

ALL TOGETHER FOR SEATTLE SCHOOLS

Date: February 5, 2024

To: Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors

From: *All Together for Seattle Schools* and concerned community members.

[Click here to add your name as a signer.](#)

RE: Important Steps To be Taken for Vacant School Board Position Appointment Process

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) now faces two School Board vacancies amidst a \$105 million structural deficit that threatens the quality of public education Seattle's children receive and the overall health of our city. Major budget decisions will need to be made soon, and it's crucial that you, along with your future members, can effectively partner with the public which will enable you to make well-informed decisions about the future of our public schools.

We, the undersigned, are therefore requesting you take the following actions to ensure these vacancies are filled by qualified, experienced community members who reflect the diversity of our city, and our School Board is set up for success:

(1) Acknowledge the resignation of two women of color board members as a call for internal organizational repair, and take steps to change. These resignations underscore the necessity for the board to review its internal organizational and leadership development to prevent the recurrence of circumstances that led to these resignations. Families, students, staff, labor partners, parents, and the broader community need to know the internal board culture is healthy and fosters collegial professional relationships and teamwork, especially for people of color and other marginalized or underrepresented communities.

(2) Include the public in the process of vetting applicants for the board. The two new directors will replace directors who won a total of three citywide elections with more than 70 percent of the citywide vote. As a democratic body, accountable to the electorate, the school board must include the public in the vetting process. This includes holding accessible public forums where community members may freely ask questions of the applicants, without questions being filtered by outside organizations.

(3) Follow the suggestions made by former Directors Vivian Song and Lisa Rivera in their resignation statement regarding their replacements: *"We urge our colleagues, who will be hand-selecting replacements, to appoint directors that fit the profiles voters overwhelmingly chose in city-wide elections when they elected us — ones who are committed to partnership with our labor unions, who favor a portfolio of schools that reflects the diversity of our students, who are able to understand the operational implications of significant changes to school programs and budget cuts, who are responsible fiscal stewards of capital funds, who champion*

At [All Together for Seattle Schools](#), we envision amply funded schools and are filled with thriving students and staff. We also conceive of a school district and school board which value the voices and needs of its students, families, and educators, and commits to timely, authentic, and accessible community engagement.

climate justice and resiliency, and who are people of color, ideally representing the Latinx, Native and Asian communities.”

(4) Appoint individuals to the board based on their qualifications, including their lived experience. The board must commit itself to giving close and fair scrutiny to each applicant. In order to do so, it is important for board members to recognize that having prior relationships with potential candidates may create a potential bias, hindering a fair evaluation of all candidates. The board must appoint new directors who have demonstrated themselves to most effectively meet the criteria described above.

(5) Appoint individuals who will commit to the following actions as board members:

- Partnering with the public, particularly SPS families, students, and staff, to co-develop solutions on all major budget decisions facing the district
- Ensuring SPS provides accessible engagement to school communities affected by proposed changes—such as consolidations, program removals, and grade level changes—and commits to incorporating community input before moving forward with any change
- Restoring board functions that enable public engagement on crucial matters, such as regular committees (finance, policy, curriculum) and task forces that include families, educators, and, where appropriate, students
- Pursuing an independent audit of district finances
- Advocating in coalition with other districts to the legislature for progressive taxation to fund schools so that school closures and program cuts are avoided
- Committing to uniting schools, families, caregivers, students, and staff across the district in the common challenges we face and in community co-created solutions to achieve educational justice for all students in SPS

(6) Revise its policies regarding director residency and eligibility to serve. The proposed [Amendment to Board Policy No. 1113](#) offers some clarity around residency requirements, but places the onus on the board member to ensure they adhere to state law, when it should be the district’s responsibility. Also, the current policies and laws do not reflect the realities of modern families and create barriers to participation on the board for those who are not stably housed, such as those experiencing homelessness, renters, and people whose family situations change. This prevents our board from truly representing the diversity of our communities.

A public school is a democratic institution run by and for the people. As parents from schools across the city convened through *All Together for Seattle Schools*, and those individuals and other groups additionally signing on to this letter, we collectively look forward to working together to help fill these vacancies and tackle the problems facing our district so that every child can get a great education in Seattle Public Schools.

Signed,

All Together for Seattle Schools
Alex Wakeman Rouse, SPS parent and alum

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Sterling Máximo
Dana Del Monte Townsend
Debbie Carlsen
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Caroline VanHarmelen, SPS parent
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Sara Givens
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Megan McCormick
Karla Sclater
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Sarah Butler, Parent
Jinna Hagerty
Janelle Norman
Amy F
Janis White, Parent of 3 SPS graduates
Jasmine Pulido
Travis Jo Cufley, SPS parent
Dayna Lee
Dan Sabath
Michelle Peters
Pamela Hale
Mary Ellen Russell
Claire Tirtoprodjo, Parent
Jie Lei
Logan Billingham
Erica Seddig
Jennifer Brown, Parent, and ECE provider within Seattle

Megan Millimaki
Yesenia Garcia
Benjamin Wahl, Ryther
Vickie Ramirez
Travis English
Veronica Romero
Joseph Rockne
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Kate Christian
Elisa Ruehlmann
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Becky Dobbins
Norah Kates
Lee Fletcher-McGookin
Jill Hannah, SPS parent
Nancy
Tracy Osheroff
Liila Woods
Kayla
Karen Murphy
Ann Ferris
Kadie Bell Sata, SPS parent
ET Monroe, past parent of student SPSPD
Kristi Yee
Elaine Jones
Tabitha Burns
Daniel Yu
Erin Connors
Sam C Gutierrez
Hayden Jones
Albert J. Wong
Jill Muscatel
Lucia Sanchez, SPS parent
Julie Crosier
Theresa Lourde
Kelly Martineau
Haleigh Gautreau, SPS parent
Theresa Glatstein, Parent of two SPS students
Vairoj Arunyaangkul
Eliana Hernandez
Megan Reibel
Lisa Calvert
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