



## Local Candidate Questionnaire District 205



### Background

Candidate Name: **Lisa Jackson**

Party: **Not Applicable**

Office and Sub District You Are Seeking: **RPS 205 School Board (A)**

Name of Campaign Committee: **Parents for Lisa Jackson**

Street Address or PO Box: **2007 Arthur Avenue**

City and Zip Code: **Rockford IL, 61101**

Cell Phone: **815-375-0175**

Email: **ljack69@live.com**

Education Background: **Master of Arts Organizational Leadership; Master of Business Administration**

Occupation, Place of Employment: **IL Mentor; GSNI**

Name(s) of Opponents: **Denise Pearson**

## 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?

**I have reviewed the district's strategic plan on the website and the plan itself is not very clear. It is very disconnected and is somewhat difficult to follow. If I understand it correctly, it appears the goals are focused on annual improvement in third grade reading and math, middle school on track and to increase the graduation rate on on-track freshman rate. All of these areas need to be emphasized, but there has to be more overall. The plan outlines what it refers to as strategies, but they are not true strategies.**

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?

**The district should expand its reach to include partnerships with other HBCUs, especially those with higher graduation rates. CSU's graduation rate, for first time students, is only 22%. During my previous tenure we formed the Diversity Council which focused its efforts on the recruitment and retention of a diverse teacher workforce; I would like to use this approach again.**

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

**I would need more information to answer this question.**

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?

**I will answer this question based on my experience as a RPS 205 school board member. We made decisions that were not in the best interests of children and now we are paying for those decisions literally and figuratively. I believe past and present strategies have been and remain misguided.**

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

**The IASB is very specific about the role of a school board member the role of the superintendent and district staffs; understanding our roles and working collaboratively to achieve "best outcomes" is how we hold ourselves accountable individually and as a collective body. My success is determined by the success of those I am elected to serve whether on a micro or macro level.**

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

**Being a school board member requires the ability to recognize and advocate for decisions that are in the best interest of your constituency while simultaneously ensuring decisions is in the best interest of the district at-large. If each board member has the ability to understand and respect this, I feel a working relationship is possible which will lead to better outcomes for all.**

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

**I would like to see greater attendance, by community members, at school board meetings. Too often individuals attend for special events, recognition ceremonies or when an issue affects them personally. In addition, I would like to see the community hold the board accountable when we miss the mark. We have to adopt a village mentality if we want community members to thrive and not just survive.**

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

**According to the district's website, it has a long list of community partners; however, I did not observe the NAACP named as one of those partners. Actually, I did not observe many Black organizations named at all. A school district cannot have a subgroup who make up the largest student population, yet have the most dismal outcomes compared to other subgroups and not have targeted community partnerships; this must be a priority.**

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?

**The following are what I see as the top three challenges for school safety: social media, bullying and weapon possession. Possible solutions include, but are not limited to the following: increase parental engagement and involvement, restrict internet access on students' mobile devices during learning hours and provide education and training for students, parents and staffs. It is not a question of whether I support or oppose. While I understand the need for SROs, I would be remiss if I did not express I have concerns about their presence in schools, particularly schools in Sub-district A.**

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 board has the responsibility to understand the needs of the business community and to equip students with hard and soft skills that will prepare them to effectively enter the workforce [upon graduation]. As a company Training Specialist, I have hired and on-boarded many RPS 205 students since 2018. Many lack hard and, more importantly, soft skills, necessary to obtain and/or maintain gainful employment. It is my opinion the district is not meeting this responsibility.**

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

**Historically, and currently, Subdistrict A is the lowest performing of all seven sub-districts. Overall, the district continues to graduate students well below the state average. In its current state of zones, the district would benefit from the following: increased academic opportunities, smaller classroom sizes, dedicated and diverse teacher and support staffs, targeted parental engagement and welcomed parental involvement, better access to resources and [more] extracurricular activities.**

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

**I am an experienced school board member having previously served RPS 205 from 2009 - 2017. I understand the needs of my community, constituency and I am committed to doing the work.**

**Do you Support or Oppose the Following**

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