

2009 Candidate Questionnaire

SECTION I

BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Andre	V	Helmstetter

2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number):

Seattle School Director Position #5

3. Are you the incumbent? Yes No

4. How long have you resided in this district/city?

10yrs / 17yrs

5. How long have you resided in King County?

17 yrs

6. Is the office sought partisan or nonpartisan? Partisan Nonpartisan

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name: Andre For Schools

Address: 1617 Boylston Ave STE200
Seattle WA 98122

City/State/Zip: _____

Campaign Phone: 206-547-3883

Campaign Fax: _____

Campaign E-mail: andreforschools@gmail.com

Campaign Website: andreforschools.org

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

1. Beginning with the most recent position, please list public offices you have held. Include positions on appointive boards or commissions.

Public Office	Elective or Appointive?	Dates Held	Leadership Role (if any)

2. If you ran for public office but were not elected, please list those races below:

Office Title	Year of Run

SECTION II

In this section, we are seeking responses that reflect the four ratings criteria: involvement, effectiveness, character, and knowledge. These are defined as follows:

- **Involvement:** What has the candidate done previously in family, neighborhood, community, volunteer work, employment or public life to suggest readiness to accomplish challenging objectives? How do these activities demonstrate readiness for the challenges unique to the office sought?
 - **Effectiveness:** Has the candidate demonstrated promise of being productive in the office sought? Has the candidate shown the ability to work with other people?
 - **Character:** Do the candidate's personal traits show the ability to take on the responsibilities of campaigning for and holding the public office she or he is seeking? Is the candidate a leader, participant or observer? Is the candidate trustworthy, reliable and candid?
 - **Knowledge:** Has the candidate demonstrated the willingness and ability to learn and adapt? Does the candidate understand the duties and challenges of the office sought? Does the candidate have a firm grasp of the issues important to his or her constituency and their potential effects?
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1. In one page or less, why are you running for this office? (Note: the interview committee will be given a copy of this statement before your interview; at the beginning of your interview you will have the opportunity to expand on this statement in any way you wish.)

As a parent of two children, one of them in third grade and the other starting in a year, I have a long term active commitment to Seattle schools.

While working with other parents and community members during the recent school closure hearings and with the new assignment plan, I decided that the most effective way to make positive change in the district would be to join the board. With years of experience as a quality assurance manager, I feel that I bring a strong ability to critically examine policy brought before the board, and to work together with the other members and the administration to make common sense decisions which support our children.

As a parent, and active community member, I understand the issues and needs of the families which make up our constituency. I believe that a major component of creating good schools is to provide families with consistent and predictable programs and assignments. As a school board member I will do my best to make sure that families have the opportunity to engage the district, and to promote policies that support the communities in which our children are living.

I truly believe that Seattle schools can be among the best in the nation. But to get there, we need to focus our dollars on direct classroom support, and equitable access to programs and resources, while making policies that engender maximum support from families.

2. Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

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I truly believe that Seattle schools can be among the best in the nation. But to get there, we need to focus our dollars on direct classroom support, and equitable access to programs and resources, while making policies that engender maximum support from families.

3. Please describe, in sufficient detail, one to three accomplishments or contributions of which you are most proud. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities you think apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.

- While attending The Evergreen State College I assisted the staff in teaching a course on data management and communications technology. I focused on making the material accessible to the students and to provide real world examples of how exciting the it could be. Later, years after my graduating I met (on different occasions) two young women who had gone on to get advanced degrees in Information Technology and were working in the field. One of them with the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation. Both of them told me that the materials I had presented and the work we had done were their inspiration for entering into the field.
- In 2006 I purchased a coffee shop on the corner of 20th and Yesler in the Central Area. When I took over the shop there were drug dealers working the corner regularly, and a large part of the community felt that the shop was not “for them”. I set out to make the shop into a community meeting place for all of the community. The rule in the shop was simple. Respect and dialog are welcome here. Intolerance is not. I welcomed anyone who followed this set of rules. Over the two years that I owned the shop, through one robbery and a shooting it became the regular hang out for people of all walks of life, and I would argue, the most diverse clientele in the city. Offering art, community meetings, traveling seminars, talks with presidential candidates, and a solid dose of community, the shop fulfilled it’s mission. And the dealers on the corners? They became customers until they stopped hanging out on that corner.
- As a sophomore I dropped out of high school. The family needed money, and I was old enough to work. But I vowed to myself that I would graduate with my class. At the time, I had no idea of how that would happen. After working full time for a semester doing industrial clean-up, I was able to cut back to part time and weekends. I was able to return to school, but had not forgotten my self-promise. I talked to school counselors and teachers to find out about taking extra classes and what I would need to do to make it happen. With their support I was able to participate in a program that provided extra early classes for kids who needed to make up credit. It took both my junior and senior years to get caught up. All while continuing to work. I graduated with my class.

4. Please list or describe current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life.

- 2009 - Currently assisting with the effort to keep TT Minor open as an International School, by attending meetings and providing data and support.
- 2009 - Supported parents and teachers in fighting the recent round of school closures by researching and presenting alternative plans, organizing parents and community members, meeting with board members, and engaging media outlets.
- 2009 - Committee Member for the Langston Hughes African American Film Festival
- 2008-2009 Vice President of the TT Minor PTSA
- 2007-2008 Home schooled my daughter through second grade. Required research on curriculum management, teaching methods, materials and requirements.
- 2005 - Vice President of the Family Staff Alliance at the Giddens school (PTSA equivalent at the private school my daughter attended).
- 2006 - President of the Family Staff Alliance at the Giddens school.

5. Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

The duty of School Board director is to work as a member of the School Board in the following facilities:

Select and evaluate the superintendent.

Formulate and adopt policies for the school system

Provide direction for educational programs

Approve the annual budget

Adopt instructional materials such as books and software, and specify process for adoption of other instructional materials.

Approve plans for major remodeling and new construction of schools

Represent schools and their needs to the community, the state legislature, and the federal government.

Act as final appeal for school personnel, citizens, and students.

I believe that the most important duties of the School Board director are:

Formulate and adopt policies for the government of the school system.

The policies which guide the governance of the school system have a direct affect on access, equity, and availability of programs and facilities for students.

Provide direction for the educational program:

It is imperative that the educational direction is creating an environment where students are allowed to excel, and providing the constituency with educational options that support varying learning styles and abilities.

Represent schools and their needs to the community, the state legislature, and the federal

government.

It is important to ensure that local communities as well as the federal and state government are made aware of the needs of our schools so that policy, funding, and local initiatives can be tailored to the actual needs of the schools, which are our most important institutions.

Act as a final appeal for school personnel, citizens, and students.

One of the most important responsibilities of any organization is providing a fair and impartial appeals process for members and constituents. The board is positioned directly between the district and the community, and is the most logical body to carry out this important duty.