

2020 Endorsement Questionnaire

Email address *

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APA Democratic Caucus of Alameda County



PLEASE COMPLETE AND SUBMIT BY SEPT. 9, midnight. Please take time to review the questions before filling in the boxes since you cannot save the responses for later completion. Thank you for your interest in being considered for an endorsement by the Asian Pacific American Democratic Caucus of Alameda County. Please answer each question in 250 words or less. Be honest and direct. Please note: your questionnaire will be posted on our website for Caucus members and the public to review.

Personal Information

Candidate Name *

Laura Babitt

City and zip code of residence.

94710

What is your campaign website address?

www.laurababitt.com

What is your campaign email address?

laura@laurababitt.com

What is the office that you are seeking? *

- Alameda City Council
- Alameda School Board
- Berkeley, Mayor
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 2
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 3
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist.5
- Berkeley, City Council, Dist. 6
- Berkeley, Unified School District Trustee
- Berkeley, Rent Stabilization Board
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 1
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 3
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 5
- Oakland, City Council, Dist. 7
- Oakland, City Council, At-large
- Oakland City Attorney
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 1
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 3
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 5
- Oakland USD, School Trustee, Dist. 7
- AC Transit, Bd. of Directors, Ward 1
- AC Transit, Bd. of Directors, Ward 2
- AC Transit Bd. of Directors, At-Large
- EB Regional Park Dist. Bd. of Directors. Ward 1

Regional Council, Bd. of Directors, Area 1

AD 15, State Assembly Representative

AD 18, State Assembly Representative

Peralta Community College District, Bd. of Director, Area 2

Other:

Are you the incumbent?

Yes

No

Are you a registered Democrat? The APA Democratic Caucus can only endorse registered Democrats

Yes

No

How long have you been a registered Democrat? If less than 5 years, please explain your reason for becoming a Democrat.

All my life

Are you an APA Caucus member?

Yes

No

Why are you seeking the Caucus's endorsement?

I am seeking your endorsement for the BUSD School Board Director because over the last 10 years in BUSD, I have helped to implement:

- Support over Discipline
- Social-Emotional Counselors
- Extended Day & Summer Learning Opportunities
- Office of Family Engagement & Equity
- Special Education Support
- Anti-Racism Task Force
- Educational Parenting and Empowerment Workshops
- Stopping Budget Cuts for Educators

As a finance and accounting professional, along with my hands-on BUSD experience, I have the experience and skills to help BUSD successfully navigate the financial crisis brought on by COVID-19. I am committed to addressing the equity challenges BUSD faces as it reengineers its schools, and strives to overcome the opportunity gap. Through the lens of equity for all Berkeley students, I am committed to:

1. Create accountability structures so that our programs/special education services are implemented effectively
2. Provide outcome-oriented budgeting
3. Cut red-tape
4. Build collaborative welcoming school environments

It is possible to serve all students in BUSD well. I am ready to help make that vision a reality.

List ONLY the top 5 endorsements that you have received. (Please reference your website if you want to alert us to more).

Berkeley Federation of Teachers,
Wellstone Democratic Club, Berkeley Democratic Club
Supermajority of the Berkeley City Council including Mayor Arreguin
6 out of 7 of the most recent current and former School Board Directors including all I will work with
See Full Detailed List at LauraBabitt.com

If we endorse you, will you use our name in your campaign materials?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

How long have you lived in the district which you are seeking to represent?

11 years

Educational background: What schools have you attended, date graduated, major and degree(s) earned.

Hampton University BS in Accounting Emphasis in Finance 1997

Employment: List the last three (3) paid positions, indicating name of employer, job title, and length of employment.

REL Acoustics, Financial Controller of Global Operations, 2016- Current
Robert Half, CV Partners, Accounting Principals- Finance, Regulatory Reporting, Operations Management
Consultant Q4 2011-2016

Central Garden and Pet , Assistant Controller , 2008-2010

What are the names of any community or nonprofit organizations with which you have been an active volunteer in the past 3-5 years.

- Berkeley Schools Excellence Program Planning & Oversight Committee
 - Local Control Accountability Plan Parent Advisory Committee
 - Parents of Children of African Descent (PCAD)
 - Superintendent's Budget Advisory Committee
 - Parent Teacher Association
 - School Site Councils at Rosa Parks, Longfellow Middle School, Berkeley High School
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CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1. What differentiates you from your opponents for the elected office that you are seeking?

When you look at the role of a School Board Director, I am the only candidate with the following experience in BUSD that directly relates to what School Board Directors do:

1. To hire and evaluate the district's superintendent. To date, I've been a part of 2 Superintendent searches.
2. Establish the vision and goals for the school district. Through my work with BUSD's LCAP Plan, I played a key role in developing our districts goals which are: Goal One High Quality Classroom Instruction (and Enrichment) Goal Two: Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Systems and 3. Safe, Welcoming and Inclusive School Climate
3. Implement policies that help improve its schools. To date, I've helped to write BUSD policies which have reduced suspension rates, addressed racial or gender identity isolation, improved BUSD response to sexual harassment, racial bias, and bullying incidents.
4. Adopt annual budgets and accountability structures that align with the districts vision. To date, I have helped BUSD to implement:
 - Support vs. discipline also known as Restorative Justice
 - Social-Emotional Counselors
 - Family Engagement Officers
 - Special Education Support/Reform
 - English Language Learner Support
 - Hiring and Retention of Teachers of Color
 - And have stopped Budget Cuts for Educators

I can hit the ground running and with two outgoing School Board Directors, it is important to have an incoming Director with a proven track record that knows where we have been and where we need to go to further the work.

I am also the best candidate because I am the only candidate who can offer our Board what it lacks, a Finance and Accounting expert. We have lawyers on our board, we have government administrators, teachers, and professors. What we don't have is someone who can help BUSD navigate the impending financial crisis COVID-19 will bring. My experience leading million to billion dollar entities through two recessions by reducing costs and saving jobs, will add great value to BUSD.

2. Describe one issue for the district you want to represent for which you have provided leadership and about which you are passionate.

Closing the achievement or opportunity gap and providing support to struggling students to ensure all children have access to a quality education, and equitable outcomes in life . In addition to the work noted previously, I have provided leadership as an advocate for equity in BUSD. I led a non-profit organization which was a key equity consulting body for BUSD over the years. Implementing equity initiatives from Restorative Justice, English Language Learner Support, and other aforementioned accomplishments took doing the research, making the right partnerships, and developing the political will within our school district to approve and implement these initiatives. Next it took oversight. I remained committed to the oversight process because I do want to see the opportunity gap for struggling students closed. The beauty of working to improve results for struggling students, meant the quality of education improved for all students.

3. What percentage of the district you [or intend to] represent are of APA heritage?

19.1%

4. Please identify the three largest APA ethnicities in your district.

Chinese, Asian Indian, Korean

5. Please identify the most at-risk APA community in your district and explain why.

Those for whom English is a second language would be most at risk for needing additional academic and social emotional support in school. This is why I made sure that BUSD's budget has included 30 minutes a day of dedicated service to for English Language Learners.

6. List the three top concerns of members of the APAs in your district.

1. Anti-Bullying Policies and Procedures For Correction. 2. Adequate Translation for Parents 3. English Language Learner Support especially Pre-K through 8th grade.

7. During the COVID-19 pandemic, reports of anti-Asian verbal and physical attacks have arisen. If you are the incumbent, how have you addressed this? If you are a candidate how will you address this?

1. Educating the community to not engage in bigotry and to choosing love over hate. 2. Ensuring BUSD anti-bullying policies and procedures for correction are working to mitigate and correct harm as all students and families should be apart of a welcoming school climate.

8. Do you believe that Asian and Pacific Americans are adequately represented in local government? What can elected officials do to improve participation?

Elected officials can mentor candidates to run for office, appoint them to various commissions and boards, and hold forums specifically for this population to ensure their concerns are heard and develop strategies to address them.

9. Please identify all Asian Pacific American candidates whom you have personally endorsed over the past 5 years including this election cycle. If there are none, please explain.

Within our school community, the President of our School Site Council is Asian Pacific American. I voted for her and have supported her during her leadership. Within the larger context of the city, I have not been asked by any Asian Pacific American candidate for my endorsement.

10. If you were faced with a situation that involved an Asian Pacific American community, would you seek consultation with our Caucus as a resource?

Yes

No

Thank you for completing our questionnaire.

Please submit your responses by Sept. 9, 2020 midnight. Our North County Endorsement Meeting is scheduled for Thu., Sept. 24 beginning at 6:30 pm on Zoom. Only those candidates submitting the questionnaire on time will be on our

endorsement ballot. No changes to your responses can be made after it is submitted.

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