS has in the last year restructured the earned sick time and family leave to better support staff needs. Supporting staff in the best way we can improves morale, provides buy in to the system, and helps to attract and retain dedicated and talented staff.

**Every Springfield resident should have a safe, accessible, and truly affordable place to call home. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

We have dedicated staff such as School Community Liaisons, counselors, nurses, and principals who work together to provide student families the support they need to create a safe and nurturing home.

**Springfield Public Schools should prioritize contracts with businesses who pay at or above prevailing wage rates and have a proven track record of respecting and protecting workers on the job. The district should prioritize contracts with businesses that employ local workers who have access to apprenticeship training. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

In my conversation with Springfield Central Labor Council I learned about various practices pertaining to the employment of out-of-state versus local workers and specific initiatives that would support apprenticeship training. I look forward to learning more about these opportunities and how they can help our schools be more successful.

**School district leaders should champion policies that eliminate racial disparities/injustices in hiring and employment practices, educational opportunities, curriculum, and discipline, as well as in income, public health and safety. - How much do you agree with this statement?**

I worked to develop Springfield Public School's Mission and Vision, and specifically its Strategic Plan which embody policies and plans that eliminate racial disparities in hiring and employment practices, educational opportunities, curriculum, and discipline.

**Is there anything else you would like for us to know?**

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