



## The Municipal League of King County

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## 2011 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Municipal League of King County requests every candidate who participates in the candidate evaluation process **submit background information prior to his/her interview with a candidate evaluation committee.** The questionnaire is the basis of the League's research and interview process. The League's ratings are non-partisan; they are based on standards of Involvement, Effectiveness, Character, and Knowledge, all of which have been developed and refined over the past 100 years.

A copy of this questionnaire will be provided to Candidate Evaluation Committee members to help them prepare for your interview. Candidate responses, except the confidential section, will be available to the public on the League's website.

The Municipal League requests the following materials from candidates. Please check to make certain you have sent in your:

### Candidate Questionnaire

Sent by:      Email                      US Mail                      Fax                      Not Sending

### Resume (education, employment, and professional activities)

Sent by:      Email                      US Mail                      Fax                      Not Sending

### Campaign Materials

Sent by:      Email                      US Mail                      Fax                      Not Sending

### Constituent Newsletters and other publications

Sent by:      Email                      US Mail                      Fax                      Not Sending

### Photograph

Sent by:      Email                      US Mail                      Fax                      Not Sending

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**Note: Electronically submitted questionnaires are strongly preferred.** All materials can be emailed to [cec@munileague.org](mailto:cec@munileague.org). They can be processed and made available on-line far more rapidly than handwritten or typed submissions.

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For non-electronic submissions, please print clearly and legibly and return the application **as soon as possible in order to allow the committee the greatest amount of time to prepare a complete report on your skills and experience.**

If you have not yet been contacted to schedule an interview, or if you have questions about the candidate evaluation program, please contact the League office at 206-622-8333.

If you have a disability and require accommodation to participate in the candidate evaluation process, please contact the CEC Coordinator at the League office.

## SECTION I

### BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot

First Name	Middle Initial or Nickname	Last Name
Martha	"Marty"	McLaren

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

KC-ECF-Seattle School District No. 1-Director District No. 6

3. Are you the incumbent?                      Yes    No

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

**17 years**

5. How long have you resided in King County?

**49 years**

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

7. If partisan, please indicate party:

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### CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Website:                      marty4ssd.com

### 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)
N/A			

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

Office Title	Year of Run
N/A	

## 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.)

**See below.**

My decision to run for School Board arises from my passion for giving all students access to the outstanding education to which they are entitled. I am running for this office to reclaim Seattle's schools for the community; I will work to turn our schools around so that all of our students attend excellent schools.

My eldest child entered Seattle Public Schools in 1978; two more followed in 1984 and 86. In 1999, having become a grandparent and a teacher, I became alarmed as I saw the effective education eroding in Seattle's schools. My educational activism was sparked in 2005 by concern about math textbooks. Since then, advocating for good math curriculum has awakened me to the many aspects of the decline of our schools – falling academic success across all levels and subjects, a widening achievement gap, misuse and mismanagement of scarce resources, lack of transparency, and centralization run amok to the detriment of learning. As a middle school math teacher in the early 2000s, I threw myself into using the new, “reform” style of textbooks, only to see at least half of my students working hard, but failing the math WASL. This failure was repeated throughout the Seattle School District – yet, we teachers were continually coached to believe in the new methods. I gave up my own classroom in frustration after four years, and substituted in math classrooms throughout the district, largely in a quest to understand how to help students succeed. I saw first-hand that students and teachers throughout the district were floundering. Then I began to talk with those “old-fashioned” teachers and education advocates, (discounted by district staff) who *were* successful with their students, using explicit texts and methods. I eventually learned that they were right, and we reformers had been wrong. I've been humbled to learn that there's enormous wisdom about education available in our communities; that wisdom has been systematically disregarded.

In 2007 and 2008, I was involved in the successful effort to rewrite Washington's math standards; in that period, I testified repeatedly to the Seattle School Board in favor of explicit math curriculum. The board persisted in adopting reform texts. In 2009, after a 4 to 3 vote in favor of the confusing *Discovering* high school text, I initiated a lawsuit challenging that adoption – with advice, participation, and consultation from a variety of other concerned people. We won in Superior Court, with a decision that the adoption was “arbitrary and capricious,” due to lack of evidence of the texts' efficacy. When we later lost in appeals court, I considered appealing to the State Supreme court. Others convinced me that I could begin to reverse the decline of our students' educational opportunities by running successfully for School Board.

As a PTSA officer in the 1980s and a teacher/advocate more recently, I've been riveted by the myriad issues facing schools. In our classrooms and buildings, I've seen too many students who are discouraged and dispirited about learning, and teachers and principals deprived of the autonomy that's crucial for effectiveness in their roles. Important subjects have been cut and reduced from the school day with no positive result – PE and arts education have been reduced, career and technical education has been truncated. I've repeatedly seen board members approve decisions that show little true insight into the daily challenges faced by students, teachers, staff, and indirectly, families. Top down management is suffocating creative problem solving and the good will that are crucial to effective curriculum and assessment.

I currently administer GED and COMPASS placement tests to students entering SSSC; the bulk of the latter place into pre-algebra; witnessing this, my energy for strong math education burns ever hotter. Recently, I have worked exclusively to improve math curriculum because I believe that change can come from carefully focused, collaborative efforts on the part of both the teachers and the community. This has proven true: we were able to bring dramatic improvement in our math standards, and the recent textbook lawsuit success has sparked community awareness about Seattle's mediocre record in math education. I'm galvanized now, with the clear understanding that my experience and insight into the workings of the district are unparalleled on the board and in district administration – my voice is urgently needed! I believe I can help lead the community to reclaim its responsibility for turning schools around and giving all students access to an outstanding education.

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

**The important traits which draw me toward the School Board are my deep, abiding love and respect for children, combined with my outrage at the squandering of our opportunity and obligation to offer them empowering education. This interest in the well-being of children has flourished through both the fulfillment and the missteps of being a parent, an early childhood educator, a public school teacher, and friend to the children around me in daily life. My sorrow and rage at the injustice being done to many children by giving them a deficient education has motivated me to work hard as a teacher, an advocate, and a change agent.**

**I've been courageous in speaking out when others have not, and have often been thanked for this. I'm tenacious but flexible. I work very well with others, both in leadership and collaborative roles; I am energized by the intelligence and imagination that arises in groups during team efforts. I have extensive experience as a facilitator and participant in consensus decision-making, deriving from my 17 year residence in the Puget Ridge Cohousing Association, a self-managed community with the basic shared value of strong connections among neighbors, both within and without our area in the Delridge neighborhood.**

**I have developed very good instincts about when to make a bold move, and have been fortunate to inspire others to join me.**

**I take delight in excellence, and in inventiveness, and my response often spurs others to increase their effort in shared projects.**

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.

I am very proud of having initiated and led the high school math lawsuit, mentioned above, and also successfully publicizing it (with the help of others). The underlying goal of the lawsuit was always that we might raise awareness of the issue, win or lose. We ultimately succeeded in doing this, beyond my wildest expectations. Many people were extremely grateful and helpful, inspired by my willingness to put my own limited funds on the line for this important cause. In a highly unusual and carefully considered opinion, Judge Julie Spector ruled the textbook adoption arbitrary and capricious, due to insufficient evidence to support its efficacy. She remanded the decision to the school board. After this victory was announced, I received donations to help pay for the lawsuit from well-known mathematics professors across the country, as well as many parents, teachers, and community members in Seattle and beyond. They thanked me, often with very moving personal stories, for raising the visibility of the issue. (Details of the lawsuit can be found in my blog: [SeattleMathGroup@blogspot.com](mailto:SeattleMathGroup@blogspot.com))

A long, very fulfilling commitment has been my membership and residence in Puget Ridge Cohousing Association. I joined the community just before groundbreaking, in 1993. The values of the group include neighborhood connection and welcoming diversity, but over the years, what has emerged is a deep appreciation for the beauty of sharing our lives with our neighbors and friends. I've helped with myriad projects over the years, from laying pavers throughout the site, to devising protocols for building maintenance, to refining our meeting routine to include a check in at the end of meetings to "catch the feelings" which might have been unspoken, to taking the lead in the onerous task of revising our Condo Docs after 16 years, in order to reflect boundary and other changes. In the time I've lived at PRCA, I've grown enormously in my capacity to relate from the heart to others and to fulfill my own promise, largely because my neighbors and friends have all shared friendship, mentoring, and emotional support most generously. We have inspired each other. I could "go on and on" about the remarkable achievements of my neighbors. I am very proud and grateful for my membership in this community.

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.

In the 1970s, I was an officer in several positions in Action for Child Transportation Safety, a group which, under the leadership of Charlanne Bachmeier, was instrumental in the creation and adoption of laws mandating the use of safe child car seats in Washington State.

In the mid-80s, I was PTSA president at Washington Middle School, and was part of the Middle School Study Group, a collaboration between PTSA and the SPS Department of Curriculum and Instruction, tasked with examining various middle school models.

In the mid-90s, as co-coordinator of Homeless Children's Network, a program of Family Services of King County (now Wellspring Family Services), I advocated for homeless families with small children at the Seattle King County Coalition for the Homeless.

In 2001-2002, I facilitated the Save Our School Committee at South Lake High School in its formative first year. South Lake is an SPS Service school in the Rainier Beach Neighborhood.

In 2003-4, I facilitated the Building Leadership Committee at Denny Middle School.

Other community activities have been cited above.

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

**Duties of School Board Director:**

- 1. Ensure excellent education for all**
- 2. Oversee budget**
- 3. Oversee Superintendent and work with superintendent to implement policies and work plan**
- 4. Represent the interests and goals of the community**

**The first is the underlying, root purpose of the school system. The others are of equal importance in fulfilling the purpose of the school system.**

## Finished!

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If at all possible, send your response to the Municipal League electronically as an email attachment, or insert it into an e-mail message ([cec@munileague.org](mailto:cec@munileague.org)). Mail and fax numbers are listed below. If the League has not contacted you to schedule an interview, please call the League office at your earliest convenience.

Don't forget to send the following to the Municipal League: a resume, a photo, campaign literature, and, if you are an incumbent, constituent newsletters and other materials. Please use the check-off list on the cover sheet of this packet to indicate which items you have sent.

A League Volunteer Candidate Investigator is waiting to receive your questionnaire to begin his or her work. Please complete and return the questionnaire to the League office at your earliest convenience.

**Please have your materials to us no later than June 10, 2011. May 31<sup>st</sup> is preferred!**

Email the completed questionnaire and other materials to:  
[cec@munileague.org](mailto:cec@munileague.org)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND GOOD LUCK IN YOUR CAMPAIGN!

### THE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE OF KING COUNTY

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