

## **Coalition for Bilingual Education (CBEE) and Austin Area Association for Bilingual Education (AAABE) Austin ISD Trustee Candidate Forum**

**Please write your response to each question below and submit by Wednesday September 30, 2020**

### **2020 Written Response Questions:**

1. What do you believe is the role of the Dual Language program in Austin ISD? What do you think are the benefits and challenges?

The role of Dual Language programs is to provide students with a biliterate and bicultural educational experience. The Dual Language program is particularly important to supporting native Spanish and Vietnamese speaking students. There is a wealth of research that shows the many long-lasting academic and social benefits of Dual Language programming. The program also benefits AISD because it attracts families to our schools. Many non-Spanish speaking families choose Dual Language programs because they are seeking a language rich environment for their child. Challenges facing Dual Language programs include developing expertise for successful implementation, changing student demographics, decisions regarding whether programs should be "wall-to-wall", costs, standardized test scores not capturing full academic story, and staffing for middle and high school academic courses.

2. The role of principals and associate superintendents and their commitment to DL is critical. What is the role of the board in regards to oversight and accountability of dual language program administration?

The role of the school board is to set clearly defined accountability metrics and goals for the superintendent. This applies to dual language and every aspect of the duties of the administration. The board must hold the superintendent accountable for implementing dual language with fidelity and in a manner that works with school communities to best meet the needs of students and families.

3. Some AISD schools do not offer a dual language program to emergent bilinguals, also called English learners ("ELs"), at their school, though **state law requires** that ELs be provided with Spanish-language instruction. What are your thoughts around revising transportation solutions for ELs whose home school does not offer a dual language program?

AISD needs a wholesale review of its transportation policies. The current transportation policies make arbitrary decisions, such as providing transportation for magnets and for the Ann Richards School, but not for academies or Sadler Means Middle School. I would like to see transportation policies included in the equity assessment that the district will soon undertake. I am open to consideration of all options to improve transportation solutions for ELs whose home school does not provide a Dual Language program.

4. As a School Board Trustee, you must not overstep administrative functions that belong to the Superintendent, but having a general understanding of how the district works and what the district offers to our students is essential. Please share what your understanding is about the different bilingual programs being offered to our students in AISD. What is your opinion about these programs? Please explain.

Dual Language and bilingual education is an area where I have a lot to learn. I support Dual Language and am committed to focusing on best practices and ensuring that programs are meeting the needs of AISD's Emerging Bilingual students.

**2020 Commitment Questions: If no, please explain.**

1. Will you commit to supporting the implementation of DL programs at all AISD elementary schools (with sufficient numbers of ELs) to the 5th grade, and wherever possible, through high school?

My first priority is ensuring that DL is implemented with fidelity in the highest need elementary schools. Once that is accomplished, I am open to expanding Dual Language programs to more campuses.

2. Are you committed as a trustee to look at long-term testing results and other indicators of student success and not just annual state testing results during the elementary years as a measure of academic success of EL students in DL?

Yes

3. Will you commit to the support of the strong and successful implementation of dual language programs even if that means: (1) having to prioritize DL programs in budgeting, (2) having tough conversations and (3) being creative around any challenges that may come up?

Yes

4. Will you commit to ensuring monitoring of the fidelity of implementation of bilingual programs in AISD, including prior to expansion or cancellation?

Yes

5. Will you commit to meet with our Austin ISD EL constituency, attend Multilingual Education Advisory Committee Meetings at times, and/or make efforts to educate yourself further at conferences (such as TABE, NABE, or Adelante) to better understand and advocate for Dual Language and bilingual education?

Yes