2026 Survey for Congressional candidates

Please return by May 6, 2026 to info@nyckidspac.org

Candidate's full name Julie Won
Staff contact and email
Phone number

EDUCATION FUNDING

Q1. How would you protect schools from the Trump administration's cuts and funding conditions?

On the Council I helped add roughly 6,000 new school seats across my district since 2022 and steered hundreds of millions of dollars in school investment into one of the most overcrowded parts of the city. So when I talk about fighting for funding in Congress, I've already done the hard version of it at home. Federally, the appropriations process is where this is won or lost - I'd defend Title I as a floor we never drop below, and I'd write anti-conditioning language directly into the appropriations bills so no administration can hold a district's money hostage over whether it keeps a diversity program or protects trans students. I spent four years running contract-oversight hearings and chasing how this city spends every dollar; I know how to force accountability on a budget, and I'd point that straight at federal education spending.

We also have to re-establish an official federal department of education since Trump has dissolved the agency and either laid off, furloughed, or relocated staff to other agencies. We also have to protect federal subsidies for higher education to continue education at low interest. I would advocate for all public education programs to be reinstated and introduce a bill to ensure this never happens again.

Q2. What increases in education funding would you support?

Start with the broken promise on IDEA. Congress committed decades ago to covering 40% of special education costs and has never paid more than a fraction of that, which leaves districts like mine holding the bill. Fully funding IDEA is where I'd begin. After that, permanent federal money for universal free school meals so no kid does what I did, plus real investment in early childhood and in community schools that put health and mental health services inside the building. Reinstate FAFSA for higher education. Title 1 funding and free after school programs to ensure children and youth have coverage from 3-6pm. Extracurricular funding for sports, arts, and tech so that these aren't just for wealthy students but for all children.

Q3. Do you support federal funds for public school construction and repair?

Yes, without hesitation. I negotiated a new middle school and two new elementary schools into the OneLIC plan because my school district is one of the most overcrowded in the city. Federal construction and repair dollars let districts do that without raiding their operating budgets to pay for it. I've brought home over $200 million for my public schools and will continue to do so on the federal level.

SAFETY OF UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS

Q4. What would you propose to protect the safety of immigrant public school students?

Last year a six-year-old named Yuanxin was detained and deported out of my community, out of a local school. I rallied with more than a hundred of my neighbors for him. No child should learn that the building they go to for breakfast and for their education is somewhere they can be taken from. In Congress I'd write sensitive-location protections into federal law so it can't be erased by executive order, keep immigration enforcement out of schools entirely, and fund the rapid-response and know-your-rights training my district already does more of than anywhere else in the city. Most importantly - I will fight tooth and nail to abolish ICE, specifically be banning its enforcement arm. I would also end familiy separation and codify sanctuary city laws and safe sanctuaries like schools so that ICE cannot enter at all.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM AND EQUITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Q5. How would you protect these groups and create a welcoming school environment?

I'm the first Korean American immigrant ever elected to the New York City Council, and I've been screamed at on the subway for "bringing the Kung Flu" and had someone try to swing an umbrella at me while I was eight months pregnant. I serve on the Council's Committee to Combat Hate, which oversees the city's hate-crime prevention offices and recently advanced a package of bills to protect safe access to schools and houses of worship and to put materials about online hate and harassment into students' hands. In Congress I'd defend curriculum that teaches our real history and protect trans students' equal right to a classroom where they're safe.

CHARTER SCHOOLS AND VOUCHERS

Q6. Do you support more or less funding for the federal charter school program, and why?

I'm a product of public schools. Every dollar that goes to charter expansion is a dollar that didn't go to the traditional public schools where the overwhelming majority of our kids actually are. The federal government's job is to strengthen public education, and will not support any funding for charter schools.

Q7. What reforms should strengthen charter school accountability?

The push-out problem is real: a school that quietly ‘counsels’ out its hardest-to-serve kids and then advertises its test scores is deceiving parents and the community. I'd require any charter taking federal money to report its enrollment, retention, suspensions, and mid-year backfill in the open and in plain language, with real consequences for schools that shed high-needs students. I went to public schools that took every kid who walked through the door, no exceptions and no quiet exits. Any school living off public money should be held to exactly that standard. Charter schools should never be co-located with public schools and they should pay their own rent privately, not the department of education.

Charter schools should not be allowed to poach or purchase student data without parental consent - not an "opt-out of data sales per student" model that we currently have.

Q8. Do you support or oppose the tax credit scholarship program for private/parochial schools?

I oppose it. A federal tax credit that routes public money into private and parochial schools drains the system that educated me and educates most of our kids, with none of the accountability we'd demand of any public school. Calling a voucher a "scholarship" doesn't change what it does to the budget.

Q9. Should charters and private schools receiving federal funds report transparently on enrollment, results, and spending?

Absolutely. Take public money, and the public gets to see your enrollment, your outcomes, your budget, and your contracts. In the City Council, I authored seven laws making city contractors do exactly that. A school spending taxpayer dollars shouldn't get a pass a vendor doesn't get.

ONLINE LEARNING, STUDENT PRIVACY AND AI

Q10. What is your position on ed tech and limits on screen time in schools?

During COVID I was delivering meals in Queensbridge Houses, and a girl showed me how she went to school: standing outside in the cold for hours on the free LinkNYC wifi, camera and microphone off, because she didn't want classmates to know her family couldn't afford internet at home. That's the screen-time conversation I care about most. Before we argue about limits, every kid needs reliable access and a working device, which is why I fought to bring Big Apple Connect and free internet to every NYCHA development in my district. On limits themselves, yes, age-appropriate ones make sense, but they should be set by educators and pediatricians, not by the tech companies whose intentions and motives may not be aligned. I support mobile bans in school. Students should have basic technology education starting elementary school one hour a day for coding, design, and AI in high school.

Q11. Should FERPA be strengthened, and if so, how?

Yes, and it's overdue. In the Council I sponsored a resolution pressing New York State to require that schools get written parental consent before they hand a student's personal information to a third-party contractor, because right now those records move through outside vendors with almost nobody watching. FERPA was written long before every classroom ran on apps that collect data by default. I'd modernize it so a parent's consent actually has to be asked for and made specific, not buried in a terms-of-service nobody reads, and so a parent can find out exactly who is holding their kid's information and make them delete it.

Q12. Does COPPA need to be amended, and if so, how?

COPPA was written for a web where the worry was a kid typing their address into a form, and it still only really protects children under 13, as if the same algorithms aren't going just as hard after 14- and 15-year-olds. The biggest dodge companies use is claiming they had no "actual knowledge" a user was a child, which is laughable when their entire business is knowing precisely who their users are. I'd raise the age the law covers and end that loophole, and I'd regulate the addictive design itself, not only the data it scoops up.

Q13. What is your position on AI in schools, and do you support or oppose federal regulation of it?

I spent ten years in tech, half of it as a federal contractor at IBM. The truth is: AI is already in our classrooms whether we regulate it or not, and pretending otherwise helps no one. I support strong federal regulation, and I've already introduced consumer-protection AI legislation in the Council. For kids, a few things aren't negotiable. Anything an AI generates should carry a watermark so a student can tell real from fake. The models shouldn't be trained on children's data. And companies have to answer for real harms; I've had seniors come into my office after being scammed by AI deepfakes of their own grandchildren's voices, and children are even more exposed to this than my grandmother's generation.

MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

Q14. What initiatives would you support to address the student mental health crisis?

I'll answer this one personally. I hold elected office and I can still barely afford a therapy session every other week, because the copay is too high. I didn't start getting real help until I was 26, partly the cost and partly the stigma a lot of us carry in Asian American families. Now picture a teenager with no money and no provider. We have a shortage of school social workers and counselors, and the ones we have are stretched past breaking. I'd fund school-based mental health staff at levels that match the actual need and pay those providers enough to keep them.

CHILDCARE AND EARLY EDUCATION

Q15. What should the federal role in childcare be?

Universal childcare is one of the pillars of what I call a Lifetime of Care, and it has to be the federal government that delivers it. I'm a mom of two in a one-bedroom, so I know what childcare costs do to a family's math every single month. But cost is only half the problem. Most programs let out at 3pm or 5pm at the latest, which is useless to a parent working a full shift, so I'd build the funding to extend hours to 6 p.m. For parents, that's the difference between keeping a job and being pushed out of the workforce. For kids, it's more hours of real early learning and care instead of being shuffled between relatives or left on their own. South Korea, where my family is from, treats childcare as public infrastructure, and a country as rich as ours should as well.

OVERSIGHT, PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY INPUT

Q16. What have you done, or will you do, to solicit the views of parents and community members?

Being reachable is the entire job of a city council member, and I've run my office that way. During the Big Apple Connect rollout, my staff went door to door inside NYCHA buildings to sign residents up for free internet in person. I show up at the tenant association and community board meetings where parents tell me directly what their kids' schools are missing. When I negotiated the OneLIC plan, the engagement ran for months and shaped the actual deal; the school seats, the affordability, and the park money all came out of what residents told us they needed. Four prior attempts to rezone that area had collapsed over thirty years because nobody listened. I'd run my congressional offices the way I've run my district one, built for organizing, not just casework.

OPEN-ENDED

Q17. Summarize your record on public education.

I'm a public school kid who made it because the system caught me, and I've spent four years trying to catch the next one. I grew up here on free lunch and public education. On the Council I negotiated 6,000 new school seats in the OneLIC to break some of the worst overcrowding in the city, chaired the subcommittee on early childhood education, brought free high-speed internet to every NYCHA development in my district through Big Apple Connect, and pushed New York State to require parental consent before schools hand student data to outside contractors. I've also added over 200 new school seats for 3k and pre-k across my district since 2022.

Q18. Top education priorities if elected to Congress?

Three of them: 1) Defend and grow federal education funding, Title I, IDEA, free meals, and never let it be held hostage to a culture war. 2) Protect immigrant students and their families, starting with keeping enforcement out of schools. 3) Get ahead of AI, because the technology reshaping the workforce my kids will enter is already sitting in their classrooms, and I'm one of the very few people in this race who actually understands how it works. We must put in national regulations on AI and keep AI companies accountable.

Q19. Anything else you'd like to share?

I'm the only mom in this race, raising two kids in this district right now - this is personal to me.

Q20. May we follow up?

Of course!