

Background

Candidate Name: **Kimberly Haley**

Party: **Non-partisan**

Office and Sub District You Are Seeking: **RPS205 School Board-District F**

Name of Campaign Committee: **Citizens for Kimberly Haley**

Education Background: **Monmouth College-B.A. Classics/minor-English**
Currently pursuing M.B.A. at Rockford University

Occupation, Place of Employment: **Currently employed at Rock Valley College/Advanced Technology Center as Student Services Advisor**

Name(s) of Opponents: **Juan Reyes**

Questions

1. Do you have an understanding of the District 205's current strategic objectives? Which objectives would you like to see emphasized or changed and why?

As a sitting board member, I am familiar with RPS205's strategic objectives which are to improve 3rd grade literacy and numeracy, ensure middle school students are academically on track and prepared for high school, and to ensure freshman are on track to graduate. While all of these objectives are very important, I believe the it is most important that 3rd grade students meet achievement standards for literacy and numeracy and that they continue to meet achievement standards through middle school. Having these foundational skills helps to ensure that, when becoming freshman, RPS205 students have the foundational skills they need to be successful as freshman which will, in turn, decrease freshman dropout rates.

2. Attracting and retaining sufficient excellent teachers is a priority for the district. What do you think of the district's five initiatives to accomplish this (Rockford University Pathway, HBCU partnership with Central State, NIU LEAP, Aspiring Teachers, and housing incentives)? Which would you revise or emphasize?

I think that the five initiatives currently in place to attract and retain new teachers is a good start. I would like to see particular emphasis on the HBCU partnership which could be expanded to include a couple of more HBCUs, to be sure we are addressing RPS205's deficit of teachers of color.

In addition to these initiatives, I would like to review the current pay structure to determine if it is comparable to surrounding districts and competitive enough to attract and retain new teachers and staff.

3. What do you think of the district's system of evaluating the performance of schools? How should under-performing schools be addressed?

RPS205 currently uses the school scorecard, launched in 2019, to measure Quality Instruction (75%) and Climate and Culture (25%). To develop strategies to remediate underperforming schools, I believe the district must treat each underperforming school as a unique environment to determine the reason for student deficits All children in the district has the capacity to learn and excel if provided with the tools and guidance for them to do so.

4. What do you think of the district's strategy of driving funding for strategic personnel investments at schools with greatest need? How do you plan to evaluate the success of this effort?

Emphasizing equity across the district ensures that each school is provided with the resources it needs to lead its students to success which also moves the district itself to success. No longer can the district take a "one size fits all" approach to funding and resource decisions. Once equity strategies are in place, evaluating schools by academic metrics will help determine the success of each school although it must be acknowledged that raising the achievement scores of underperforming schools will take time.

5. What will be your approach to holding yourself, the board and administration accountable? How do you define success for your potential term?

My approach would be to first, get a full understanding of the programs, policies and procedures in order to be able to effectively evaluate their efficacy. Accountability, to me, would be demonstrated through building cooperative and collaborative relationships with board members, administration, and teachers/staff across the school district as well as building relationships with community partners and parents. I would like to ensure that everyone feels heard and that serious concerns are addressed in a timely manner. I would recognize and applaud our successes and work toward finding remedies for our weaknesses. Success for me would be making progress in the aforementioned items, making progress on the strategic goals of the district and that teachers/staff and parents have felt involved in decisions made by administration and the board.

6. What will be your approach to making the board a cohesive and effective unit?

Through communication, collaboration, mutual respect, and positivity. Respecting the experience and backgrounds of fellow board members will be key to developing a relationship of trust and open dialogue. I would also want to ensure that enough information is available to make well-informed decisions and encourage all to members to stay abreast of happenings throughout the school district.

7. What community engagement and support do you want to see for the board and the district?

I would like for community and employer partners to be open to conversations and be willing to provide honest and constructive feedback about how we can improve as board members and how they can support us in our roles as board members. I would have specific asks as to the possibility of mentorship opportunities for students and invitations to community and employer organization meetings to better understand the needs of the community and employers therein.

8. What strategic partnerships do you want to see created by the District?

I would like to see stronger partnership with Rock Valley College as the local community college for students in RPS205 and strong relationships with employer organizations in the manufacturing, healthcare, and the building trades. Partnerships with these growth industries will allow us to prepare students for real jobs across this region. If we can demonstrate a viable pipeline and strong workforce not only will we allow existing business and industry to grow and thrive but we will also attract new business to the region.

9. What do you think are the challenges and solutions to school safety? Do you support or oppose the Rockford Police in the schools as resource officers?

Unfortunately, challenges to school safety are not only external but can be internal as well. I believe that our schools have sufficient protocol in place to deter outside danger. When school safety becomes a concern because of our students, I believe we need to develop close relationships with those families and encourage them to utilize family supports and have personnel in place to address trauma and psychological concerns.

I support police in the schools as resource officers as long as they are sufficiently trained to work with school age populations and are able to understand a child's psychological and emotional development and needs and that how troubled children may be incapable of adult thought processes.

10. What responsibility does the school district and the school board have to the business community of Rockford? Do you feel the District is meeting that responsibility?

The school districts across this region have a responsibility to be keenly aware of the in-demand career fields in the areas in which they operate. Strong partnerships with the business community are a must to build an economically strong region and prepare students for career opportunities in their communities. I believe that the district still has some work to do to ensure that students of RPS205 are prepared academically to pursue higher education (short term trainings/certifications & 2/ 4 year degrees) or to pursue career opportunities straight out of highschool.

11. What is the status of student academic achievement in your District? And how can it be improved?

Student academic achievement sits below the state's average student academic achievement. Academic achievement can be improved through ensuring that our students have a solid foundation in elementary school that will encourage them to remain engaged as they enter middle and high school.

12. What in your background leads you to believe that you would be an effective school board member?

My background is in Education, Counseling, and Workforce Development. I have had first hand experience meeting with employers across this region to understand their employment needs. I understand the challenges our employers face with not having enough local, well-trained talent to support the available jobs. I also understand the need to develop our workforce through highschools and post-secondary training opportunities to prepare students for current opportunities and careers of the future and to attract new employers to this region. Additionally, my more recent training in organizational leadership and development has taught me the value and importance of working collaboratively in teams which will be invaluable in developing relationships with board staff and administration. As a school board member, I believe my background and experience is key and provides a unique perspective to guide our schools to prepare students for career opportunities locally.

Do you Support or Oppose the Following

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|---|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose | Year-Round Schools |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oppose | Charter Schools |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose | Magnet Schools |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose | School Uniforms |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Support | <input type="checkbox"/> Oppose | Comprehensive Truancy/dropout prevention program |