

Jennifer Brouhard - East Bay DSA 2022 Electoral Endorsement Questionnaire

A. You & Your Campaign

1. Briefly tell us your background or biography.

I was raised in Southern California, but I moved to Oakland 41 years ago. I raised my three grown kids in Oakland public schools and had a grandchild attend Oakland public schools. My daughter is also an OUSD teacher at Edna Brewer Middle School.

I have a BA in anthropology from UC Riverside and a Master's in Educational Leadership from Cal State East Bay. Before I began teaching, I worked at UC Berkeley as an administrative assistant for 10 years, where I was a member of AFSCME Local 3299. I raised my kids as a single mother for several years, but I never worried about healthcare or paying my mortgage because of the job security I had in my union contract.

I began teaching 27 years ago as a resource specialist at Brookfield Elementary. I taught special education in Oakland for three years at Brookfield, Chabot Elementary and Crocker Highlands Elementary. From there I taught for three years at King Middle School in Berkeley as a math and science, and then humanities, SDC teacher.

I came back to OUSD as a 4th/5th grade teacher at Glenview in 2000 where I taught social studies and language arts for 17 years until I moved to 4th/5th grade social studies and language arts at Melrose Leadership Academy. I wanted to return to middle school, so when an opportunity opened at La Escuelita, I returned to 7th and 8th grade humanities. I retired from OUSD in August 2022 when La Escuelita's middle school was closed by OUSD.

Alongside teaching, I have also always been active in my union. As a union rep and a union officer, I have organized with my colleagues to advocate for our students. I know the level of organizing it takes to win what Oakland students and families truly deserve, and I'm prepared for that work. My greatest passion as an educator has always been history and social studies. I contributed to the California History/Social Sciences framework that guides history instruction for all California students.

I have developed curriculum for OUSD on a variety of topics, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and LGBTQ+ history. I have received several honors for my work as a history teacher: a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching, Teacher of the Year by the UC Berkeley History Social Science Project, and California History Teacher of the Year by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

I believe that my experience as a parent and grandparent in OUSD, as an award-winning teacher who has helped to develop key parts of the district's history and social studies curriculum, and as a union activist who has partnered with parents and community to fight for the schools Oakland students deserve, have all prepared me well to serve as a school board director representing District 2.

2. Why are you seeking this office?

I'm running for Oakland school board in District 2 because almost 35 years ago as a parent and President of the Glenview Elementary School PTA, our neighborhood school, I saw firsthand the impact of devastating budget cuts on our students. I worked then with a coalition of other parents and community members to increase funding for public education, and I've been engaged in that fight every year since.

That early organizing ignited my passion for education, and I became a credentialed teacher in 1991. Over the next 27 years, I taught in several schools, grade levels, and subject areas, serving both special and general education classrooms. I won numerous awards for my teaching, and developed curriculum for OUSD that is used by district teachers to this day. My experience as an award-winning OUSD teacher uniquely qualifies me for the school board. No other board member has my experience.

I am proud to be an OUSD teacher, a parent, and a grandparent, and while my days in the classroom are behind me, I am committed to continuing my work for Oakland students as a member of the school board.

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3. What movements are you connected to in your community, and what is your level of involvement with them? What organizations are you involved in or connected with?

Most of my work has been in education. I have worked with the UC Berkeley History Social Science Project for over 20 years as teacher leader, teacher trainer, and curriculum developer. I have worked with many teachers and staff in OUSD in my years in the district. I have been a site rep and three-term Executive Board member of OEA.

4. How do you differ from your opponents in this race?

I have been a classroom teacher for 27 years and my children and grandchild have been OUSD students; I have experienced district policies as a teacher, parent, and grandparent. I know first-hand how good curriculum and effective literacy strategies can improve student outcomes. I have worked with other OUSD teachers to develop a history curriculum that reflects our students and builds the literacy skills our students need to prepare for college. I was a teacher when the district went into state receivership and I taught during those draconian budget cuts. I fought against taking the loan that we are still paying off. I faced the uncertainty of my job when funding was cut. I taught at La Escuelita middle school when it was abruptly closed this spring. But I have also seen success. I have seen teachers I mentored earn awards as well. My former student is now a San Leandro school board member and has endorsed my campaign. I want to use my experiences over 27 years to refocus our priorities on student outcomes and fair working conditions for site staff.

5. Why should our Chapter prioritize this campaign and this race?

Oakland students, families, teachers and staff deserve schools where students can achieve academically and emotionally. This election offers voters the opportunity to elect a majority-progressive board. A board that will listen to students, families, teachers and staff and prioritize funding in our classrooms and oppose school closures. My campaign offers the opportunity to change how the district allocates money so that classrooms come first. By electing me and others who share similar priorities, we can win big gains for our students.

6. From which other organizations and individuals are you seeking endorsements in this campaign? Who has already endorsed you?

I have the endorsement of the Wellstone Renewal Democratic Club and Educators for Democratic Schools. Other endorsements include (*organizations for identification purposes only*):

- Vancedric Williams, Oakland School Board Director, D3
- James Aguilar, San Leandro School Board Director
- Keith Brown, OEA President
- Dr. Rachel Reinhard, Director, UC Berkeley History Project

7. Are you registered to vote with a party affiliation? Which party? Will that be the same when you run for office?

Yes, I am registered as a Democrat but the race is a non-partisan race.

B. DSA and Democratic Socialism

8. Are you a socialist? If not, why not? If so, what does being a socialist mean to you?

I would consider myself a socialist. I began this political journey many years ago with the struggle to save the International Hotel in San Francisco fighting to keep affordable housing in Chinatown/Manilatown. That was another struggle where billionaires bought up hotels, tore them down and built high-rent properties, displacing both Chinatown and Manilatown working class residents. I believe that capitalism is at the root of oppression (race, class, gender, economic and environmental). I believe there are many ways to wage struggle and capitalism including, but certainly not limited to, elections. I believe that all workers have the right to strike. I believe that all working class people have the right to live in a society where their needs are met including a right to universal health care, gainful and meaningful employment, schools that meet the needs of their children, affordable housing and clean water, air, and a sustainable environment.

9. Are you willing to run for office publicly as a socialist?

I am willing to publicly say that I believe in socialism – that is not something I have hidden or shied away from over the years. I run on a platform of anti-privatization because privatization by billionaires is at the root of school closures.

10. Are you a member of DSA? If not, would you join if you receive the DSA endorsement?

If I receive the DSA endorsement, I will consider joining but I would consider joining because my political views and actions would align with DSA not simply because I got the DSA endorsement.

11. Have you been active in DSA? In what capacity?

I have not been directly involved in DSA yet have worked on the same campaigns as DSA members. I canvassed with DSA members in February 2019 when we were building for the strike. I was impressed with DSA members who organized Bread for Ed and some of the strike schools for working parents and their children. I have occasionally read the *Jacobin* and agreed with much that was in the paper.

12. Why are you seeking East Bay DSA's endorsement?

I believe that over the years DSA has built a solid reputation in education and community struggles. I also appreciate the clarity and honesty in how DSA members express their political views and put their views and analyses into action. I respect the DSA members that I have worked with and for that reason, I am seeking the endorsement of East Bay DSA.

13. Will you publicize EBDISA's endorsement?

Yes, I'd be proud to announce I'd been endorsed. DSA is a well-respected organization in the community and among the left.

14. Will you be willing to run with other DSA-endorsed candidates as a slate?

It would depend on which candidates DSA endorses, but I intend to support both Pecolia Manigo and Valarie Bachelor in their races. DSA has already endorsed Nikki Bas Fortunado and I also support Nikki Bas Fortunado.

15. Are you open to working with DSA when developing your platform?

My platform has been developed and published. I would hope that DSA would also support my platform but I am most definitely open to DSA adding their thoughts, suggestions, and even criticisms or things they would like to carried out differently.

16. Will you allow the EBDISA Electoral Committee to create campaign materials to distribute during its work on your campaign?

I am open to the idea, but I would like to see the materials first to make sure they align with my platform and my beliefs.

- 17. EBDSA has a large and active volunteer base. Will you support EBDSA training our own volunteers, running our own canvasses, and campaigning openly as DSA members?**

Yes, I would be willing to support this.

- 18. Will you allow EBDSA to collaborate with you on your field plan and program?**
Yes

- 19. Will you allow EBDSA to keep copies of all data we collect through voter contact?**

Yes, but I would hope you would also share it with my campaign. I would hope that we were working toward the same goal of increasing the political voices of voters whose voices have been suppressed.

- 20. In past campaigns, EBDSA has had teams of member-organizers who work directly with campaign staff on areas such as field, communications, fundraising, data, and legal compliance. Will you agree to this arrangement and guarantee that your staff will build direct relationships with members of our campaign team?**

Yes, I would be happy to have member-organizers work directly with the campaign team.

- 21. DSA ran an independent expenditure campaign in support of Bernie Sanders in the 2020 Democratic presidential primary. Who did you support in the 2016 and 2020 primaries? How did that support manifest?**

I supported Bernie Sanders.

- 22. If EBDSA were to endorse another candidate in this race, would you run against the EBDSA-endorsed candidate?**

I am already running for School Board Director in District 2. I support ranked-choice voting so depending on who you endorse, I might support that person as a second choice.

- 23. If EBDSA does not endorse you, how will you relate to EBDSA?**

I would work closely with DSA to run a campaign that opposes school closures and fights to prioritize funding that ensures academic and social emotional success for our students and community and family participation in deciding what our schools need.

24. What do you see as the role of EBDSA in your campaign? And how will this campaign contribute to building DSA?

I would see working with DSA to get out the vote and elect a progressive, student-family-teacher-staff centered school board. Working together on campaign materials, canvassing and listening to concerns of the District 2 community would be one solid of working together. The DSA endorsement is sought by progressive candidates. If we are going to build progressive government in Oakland, candidates have to work with DSA to get out the vote.

C. Goals of Your Campaign

25. Who will be running your field program?

Nathan Stalnaker

26. What staff and/or consultants have you hired?

I have hired Nathan Stalnaker to run my field program and Ismael Armendariz is my treasurer.

27. What voter contact program are you using for your campaign?

I am using PDI for voter contacts and NationBuilder for volunteer management

28. What is your fundraising goal, and what is your plan to reach that goal? How much have you raised already?

My fundraising goal is \$30,000. I just got my FPPC number on Friday and have raised \$1,000 this weekend through the support of friends, parents of former students, former students, family, and friends who I have worked with in political and community struggles over the years. I also plan to hold fundraisers and raise money through house meetings.

29. What is your win number? How many doors will you knock?

I will be analyzing this information with my campaign manager within the next week.

30. Which voters do you need to activate to win? What is your intended constituency?

We need to activate District 2 voters who have voted in the last School Board election as well as Asian voters and youth voters. My district has a high percentage of Asian voters and a large Asian community. My district also has younger voters who have recently moved to Oakland. My constituents are parents, public school teachers and working class Asians who have seen their communities displaced by land developers.

31. How much direct voter contact are you personally preparing to do?

I am preparing to have a minimum of 2 hours a day of personal direct voter contact by door knocking and walking merchant corridors throughout my district. In addition, I will be attending all house parties and community events as well as meeting with parents whose children attend District 2 schools.

32. Will you pledge not to take any campaign contributions from the following sources?

- For-profit corporate entities (corporations, LLCs, etc.) YES!
- Political committees formed by for-profit entities YES!
- Real estate developers and realtors YES!
- For-profit corporate lobbyists YES!
- Professional landlords YES!
- Law enforcement or prison unions YES!

33. Have you ever previously taken money from the sources listed in question #32? If so, please explain.

No

34. Is public financing available in your campaign? If so, are you using it? Have you ever previously turned down public financing?

Not available.

35. What is your profession? Is a significant portion of your income or wealth derived from capital holdings (e.g., investments, rent, etc.)?

I am a recently retired OUSD teacher, parent, and grandparent. I hold no capital holdings.

36. Will you abide by the Campaign Workers Guild's [Fair Campaign Pledge](#)?

Yes

D. Goals in Office

37. How do you think political change happens?

Political change happens in several ways. Political change happens when we see that things like livable wages, health care, access to jobs and education, childcare, transportation and climate are not working for us and the people in the communities where we live. So, the first impetus to thinking about political change is becoming aware of a broken system. Next, we begin to educate ourselves by talking with each other and getting some ideas about why it isn't working and what we can do about it. This is where I think we are with how we think about OUSD. Community members have been talking about the need to make change in OUSD schools and over the past few years we have taken those discussions, put them into action and the community has fought for and won major gains for our students. Victories include getting the police out of Oakland schools, reparations for Black students, and restorative justice funding.

The Oakland community fought really hard to stop school closures but the school board did not listen. As a result, community members are running for school board in three districts. We recognize that there are strength numbers and we have the opportunity to hold 5 of the 7 seats. We have the opportunity through elections to make real change in OUSD. Elections are another avenue for change.

We have to continue deep community organizing because this is where problems are identified, solutions developed, and the struggle for political change is fought.

38. How does the campaign you are planning and the elected position you are considering relate to your theory of change?

Yes, my campaign is rooted in the struggle to save schools both as a result of my

experience in working at a school that was recently closed and the experience of parents and students whose education has been uprooted as a result of school closure.

39. If elected, what are your top 3 priorities?

My three campaign priorities: (1) Invest in academic outcomes for all Oakland students. (2) Fund our community schools adequately without closing schools by prioritizing classroom funding. (3) Build trust through engagement between the school board and the community.

40. If elected, you'll be one of a few representatives who refuse corporate donations and support a Democratic Socialist vision for our state. How can a single elected official contribute to bringing radical change to California?

First, I do not believe that a single candidate can bring radical change to California. As a candidate, I will have to work with other progressive allies to build a coalition of progressive elected officials. We saw this in action with Bernie Sanders. He got as he did because there were allies working together in his campaign. As more progressive officials have been elected to Congress we have seen more of the issues raised in Sanders' campaigns brought to the floors of the House and Senate. This is the same in local elections. If I were elected to the School Board without other progressive candidates, we would have the same situation we have now – privatizers and charter school supporters outnumbering us. We have to build progressive coalitions to stop corporate political donations and build a socialist vision for our state.

41. In a capitalist democracy, politicians are by default accountable to a broad array of interests, constituencies, and donors. How will you instead remain accountable to the interests of the working class as a whole?

I will not take campaign contributions from privatization-linked organizations, corporations, or billionaires. I am accountable to the broad array of interests of the working class. To remain accountable, I have to go to the community and listen to the concerns and needs of working people and then go back to the school board and work with others to act on what I have listened to.

42. How will you be accountable to the members of DSA once you are in office?

DSA is a big organization and I would like to work with DSA members as well as DSA leadership. I would see doing this by attending general meetings or committee meetings and maintaining an open dialogue throughout my term.

43. **What would the role of constituent services staff in your district be?**

I will not receive money to fund this position in my capacity as a school board member.

44. **How would you seek to increase democratic involvement and representation within your district?**

To increase democratic involvement, I will register voters and get voters out to vote during the voting period. After I am elected I will hold meetings in the community to continue to give voice and power to people in my district.

45. **Will you agree to appear periodically at monthly DSA meetings in your district?**

Yes

46. **If elected, would you join a Democratic Socialist caucus?**

I will continue to work with labor, community and political organizations and organizers who fight privatization in OUSD schools.

47. **Do you commit to working in collaboration with other DSA elected officials?**

Yes

48. **What do you see as the role of DSA once you are in office? And how will you use your position to contribute to building DSA?**

I will meet with DSA to build strong organizing in our communities. As I said earlier, I appreciate the views and organizing abilities of the DSA members I have worked with over the years.

E. Issues

Environment and Green New Deal

49. **What does a "Green New Deal" mean to you? How do you hope to help implement it in office?**

The New Green Deal addresses the harm that environmental injustice has caused in BIPOC and working-class communities and offers solutions to the issue of

climate change. The New Green Deal offers safe, sustainable, environmentally sound jobs with union protection for workers. We can work with labor partners to ensure these things for OUSD workers. We can fight environmental injustice in our communities and schools.

50. What does a "just transition" for fossil fuel workers and frontline communities mean to you?

A just transition means that we phase-out the fossil fuel industry in a way that doesn't leave workers in that industry without job and safety protections offered by unions. It also means that we do not phase out fossil-related industries in working class communities without bringing in new industries that will offer workers job and wage protections.

51. Should utility monopolies like PG&E be publicly owned? If not, please explain.

Absolutely because PG&E is accountable to no one and their lack of care including safety, service and high-cost rates for California communities is appalling.

Mass Transit

52. How does publicly owned mass transit fit into your vision of a fully realized socialist society? How can it help us transition to that society?

Students, families, workers, and others in the community rely on public transportation. When transportation is costly and unreliable because of cuts made by transportation agencies, those who rely on the bus cannot afford to get to work, school, or medical appointments, for example, in a timely manner. Many workers who rely on public transportation can share stories of times they lost their jobs or been docked pay because they were late due to public transportation.

My vision of a well-connected, fully-funded mass transit is one that runs regularly throughout the 24-hour day. It is one where routes are thoroughly connected to each other. It is one where mass transit workers are well-paid and where enough workers are hired to provide the services needed. All forms of mass transit should be electric and not gas-driven. If this were the case, more of us would rely on mass transit more than we do on our individual cars.

- 53. What role should transit workers and riders play in decision-making within public transit agencies? How can we move toward the governance model you envision?**

All decisions related to improving the public transit agencies should be led by workers and riders.

- 54. Do you support having a robust transit system with extensive and low- or no-cost bus service — including service connecting working-class neighborhoods without running through business or financial centers? If not, please explain.**

Yes, I support a robust transit system with extensive bus services and paratransit services for our differently-abled and elderly community members.

Labor

- 55. Are you a member or elected leader of a union? Have you ever been? Have you ever walked a picket line? Please provide specifics.**

Until I retired in August 2022, I was a site rep for 20 years and I had been elected to one term as OEA secretary and three terms as an elected member of the OEA Executive Board.

- 56. What do you see as the role of the labor movement in political change?**

Unions have played a huge role in my life. As a single mother of three children, my union membership gave me job security, a steady wage, and health benefits that were essential to my family. This is essential to working-class families. Unions not only provide stability for families, but they are also often the place where workers go for political education and to organize for political change in their jobs and their communities.

- 57. What support, specifically, do you plan to give as an elected official and public figure to workers in your district who are organizing a union or negotiating a contract?**

As a former union activist, I will always support district workers who organize for a union, who are negotiating a contract, or who are on strike. I will support their demands. I will do what union leadership asks me to do to support their organizing, negotiating or striking.

Healthcare

58. Do you support Medicare for All in California? Will you pledge to vote for AB 1400 (if relevant)? If not, why not?

As a person who is currently on Medicare, I absolutely support AB1400. As a school board member, I cannot vote on AB1400, but I can call legislators to encourage them to vote to support this.

BDS and Palestine Solidarity

59. Do you support the Palestinian call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) to pressure Israel until it complies with international law by ending the occupation, instituting equal rights for its Palestinian citizens and respecting Palestinian refugees' right to return? If not, please explain.

Yes, I support the BDS and strongly support the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and recognition of Palestine.

Prison & Police Abolition

60. Do you commit to reducing budgets for police, prisons, and other carceral institutions and reallocating that money to social services and alternative programs for building community safety (like violence interrupters and mental health crisis responders)? If not, why not? If so, talk specifically about where this money should go.

Yes. We must allocate money to social services and alternative community safety programs to de-escalate conflict so people are not arrested. I would have to do a needs assessment at each site to see what programs and services were most valued by students, families, and staff.

61. What concrete steps will you take in office to end mass incarceration and decrease the power of the police?

I will continue to make sure that police are not in our public schools. I will support candidates who support criminal justice reform and oppose incarceration for most crimes. I will also take steps to bring curriculum into our classrooms that teach students about their rights.

Housing

62. **YIMBYs (“Yes in My Back Yard”) claim that overregulation is the primary cause of the housing crisis, and loosening regulation to allow more housing to be built is sufficient to make housing affordable. Do you agree or disagree? What do you think are the main contributing factors to the housing affordability crisis?**

I disagree because the primary cause of the housing crisis is a lack of affordable housing and the displacement of those who lived in communities that are being gentrified and developed by land developers. I think there needs to be stronger language mandating that new developments include a much higher percentage of affordable and low-cost housing in new developments. Major contributing factors to the housing affordability crisis include land development projects that displace residents and for whom the cost of rentals in these new developments is totally unaffordable. Another factor is the fact that many of these new developments are built to own and not to rent.

63. **Will you support all legislation that requires building owners to negotiate with tenant unions? What other measures will you support that would even the playing field between tenants and landlords? Is there any expansion of tenants’ rights that you would not support?**

YES, I also support tenant strikes.

64. **Do you pledge to oppose any upzoning proposal without sufficient affordability requirements, such that it is opposed by grassroots anti-gentrification organizations? Do you pledge to support proposals by such groups to fix new and existing laws which fail to include such requirements?**

YES, and as a board member, I will support this effort publicly.

Taxation

65. **How do you propose to change our budget and tax structure (on the federal, state, or municipal level, as relevant) to better fund public services and redistribute wealth?**

I support a progressive tax.