



# ST. PAUL VOTERS GUIDE

## 2021

*A guide to mayoral and school board candidates*



The League of Women Voters of St. Paul is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to civic engagement.



## Key Election Dates & Information

<p><b>Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Early Voting Period Begins</b></p> <p>Vote in Person</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person absentee voting runs Sept. 17-Nov. 1. Voters can register at the early voting site: <i>Ramsey County Elections Office Plato Building.</i></li> <li>• Site is open September 17<sup>th</sup> – Nov 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>• Additional sites (Arlington Hills Community Center, Highland Golf Course, Frogtown Community Center, Ramsey County Library) open Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> , check location for hours.</li> </ul> <p>Vote by Mail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered voters must submit a <b>paper</b> absentee ballot application. <b>You cannot apply online this year for an absentee ballot.</b></li> <li>• Return your ballot by mail or in person to multiple locations. Check <a href="http://www.ramseycounty.us">www.ramseycounty.us</a> for complete list.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Deadline for Registering to Vote in Advance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5pm for paper registration - must be received by this time via mail or drop off (if you miss this deadline, MN has same day voter registration at your polling place)</li> <li>• 11:59 pm for online registration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Recommended deadline to <i>apply</i> for an absentee ballot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply any time of year and your ballot will be sent to you 46 days before the election.</li> <li>• Apply as early as possible!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Recommended deadline to <i>return</i> an absentee ballot, return earlier if possible</b></p>
<p><b>Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Election Day!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voters can register at the polls; proof of residence is required.</li> <li>• Bring current MN driver's license/state ID or photo ID that has old address (may be expired) along with (1) a bill that shows current address and is due or dated within 30 days of election, or (2) rental agreement that is valid on Election Day or (3) other acceptable proof as listed on the Secretary of State website: <a href="http://mnvotes.org">mnvotes.org</a>.</li> </ul>

## **What is on the ballot in St. Paul in 2021**

*A sample ballot is available 45 days before the election on the Secretary of State's website: [mnvotes.org](http://mnvotes.org).*

- **Mayor** – ranked choice, rank up to 6
- **School Board** – 3 at large seats, 1 special election to fill a vacant seat
- **City Ballot Question 1: Whether to adopt a Residential Rent Stabilization Ordinance, Vote yes or no**

“Should the City adopt the proposed Ordinance limiting rent increases? The Ordinance limits residential rent increases to no more than 3% in a 12-month period, regardless of whether there is a change of occupancy. The Ordinance also directs the City to create a process for landlords to request an exception to the 3% limit based on the right to a reasonable return on investment. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of limiting rent increases. A “no” vote is a vote against limiting rent increases.”

## **How does Ranked Choice Voting work?**

*The following information is from the **Fairvote Minnesota** website: <https://fairvotemn.org/rcv/>.*

In ranked choice elections, voters rank as many or as few candidates as they like from their favorite to least favorite: first choice, second choice, and so on.

In a single-seat election, if a candidate receives a majority (50% + 1) of first-choice rankings in the first round, that candidate wins. However, if no candidate receives majority support, then an “instant runoff” second round takes place. In that instant runoff, the candidate with the fewest first-choice votes is defeated, and these ballots now count for those voters’ second choices. This process continues until one candidate reaches a majority and wins.

RCV is the most cost-effective and efficient way to ensure winners have broad voter support and eliminate spoiler and strategic voting dynamics.

## **Questions?**

### **League of Women Voters St. Paul**

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MN Relay Service: 711

# 2021 St. Paul Mayoral Candidates

## Ranked Choice, Rank up to 6

*Each candidate was asked the same questions, their answers are unedited and listed in alphabetical order.*

### 2021 Mayoral Candidate Questions

1. If elected, what are your top priorities?
2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?
3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing St. Paul right now and how should they be addressed?

#### **Melvin Carter**



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#### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

Saint Paul today is larger, more diverse and more prominent than ever. As our community reinvents itself, so too must we be prepared to reinvent the services, systems, processes and resources we leverage to govern from City Hall. My administration has led that work, with an unapologetic focus on equity – passing a \$15 minimum wage, eliminating library late fines, tripling free recreation center programs, establishing our first dedicated funding for bikeways, eliminating minimum parking requirements, and establishing College Bound Saint Paul, our partnership to start every child born in Saint Paul with \$50 in college savings.

While the last 18 months have taken a profound toll on communities across the globe, Saint Paul is poised to thrive, as we transition into one of the most prolific phases of economic expansion in our city's history. We must meet this opportunity with a big vision for our future.

That's why my top priorities in my second term will be: driving safer outcomes through our Community First Public Safety framework, housing and job development to meet the demands of our growing population, and investing to ensure that every family in our community can access the greater prosperity our city has to offer.

#### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be improved and with more transparency to voters?

Transparency and engagement may be the true themes of my administration: hundreds of residents have served on hiring panels to vet Cabinet appointees; over 1,000 residents provided input to inform our Community First Public Safety framework; and we engaged residents with

police leadership in our first 100 days in office to rewrite our use of force policies — far before the murder of George Floyd drove other cities to follow suit.

As our clearest opportunity to demonstrate our community values, we've worked hard to reinvent our city's budget process for accessibility, with hundreds of Saint Paulites having participated in our annual "budget games" these past 4 years. These events — held in coffee shops, libraries, breweries and online — invite residents to engage with city leaders in the trade-offs of city budgeting, and form the basis of my budget each year.

This summer, we held three virtual roundtables to arrive at a 2022 budget proposal that matches the bold vision Saint Paulites hold for our city's future. Responses focused on neighborhood safety investments, housing and job opportunities, and building upon city services to ensure economic stability and prosperity; the core themes of my 2022 budget proposal.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing Saint Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Like every major city in America, our public safety challenges have grown more pronounced since the onset of the pandemic. This national phenomenon is a predictable reflection of the deep compound crises families have faced over the past year, as we've experienced more homelessness, hunger, unemployment and social isolation than ever before. While these challenges have become more pronounced during the pandemic, they are anything but new; Saint Paul families have been battling these ills for generations.

Our Community First framework, built by neighbors and officers working together, balances investments in law enforcement with proactive interventions in our highest potential neighbors and neighborhoods, while establishing alternative 911 responses to more effectively address the cycles of crisis in which too many residents and families find themselves stuck. These strategies, in combination, form the most comprehensive, coordinated and data-driven approach to public safety that our community has ever endeavored.

## Miki Frost



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### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

If elected, my top priorities are to implement strategies that will show a decrease in violence, an increase in employment opportunities, housing assistance and providing additional community-based resources.

### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

The budget needs to include more resources aimed at mental health and addiction rehabilitation services. Our goal is not to increase taxes, but to be creative in providing incentives to business owners who willing to participate in the employment increase initiative. We want to see our communities of marginalized people thriving, not just surviving. The budget needs to also include programs that provide education and/training for those individuals whose backgrounds have prevented them from accessing opportunities for advancement.

### 3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing St Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

I believe the biggest concern is an insufficient number of people holding law enforcement positions, coupled with the lack of adequate training for those that do hold these positions. The best way to combat this is to restructure the officer training program in a way that is more conducive to carrying out the goal of "protect and serve." Another avenue is to recruit more people of color into law enforcement so that the disconnect between our communities and officers can be fixed and better relationships built. Third, I would like to see more partnership between law enforcement and mental health workers who may assist in protecting the communities we serve. Lastly, there must be better support for those boots-on-the-ground organizations that are working in the heart of these communities with the goal to provide resources to the people seeking assistance.

## Dino Guerin



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### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

The single biggest issue facing our city is crime. Criminals have taken over the streets and violent crime continues to increase. For over two years now, Saint Paul has faced a record number of homicides, gun shots fired, carjackings, and other serious violent crime. My priority is restoring safety and security to the city for residents, employees, businesses, and visitors. I would hire more dedicated police officers to patrol the streets and serve the community. Several other issues will be resolved when public safety is addressed. Businesses will remain in the city and provide employment opportunities, people will visit the city for events, dining and entertainment, residents will invest in their property and their future in the city.

### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

As Mayor, all aspects of the budget would be reviewed. I will consolidate services when possible and eliminate redundancy and waste. I will hold community listening meetings to determine what are the priorities of residents and business owners.

### 3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing St Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Controlling and reducing crime. Studies have proven that focusing on what may be considered minor crime E.g. graffiti, littering, panhandling, etc. can set the tone for the commitment to safety and security for the entire city. This in turn reduces violent crime. I am committed to hiring, training, and ultimately putting more dedicated Law Enforcement professionals on the streets to serve the citizens, businesses, employees, students, and visitors to the City of Saint Paul.

## Bill Hosko



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### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

My answers forthcoming are long-standing positions. My priorities include: 1. Rebuilding people's trust in city hall, 2. New city website to allow citizens to communicate with each other 'on topics' and with city hall, 3. All neighborhoods should feel protected. Higher crime areas do want a strong police presence, 4. Retrofit light rail stations to include fences and gates. Honor-system ends, Pay-as-You-Enter system begins. (Curbs crime, violence and millions in annual losses.) Metro Transit bus misconduct also addressed, 5. Downtown skyway 'system-wide' camera-audio security system to restore greater safety. Numbers 6 and 7. More equitable City-Trash Collection fee structure and new 'Opt-Out/Share' trash program offered. Review ending 'Individual Assessments' for Public Works projects and capping Property Tax and 'Fee' increases to inflation rates. Numbers 8 and 9. Since Union Depot's \$250 Million restoration in 2012, it's lost nearly \$30 million. It's time we create the 'Railroad and Riverboat Museum of Minnesota' here! We'll restore Saint Paul's July 4th Fireworks and a 'Taste of Minnesota' style festival on our Capitol Mall as we also work to reinvigorate our Winter Carnival, Art Crawl & more! Lastly, number 10. Referendum: Move City elections to even-numbered years to double or even triple future Voter turn-out!

### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

1. Most believe there continues to be significant needless spending, while basic services they are paying for such as road and sidewalk repair, tree trimming and tree maintenance, snow plowing and most importantly - keeping society safe, are being unmet. They will be met if I am elected.

2. As Mayor, I will also ensure the City's website is upgraded to allow citizens to easily participate, within parameters/guidelines, in the budget process and to also publicly communicate with City Hall and each other, and to Vote online here on 'topics' before us. I would also like a discussion on allowing differentiation between Homeowner and Renter Voting/Comments. Would this be helpful? Should we also allow verified Saint Paul business owners to participate as well?

Together, we will install transparency and ease of participation at unprecedented levels.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing St Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

I have been door-knocking our city since February 25. By election day, I expect to have covered every block. The public agrees, we cannot place Saint Paul back onto a higher track until we get growing crime and growing lack of accountability under control and reversed.

Do we need more police officers and shot-spotter technology to do it? Most citizens in high-crime areas want this. Are judges and city/county attorneys perhaps being too lenient? Many say yes. Should we educate the need for personal responsibility and a need for achievable, large-scale mentoring and work programs - in the vein of 1930's WPA programs? Yes, will have them.

Misconduct/crime on public transit has become commonplace. A quarter-century ago (I've used transit for 28-years) I spoke of this at a Met Council public-hearing. Staff came to me afterwards saying there was no political will to help them. I will provide it.

A city-wide, year-to-year Crime Map will importantly allow us to see what is occurring. Each New Year a new map begins, with the former ones retained for easy review - of our progress.

Don't be discouraged or lose faith currently. Together, we can and will bring back a more vital and kinder city.

## Dora Jones-Robinson



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### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

My first mission is to work vigorously hard on public safety, working with the police department and other departments to assure the people of the city of St. Paul are safe, secure the newest technology Shot Spotter in hopes to save lives. Work with police department to makes sure our police officers are healthy and give an incentive to live in the city they work in. Create a youth gun violence initiative to begin to change the mindset of these youth in gangs and clicks to address the mental health and drug abuse that is plaguing our city youth.

Work with the homeless and those who experience repeated episodes of homelessness. Work with individuals on a one-on-one basis and tailor the program based on individual needs. Help small businesses to thrive not just survive, give businesses an incentive to move back to downtown St. Paul, which will generate revenue back to the city and give jobs to youth. Also, bring back the fireworks show to our city of St. Paul.

### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be improved and with more transparency to voters?

First, we must do a full independent audit so that we will know what we are truly working with. Where funds were spent unnecessarily and make adjustments based on our findings from the audit.

One of the things that our administration will do is create several decision-making teams, these teams will make decisions for the people on behalf of the people and will respond to the people.

This process will be transparent to voters and tax payers of the city of St. Paul, because they will be the ones to ultimately make decisions for the people.

### 3. What are some of your biggest safety concerns facing St. Paul right now? And what's the best way to face these concerns?

The biggest concern is the rapid gun fire and the shootings of innocence people, the carjacking and the crime rate. Another concern that we need to address immediately is drug overdose of our young people taking fake percis and fentanyl and dying from them. The best way to face these concerns is to deal with it head on, those issues I named

	<p>above are getting more aggressive as time goes on and we have to meet that aggression with aggressive action.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paul Langenfeld</b></p>  <p>email: LangenfeldForMayor@gmail.com</p>	<p>1. What are your top priorities if elected?</p> <p><b>Public Safety:</b> My top priority is law and order. It's time to prioritize the freedoms of our citizens, and their businesses, over the freedom of criminals. As Mayor, I will work to restore law and order in our city because our community cannot economically thrive without safe streets first.</p> <p><b>Economic Opportunity:</b> Provide a safe economic environment conducive for helping our small businesses thrive in. With a strong small business sector, the citizens of Saint Paul will enjoy a vibrant local economy, and increased access to good jobs. A stronger local economy is foundational in providing access to economic opportunity for everyone in our community. My goal is to help build an economy in Saint Paul that works for all of us.</p> <p><b>Infrastructure:</b> Aging infrastructure continues to remain a concern. It is paramount that we focus on renewing local infrastructure now given the increased national attention and funding coming from the Federal Government. Getting ahead on infrastructure not only helps to make our roads, bridges, and walkways safer; rebuilding our infrastructure also helps to grow our economy, enhance our local competitiveness, and create good jobs.</p> <p>2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be improved and with more transparency to voters?</p> <p>The City of Saint Paul publishes departmental projects on its website, insight into the budgeting process, charts &amp; graphs, and access to the many different presentations. A great deal of time, effort, and resources are expended each year by department leaders and their teams to provide a departmental budget that works to address the needs and concerns of the community at-large. Designing and submitting a departmental budget that makes everyone happy is a near impossible task. Having good leadership in place at the departmental level has never been more important as they must always consider public feedback while balancing that input with their career and training experience with a goal</p>

of providing the public what it needs, but not necessarily what it (passionately) wants. Long-term budget planning would not be possible if departmental leaders simply reacted to the loudest voice each year. We must trust the experience and insights of our departmental leadership, and if we later learn that our trust was misplaced, we will quickly find new leadership.

The city provides a user-friendly set of tools online for the public to research both revenues and expenses. However, the level of drill-down on each expense category is somewhat limited to the broader categories. Accounting systems today allow a CEO to quickly drill down to the transaction level detail (or project detail) of any account category. Whether or not the public wants to get that granular is up for discussion; but knowing that this type of detailed information could be included only helps provide greater public transparency and bring to light any potentially questionable transactions for discussion.

Salary / compensation transparency through yearly benchmarking and comparing findings to average private sector wages in St. Paul's business sector. The city's website should share these finding with the public each year.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing the City of Saint Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

It's time to begin prioritizing the freedoms of our law-abiding citizens, and their businesses, over the freedom of criminals. If crime pays, citizens and our businesses will lose. As Mayor, I will work to restore law and order in our city because our community cannot economically thrive without safe streets first. Here are the facts: Motor vehicle theft up 48% since 2016. Out of 2,774 theft attempts made last year, 99.03% were successful. Less than 1% were unsuccessful. These odds clearly favor the criminals, not our citizens. Furthermore, Robbery grew 32%, Commercial Burglary exploded 70%, and Aggravated Assaults rose nearly 32% last year leaving behind a growing number of shattered lives. The path back to having a safe city begins with everyone uniting to demand the return of safe streets for everyone in our community. When a manager of a local business politely leans over to inform you as you're checking out, "it may be best to begin heading home now to be off the streets before dark", something is unequivocally wrong with our city. Failing to respond to the growing

threat of crime, will poison our economy, and chase away economic opportunities for everyone (except for the criminals).

**Abu Nayeem**



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**1. What are your top priorities if elected?**

My campaign is about giving voice to the disenfranchised and empowering citizens. Two out of three registered voters did not vote in the last mayoral election. The disenfranchised voters include the politically disenfranchised, who are citizens that hold a minority position and want to engage, but have no traction, and the structurally disenfranchised, who are citizens that live in high crime-density neighborhoods and have lost hope after their pleas for public safety have been ignored. Here are my top priorities if elected:

- 1. **Public Safety:** Support community alternatives to policing and fund the SPPD; i.e. "Yes And.." approach. Improve trust between law enforcement and citizens via policies such as allocating time for officers to engage the community and police accountability (i.e. carry insurance)
- 2. **Citizen Agency:** Implement a participatory budget, and use this approach in allocating American Rescue Plan dollars to citizen-driven and citizen-led programs
- 3. **Community Organizing:** Pursue asset based community development (ABCD), which draws upon the strengths of local residents and local institutions to build stronger, more sustainable communities.
- 4. **Digital Infrastructure:** Build a digital civic engagement platform that encourage civic engagement and community organizing which includes building a neighborhood block club network; i.e. Knock my Block Initiative

**2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?**

There is limited public awareness of how the budget process works. The mayor has the power to draft the budget. Once the budget is drafted, it is too late for public input. The city council can tweak the budget for approval, but this role is limited. Essentially, it's a top-down management approach from the mayor. This year, in particular, the drafted budget is unjust. Mayor Carter will be spending \$72 million of federal money from the American Rescue Plan and the city council is planning to approve the budget before the election. This is unfair to the candidates

	<p>who have their own vision of St. Paul, and the citizens who should decide their future. I made a public proposal on August 27th, requesting that the city council postpone passing Carter's budget until he has won the election, and that an alternative budget is drafted in case he loses the election. I would like to implement a participatory budget where citizens can distribute a portion of their taxes however they see fit for different public programs. The participatory budget promotes a bottom-up management, where the citizens are investing, building, leading their own initiatives, and holding themselves and elected officials accountable. The greatest concern is the rampant crime in marginalized communities. Despite a record number of shootings, murders, and robberies in the last two years, the Carter administration continues to underfund SPPD. During my ride-along with the SPPD East District, there were several off-duty officers working the street, and the specialty gang-unit (responsible for removing guns) was disbanded due to low staffing numbers. All this additional stress on officers, increases the likelihood of a police-involved incident, which can lead to intensive civil damage. From the citizens perspective, the light rail is so unsafe that commuters choose to take the bus, and many long-time residents are leaving Saint Paul for safety concerns.</p> <p>3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing the City of Saint Paul right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?</p> <p>I would address public safety with a two-pronged approach. Provide the necessary resources for SPPD, and support other community engagement programs such as the Community Ambassador program. Finally, citizens can be proactive in protecting their community and making it more vibrant. I want to build a digital block club network, i.e. Knock my Block Initiative, that builds stronger relationships with neighbors and provides immediate safety. Finally, both citizens and officers, alike, need to treat each other with mutual respect and dignity. We close the empathy gap by having conversations.</p>
<p><b>Scott Wergin</b></p> <p>(No photo provided)</p> <p>phone: 651-867-7382</p>	<p>No answers provided.</p>

# 2021 St. Paul School Board Candidates

## At Large, Vote for 3

*Each candidate was asked the same questions, their answers are unedited and listed in alphabetical order.*

### 2021 School Board Candidate Questions

1. If elected, what are your top priorities?
2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?
3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face those concerns?

### **James Farnsworth**



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#### 1. If elected, what are your top priorities?

**Good Governance:** Transparency and oversight, fiscal accountability and stewardship, and strong enrollment strategies. A core tenant of school board service is fiduciary management of the school district. With continued declining enrollment, especially as a result of COVID-19, a key focus of my service will be ensuring we use our financial resources wisely and make key, student centric investments in areas where the district will receive high return.

**Educational Equity:** Disrupting institutional and systemic racism, legislative lobbying for fully funded public schools, and a comprehensive school safety plan. Combating racist systems that disenfranchise our most marginalized and underrepresented communities must be at the center of everything we do as a district.

**Restoring Academic Excellence:** Ensuring robust legally mandated supports for ELL and SPED students, implementing culturally competent ethnic studies curriculum districtwide, and comprehensive art and music education for all students.

#### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

First off, I strongly support the immediate re-implementation of the Saint Paul Public Schools Budget and Finance Advisory Committee (BFAC) which advises the Superintendent and his team on district budget priorities and decisions. Participatory budgeting is a framework that I'd like to see more embraced by the school district as a way to increase transparency and accountability. While the yearly budget process exists primarily at the local building

level (based on broader guidelines and framework from district administration), the process as a whole from a public participation standpoint is scattered at best. I would like to see a more consistent engagement process across the district that includes support for families who need additional accommodations (interpreters, translation services, etc.) that want to participate

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

At this moment in time, there continues to be concerns surrounding the health and safety of students, staff, and faculty in buildings due to the shifting landscape of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of the Delta variant, I would say that COVID-19 and the surrounding physical, mental, and emotional aspects of how folks interact with the pandemic is the most pressing safety issue in our district.

In terms of how to approach it, I believe the school board plays a critical role in setting goals accompanied by measurable outcomes (through a process with ample community engagement) and then measuring those outcomes and adjusting course accordingly. Some specific areas include investments in increased mental health staffing, adjusting our district facilities master plan to account for “lessons learned” in how we use our school buildings and other district spaces, and in the short term, making sure we continue to have resources available for educators who need additional supplies and materials to feel safe teaching in the classroom in the face of variant uncertainty.

### Halla Henderson



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1. What are your top priorities, if elected?

As we transition into the school year, it's crucial that we meet the needs of our students and educators by providing them with the resources they need to be successful. For the past year, the district has existed to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and I'm feeling a sense of urgency around the resources that we provide our students as they return to classrooms. Ensuring they have access to quality mental health supports, trauma-informed care, and support for our educators and staff is an immediate priority. Additionally, addressing long-standing issues such as enrollment declines and supporting the investigation into the impact of charter schools in our city is a top priority. Finally, working to develop deeper and more inclusive relationships with our

students, educators and community members within the governing process is a constant challenge and priority for me.

2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

In conversations with community members about the health of our district and the budget, a point of frustration I hear frequently is when and how we distribute information. By beginning communication early with community members, holding conversations about the needs in our buildings, and pushing for deeper accountability and transparency from Administration, we can contribute to a system that is rooted in governance with voters as opposed to governing for voters.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

I am a firm believer that our safest schools are ones where our students can focus on their academics and proximity to harm is minimized. I believe that the ending of the contract with our School Resource Officers was a step in that direction. When I imagine a school setting where students feel safe in our buildings, it's one where we invest in mental health supports and proactive measures and move away from punitive ones. When we invest in additional Restorative Coordinators and Community Intervention Workers as opposed to relying on suspensions, we shift the way our students view their experiences at school and how we engage in student-adult communication. For years, the conversation around school safety has been used against BIPOC students and to reconcile some of the harm that has been caused by that, we need to actively challenge the notion that police in our buildings is what protects our communities. I feel that the best way to address the concerns over school safety and the relationship our BIPOC community has with historically, police-centered safety measures is by continuing to meet our community where they are at and build policies and plans with those most impacted by them.

**Jennifer McPherson**



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1. What are your top priorities if elected?

New leadership, Internal bullying, fair education, school choice, reparations, new curriculum, HBCU inclusion.

2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process?

What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

I would like to see the funding rearranged with students being the focus. Being open and honest allows the voters to have a say in making the budget and the actual spending every year public information.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Lack of protection against school intruders and no emergency response team. Add an emergency response team and put safety measures in all schools.

**Jim Vue**



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1. What are your top priorities if elected?

First, I want to implement equitable engagement practices to support communication between parents and their school leaders as well as between parents and the board of education. In addition, I want to introduce ethnic studies as a graduation requirement. Finally, I want to ensure all students have access to a well-rounded education that supplements core subjects such as reading, math and writing with science, physical education, social studies and arts. We have many languages and world experiences that our families bring into our buildings. I think those languages and world experiences should be utilized as assets by which our families can develop a strong connection with SPPS. Ethnic studies has the potential to incorporate those experiences into the classroom setting. The more our students see their experiences reflected in the content of their learning, the more successful they will be after they graduate and move onto post secondary college or careers.

2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

From my experience as a parent in the district as well as an active board member, I've learned that by the time budget decisions are made by individual school buildings in May, those decisions have mostly been decided already. This is very frustrating and confusing to students and parents. I propose SPPS implement an after action review that evaluates if those cuts achieved its intended outcomes. This review will include how that school has redirected students and staff who were most impacted by the cut, what or if the school received any other resources in return for the cuts, and to what extent subsequent programs that replaced the cut programs improve student outcomes. This review will also include reports about on-going engagement with students, teachers and administrators from the building. This after action review will be included in the quarterly budget reports that the school board receives so that we are informed about the impact of the previous budget cuts and that it may guide us for the current budget decisions.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Governor Walz's Safe Learning Plan expired as of June this year and will not be continued into this school year. It is up to the school board to ensure that we safely open our schools this fall. Recently in August, I along with the six current board members approved a mask mandate for SPPS. To safely open schools this fall, we still maintain that social distancing of 3 feet or more is recommended and our Covid-19 reporting system from last year remains in place. However, I think encouraging vaccinations among the entirety of our staff and to as many 12 or older students as possible will go a long way in ensuring that folks don't get hospitalized from the spread of Covid-19 and so that our school buildings will remain open. However, there still remains our group of students age 11 or younger that are ineligible for vaccination. For this reason, I would support creating a resolution that would mandate that all SPPS employees be vaccinated.

## Uriah Ward



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### 1. What are your top priorities if elected?

I'm a former teacher and I got into this race because I believe that every single child, regardless of background, deserves a high-quality education. We need to make sure we're doing everything we can to address student needs. We need to reduce class sizes and invest in mental health supports so that students receive more individual attention. We need to make sure that our curriculum reflects the diversity of our district and that we're cultivating a nurturing and welcoming learning environment for all of our students. As much as possible, we need to direct our resources to where they'll have the biggest direct impact on our students.

### 2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

To build a budget that reflects the needs of our district, we need to work intentionally to gather feedback from our students, parents, staff, and community members. We should provide a variety of opportunities to provide feedback and should work to publicize those. We should work intentionally to make certain that our community members who do not speak English are able to participate equally in this process.

From the feedback we collect, we should develop budgetary priorities so that district leadership has guidance when working to craft the details of the budget proposal. We should continue to publicize each step in the budgeting process and should seek public feedback on each draft of the budget.

As a School Board member, I would also work proactively to share the details of the budgeting process with our community and would encourage everyone to engage and provide feedback. I'd want to make sure that the details of the budget were easily accessible for people to review and critique.

### 3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

When I taught, I had to de-escalate violence in school. Students will sometimes fight and misbehave. Our tendency has been to lean on punitive responses. But if we want to serve those students and stop those behaviors, we need to

	<p>address our students holistically. We should invest in mental health supports so that we can get to the 'why' of misbehavior and address it.</p> <p>Perhaps the largest safety concern facing SPPS in this moment is COVID-19. The Delta variant appears to be spreading through schools across the country. To be as safe as possible, we need mask and vaccine mandates. As I'm writing this, masks have been required for everyone in our school buildings. I'm hopeful that SPPS will require vaccines for all of our staff and that we can move toward vaccinating our students as the vaccines are approved for them. For anyone in SPPS who is unable to vaccinate, we should provide regular COVID tests so we can catch cases quickly and respond as necessary.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ryan Williams</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">(No photo provided)</p> <p>email: RyanWilliamsElection@gmail.com phone: 952-239-1892</p>	<p>1. What are your top priorities if elected?</p> <p>COVID safety and adaptability is a top priority. Honesty is needed with the lack of space for physical distancing inhibiting contact tracing. In the contact tracing and notification procedures we must inform students and staff of the times contact tracers are unable to confirm necessary physical distancing was provided. As the candidate that has been in schools with students every month of the pandemic I prioritise getting the board up to speed on where written policies don't meet reality.</p> <p>Updating board policies to meet state statutes is a priority. Over the decades a few of the board's policies have not been updated to meet state statutes;</p> <p>Protecting students and staff from assault is a top priority. I will guide the board to comply with state statute 121A.61 for the board to adopt a policy provision that states a student must be removed from class immediately if the student engages in assault or violent behavior.</p> <p>MN statute 123b.91 has required the district to adopt policy provisions governing bus monitor qualifications, training, and duties for 3 decades. Not meeting the standards has created a bus driver shortage. It is time to meet the statute requirements.</p> <p>Adopting a board policy for documenting all physical restraints of students should be everyone's priority. If the incident is serious enough to restrain, the incident is serious enough to document. We must shine a light on secret restraints .Bringing restraints out of the shadows will help us identify the source of the problems.</p>

We must expand district child care to accommodate our families. It is unreasonable to have low income students bus to a different school for childcare. More childcare locations are desperately needed.

Obviously the 5 year lead in water tests is a priority. We should catch up on the requirements for testing the water for lead, No excuses.

2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

Financial transparency is desperately needed. It is time to rebuild trust with the community. We should start with the board. It is hard to find board compensation. The board recently nearly doubled their annual pay to around \$20,000 a year for a few meetings a month. If the board is shy about making their compensation easy to find we can't expect much information about the larger expenses.

The board should make all chapter 13 public data requests available to the community on the district website. If there is a reason someone requests data there is a reason for the public to know. This would be a first step towards building trust and transparency.

The recent construction cost error is an embarrassment. We should go back to basics. The 5 year lead in water testing is past due. The board can show competence and transparency by testing the water for lead and publishing the results. After we trust the board to test the water for lead we can discuss larger expenses.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

I am deeply concerned that not a single school board member has worked with students in a school during the pandemic. The lack of real world experiences creates a disconnect between written policies and the realities of school buildings. I have been working in schools in person with students every month of the pandemic. I look forward to bringing real world experience to the board.

The lack of board policy on documenting all restraints of students is a danger to students and staff. The board must take responsibility for the safety of students and staff by

	<p>adopting a policy covering the documentation procedures.</p> <p>The lack of an assault / violence removal policy is an inexcusable safety concern. This is a state statute we are required to follow.</p> <p>Falling behind on lead in water testing is a concern.</p> <p>The lack of adequate space for busing and childcare is a daily safety concern.</p> <p>Candidates asking constituents to go door to door for them. This is a dark preview of board members asking staff to take risks they are not willing to take. Sending constituents to not physical distance is just as bad as sending school staff to not physical distance. We need a board that will put stopping the spread before personal gain.</p>
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**2021 Special Election for St. Paul School Board**  
*To fill a vacancy, term expires January 1, 2024*  
**At Large, Vote for 1**

<p align="center"><b>Jeannie Foster</b></p>  <p>website: <a href="http://www.jeanniefosterforkids.com">www.jeanniefosterforkids.com</a>  email: <a href="mailto:info@jeanniefosterforkids.com">info@jeanniefosterforkids.com</a>  phone: 651-560-5437</p>	<p>1. What are your top priorities if elected?</p> <p>My priorities remain similar to my previous election as our work is not done. Systems change takes time. I remain focused on keeping children, their outcomes and equity at the center of our decision making; Continuing to work together to build trust within the relationships of the board, administration, staff and families in SPPS; Continuing to challenge and engage the system to have more responsive and reflective engagement so that all kids and families are able to navigate within SPPS and be successful.</p> <p>2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process?</p> <p>Under my leadership, we have moved to a priority based budget so that we will know what we are paying for upfront. We are currently in our second year of implementation. This process requires more points of contact called 'gates checks' so we are regularly reviewing and openly sharing our budgetary process with the community.</p> <p>What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?</p>
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The district continues to find ways for more transparency, such as the creation of an online database that the community can view and see budget line items. However, we still must work to have a variety of options and different ways to access the information as many of our families do not navigate the technological landscape. It is our responsibility to be in continuous communication with these communities and to find methods that allow them to be as active as they want to be in the budgetary process.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Getting our children and staff back in school during the on-going Covid-19 pandemic and working to mitigate its impact are our primary health and safety needs. The best way to face these concerns is to use the data and science to guide us in creating proactive vs. reactive safety protocols, processes and procedures. It is essential to continue to have on-going active communications with all stakeholders in our SPPS community and be prepared to have the flexibility to adapt and change as new and on-going information comes in to guide our decisions.

**Clayton Howatt**



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1. What are your top priorities if elected?

I have three main priorities if elected; equity, enrollment, and finances. I have laid out specific strategies in all three of these areas, those can be found on our online platforms. Here are the broad concerns in those three areas.

We continue to see no real improvement in educational outcomes for the majority of our Black and Brown students. We have what one could conclude is a two-tiered elementary system. We have schools that have high percentages of students in poverty that have less educational opportunities and lower expectations than elementary schools with higher percentages of affluent and/or White students. This is clearly inequitable.

St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) continues to see enrollment losses. In my opinion there are three main reasons for this. SPPS needs to become more responsive to our families. The State of MN needs to increase funding for k-12 education. We need to address unchecked charter school expansion in St. Paul.

SPPS continues to see perennial deficits. We can not continue to operate in this manner. We require a robust

conversation in our broader community about the role of public education and what we need to do to support those beliefs.

2. What are your thoughts on the yearly budget process? What can be done better and with more transparency to voters?

As a member of the SPPS Budget Finance Advisory Committee for three consecutive years I gained a further understanding of the often times opaque SPPS budget process. I would like to see the following changes. First, there needs to be an understanding of why we the invest resources we do. The number one goal is to improve out comes for our all of our students. That also means that the students with the highest needs require a higher level of investment. Our budget needs to reflect those two foundational goals. To do this transparently I would request that SPPS layout handful of specific investments they plan to pursue. In the short to midterm. The key is "specific". Secondly I would like to have SPPS release the "real" budgets of every school each spring, and not the "building allocations" that happen now. The real budget would include the costs that are actually included in running each school such as transportation, teacher salaries, funds generated by parent groups, etc. This will enable citizens to see that we are spending tax dollars equitably and it will provide the baseline for the increased investments laid out by the district.

3. What are the biggest safety concerns facing SPPS right now and what is the best way to face these concerns?

Without question the number one safety concern facing SPPS right now is COVID. I am in favor of the current mask mandate for all k-12 students. The mandate should be lifted when the scientists at the MN Department of Health, and elsewhere, say it is safe and the St. Paul School Board votes on a resolution to do so. I am in favor of a policy that mandates either vaccinations or weekly tests of our employees. I am also in favor of at least two improvements in the area of communication.

There continues to be many questions and concerns from parents around our HVAC systems in our schools and air circulation within individual classrooms and common areas such as lunch rooms and gymnasiums. There needs to be a more robust process put in place to communicate to the

	<p>constant concerns of parents, many of which are real legitimate concerns. We should provide not “code minimum” but provide above the minimum required to keep our students and staff safe.</p> <p>I would also like to see one single online location that will report COVID outbreaks and quarantines across our district. It could simply say, “school X quarantined a single classroom on the following date, there were no hospitalizations”. This could also allow a clear process to add additional safety measures in specific schools that may be experiencing higher numbers of outbreaks for whatever reason and communicate that clearly to our families.</p>
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This Voter Guide was made possible in part by a grant from Ramsey County Elections. Thank you!

