

2019 SPFE Public City Council Candidate Questionnaire

Please limit the following questions to a yes or no response.

1. The Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) believes parents, educators, community members, and students should be at the center of decision making around educational policy. However, increasingly out of state millionaires with a vested interest in pursuing a corporate education reform agenda have poured money into political races with the goal of removing local voices from discussions about our children’s education.

- a. **Will you and your campaign reject contributions and independent expenditures from wealthy donors who live outside our community and from market-based education reform organizations?**

CANDIDATE	YES	NO
Alexander Bourne	X	
Tony Her	X	
Danielle Swift	X	
Terri Thao	X	
Nelsie Yang	X	

2. Despite recent increases, public education statewide is severely underfunded, and has not kept pace with inflation. Communities have increasingly been called on to make up the lack of funding by passing levies that increase property taxes for home owners, while wealthy corporations continue to receive tax cuts – allowing them to benefit from our communities without contributing to them.

- a. **Will you endorse, support, and campaign on increasing revenue that will go directly to public education funding?**

CANDIDATE	YES	NO
Alexander Bourne	X	
Tony Her	X	
Danielle Swift	X	
Terri Thao	X	
Nelsie Yang	X	

3. SPFE members have indicated that they do not want to participate in Q-Comp (Quality Compensation). The core components of Q-Comp include: performance pay and salary schedule reform, teacher evaluation, and job-embedded professional development. Each Q-Comp plan must include all of the core components. The implementation of Q-Comp requires performance pay to be based on standardized test scores. This funding is dependent on action by the state legislature.

- a. **Would you support moving the funding and capacity put into Tim Pawlenty’s failed teacher merit pay scheme commonly called q-comp, into equitable funding for all Minnesota districts general budget?**

CANDIDATE	YES	NO
Alexander Bourne		X
Tony Her	X	
Danielle Swift	X	
Terri Thao	X	
Nelsie Yang	X	

4. **Do you support collective bargaining for public sector unions and will you fight to protect them?**

CANDIDATE	YES	NO
Alexander Bourne	X	
Tony Her	X	
Danielle Swift	X	
Terri Thao	X	
Nelsie Yang	X	

Please limit your response to 150 words or fewer for each part of the questions below.

1. What is the value of public education for you and for the city of Saint Paul?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Sadly, St. Paul Public Schools do not adequately support and work well for too many students, particularly for students of color. Regardless if I am elected or not, this will be my stance until this issue is properly addressed. We must muster the resources necessary to provide a quality education for every child. I understand that this is seemingly complex, but it is necessary and something that I deeply believe we can accomplish together. I am committed to standing with educators, parents, students, and our labor partners to fight for fully funded schools. I do not want these kids to have the same experience that I had in St. Paul Public Schools K-11. Our elected officials need to understand the role public schools play in shaping our future

TONY HER: Public education is very high value and important for me and the city of Saint Paul because I was graduated from Saint Paul public school and I also worked for Saint Paul public school for over 25 years.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I rely on Saint Paul Public Schools to educate my children. I have two children who are currently enrolled in Saint Paul Public Schools.

TERRI THAO: Education can be the catalyst needed to lift people out of poverty and as someone who grew up poor, public education in particular served as a lifeline to future opportunities and economic advancement for me. Having attended St. Paul Public Schools the majority of my life, I would not have met people from diverse racial and economic groups; become exposed to different ideas and ways of thinking; and, of course received a valuable education. I want every child in St. Paul to have access to public education where they build knowledge and earn the confidence needed— to be set up for future success no matter their race, gender identity, preference, ability or economic status.

NELSIE YANG: Every student deserves high quality, accessible education, no exceptions. Public education is important to me because it fulfills this vision and allows for every child to have access to education no matter their race, gender, and class. As a daughter of refugees, public education was my only hope to get my family out of systemic poverty. Public education is a source of hope for many, and more than ever, we need to partner up to fully fund our public education and ensure that all schools are safe and racially equitable. The conversation doesn't stop there. I believe our vision for students must expand to further fight for free college tuition so that our young generations are not burdened by a lifetime of debt. The attack on public education from the federal level to the local level is a threat to many working families and families of color, but I will be an unwavering, bold voice fighting for public education because that's how we build strong families in our communities.

2. An endorsement from SPFE is only given to candidates that show they are a champion for public education. We do not endorse in all races.

a. **What are your direct connections to SPPS, SPFE, and/or public education?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: From Kindergarten at Hancock Elementary until the middle of my junior year at Central High School, I was a "special ed" student. I agree

wholeheartedly with the position that SPFE takes. My priority starts with Early Childhood education, which is why I served as a Board of Director member for what is now Health & Education Alliance of Louisiana, a new model for education reform

TONY HER: I worked as educational assistant for saint paul public school and I am a proud of Saint Paul Federation teachers unions member.

DANIELLE SWIFT: My children go to Spps schools.

TERRI THAO: I am an alumni of St. Paul Public Schools. I attended Webster (now Obama) Elementary, Ramsey Junior High and Central High School. All six of my siblings and I went to St. Paul Public Schools. My husband attended Humboldt. I have two children, in grades 5 and 3 at Nokomis Montessori North. My children are very different learners both gifted and talented and on the Autism spectrum and I have appreciated how well their school works with both of their learning styles. I also have a sister who is a kindergarten and first grade resource room teacher at Bruce Vento Elementary and my nephews attend Nokomis Montessori South and Capitol Hill. I am a proud product of public education. As a taxpayer I am also a key investor in the success of St. Paul Public Schools.

NELSIE YANG: Since birth, I have always been surrounded by caring educators in public education. The amazing couple who sponsored my parents to the U.S. have been educators for over fifty years. I can only imagine how deeply heartwarming it is for them to see me run for public office. Growing up, it certainly wasn't in the plan because I was trained to believe through media, books, and stories that only old, white men were qualified to be in decision-making seats. That story has long changed for me. I am moved by the stories of distress and joy that many educators around me, including my sister and uncle, share almost every day. My values around public education are shaped by the lived experiences and stories I hear, and I carry with them in the all of the policy work that I do. For many years, I've been on a mission to help elect progressive champions of collective bargaining, public education, and racial equity, which is why I served as the Communications Director for School Board Member Marny Xiong. Her historical victory is one that I will remember for a lifetime. These are only small chapters within a bigger book that we all are writing to make progress in the community.

b. What is your definition of a “public education champion”?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: I have never heard that phrase before, so I would be lying if I could definitively say that I can personally define that phrase.

TONY HER: My definition of a public education champion is high quality of education for me and my childrens.

DANIELLE SWIFT: A champion for public education is someone who will listen and actively seek the voices of the children and the parents of the communities who are typically the least heard.

TERRI THAO: A public education champion is someone who understands the important role and impact public education has in different communities. This includes: the students who attend the schools who directly receive the education, the families who depend on having a good public education system to educate their children, the employees who are

committed to student success, and the community and broader systems who stands to benefit tremendously when children are properly educated. A champion also understands the complexities and challenges amongst stakeholder groups and is able to work effectively across differences to advocate for an inclusive and equitable quality education for all children. One example of where I have advocated for this is providing a statement for a grant for restorative practices at my children's school which we received and are implementing this school year.

NELSIE YANG: A public education champion is a leader who will defend public education in both public policies and actions. It is someone who will ensure that our public schools thrive, no matter the pressures put onto them from outside factors. Being a champion isn't about how many years you've had at the decision-making table. It's not about doing what's easy or popular. It's being able to do what's right for the most impacted people even in the face of injustice.

c. Why are you seeking an endorsement from SPFE?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: SPFE is the first group of individuals that I have found in Minnesota since moving back home in 2016 that gets it. I want to work in concert with you all. I want to leverage my narrative to advocate for what we need most in our schools – a fully funded school system that works for us all.

TONY HER: Because I want to protect the public sector education.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Youth development is a pillar of my platform. 25% of the 55106 zip code are people under the age of 18. Education and school environments are crucial to the development of our youth as a whole and education intersects with many other issues that our youth face. It is important to have the support of those who share the same values that I do while I seek to serve the public.

TERRI THAO: I am seeking an endorsement from SPFE because I support and deeply value the work of our educators. My campaign is focused on making sure we collaborate and gain the support of a variety of stakeholders from different sectors. Educators have had a large positive influence in my life, from my 5th grade teacher at Webster Elementary, Mrs. Rhoda Stroud, to my aunt Choua Lee who was a principal at Homecroft Elementary, to my sister Elizabeth Thao who is a current teacher at Bruce Vento Elementary to the patient educational assistants who help my children at Nokomis Montessori and the many other educators I know who work in St. Paul Public Schools. In my door knocking of Ward 6 I have met many educators who bought homes in the neighborhood and want live close to where they work so they are not just educator constituents but are residents as well.

NELSIE YANG: I went to public schools my entire life and I saw how teachers and educators are the backbone to shaping a child's adolescence. I want to partner with SPFE and all stakeholders to ensure that we co-create and co-lead together to build a better city. I want to see a thriving eastside where schools are a community hub, families are thriving, students are challenged with a rigorous education, educators are respected, families can open businesses to achieve their hopes and dreams, young people want to stay in the community, and the community is driving all changes in their neighborhood. In addition, I seek endorsements from bold, progressive organizations, and SPFE has been an unwavering voice for progressive change. This vision cannot

be possible without our educators and labor unions which is why I am seeking SPFE's endorsement.

d. How do you envision working in partnership with SPFE? What does that look like when we disagree?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: I want to work in concert with you all. I want to leverage my narrative to advocate for what we need most in our schools – a fully funded school system that works for us all. When we disagree, I want everyone to understand why those disagreements exist and identify ways that we can work in concert to move towards a measurable solution together.

TONY HER: I will try my best to work and partnership with Saint Paul Federation Education even if I disagree with them.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I envision building relationships throughout SPFE and with members of the school board in order to create the foundation that it takes to build and co-create. Setting goals together will help us center our actions. If the time occurs when we disagree knowing we are trying to accomplish the same end result we will be able to work through disagreements to reach our ultimate goals.

TERRI THAO: I envision working in partnership with SPFE by first learning and then communicating frequently. I know we learn best when there is tension and disagreements; I will work hard to find common ground, listen to solve problems, leverage resources/connections and collaborate on issues that are important to me and SPFE. When we disagree, I would expect us to be honest about our motivations and challenges.

NELSIE YANG: I want a collaborative partnership where all stakeholders are at the decision making table. We all have stake in ensuring that we build the best city for all people to live in. There may be time of disagreement on how we get to our collective outcome desire. I am a person who seeks to learn and understand. In circumstances where we disagree, I will reach out to better understand perspectives that are different from mine. The best solutions are solutions with everyone's input.

3. Over the past year, educators across the country have gone on strike. Just one year ago, SPFE narrowly avoided a strike by reaching a last-minute contract with the district.

a. What have you learned from the Red for Ed Movement?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Fight for everything or succeed at nothing

TONY HER: Our Saint Paul public school we have very good unions teams and our unions are working very hard to get our teachers contract before they strike so I'm proud on them.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I have been reminded that being organized and having a unified voice truly makes a difference. As a collective we can accomplish things that may not have happened otherwise. I also learned that here in Saint Paul we have strong teachers and advocates who are fighting for our students and a school board who can be moved to make decisions that benefit our teachers and students.

TERRI THAO: To me the movement elevated a different way for educators to use their voice and position to call attention to not just their needs as employees but also leverage the wins for their students of smaller class sizes and updated materials. I think there was a general perception that educators would always accept the budget cuts and worsening conditions and Red for Ed's movement across different states demonstrated that they should not be taken for granted.

NELSIE YANG: We have an education crisis in America. Our states and electeds are not upholding their responsibilities to fully fund high quality education. This is why teachers need to take into the streets the fight for education and to raise awareness of this crisis.

- b. **UTLA (United Teachers of Los Angeles) recently ended their strike. In addition to much-needed pay increases, the challenges facing their students are similar to the students of SPPS. How can you use your position to support educators, parents and students in addressing these concerns?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: I have never been intimately involved in a protest of that magnitude. As of now, I would depend on the expertise within SPFE to help guide me in ensuring that we are taking the proper steps to reach our goals.

TONY HER: If I get elect to be ward 6 city council for the city of Saint Paul I will come up with a strategy plan to help our educators, parents and students to agree with each others.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I can use my position to be an advocate for the students of Saint Paul Public Schools as well as an advocate for those who teach and care for our students everyday. Building relationships is key to building strong coalitions to create the greatest environment for our students and teachers to thrive in.

TERRI THAO: As a city council member, I would continue to articulate the value of what a quality education system has for our workforce and for our neighborhoods. I work to encourage dialogue and even facilitate conversations about our concerns.

NELSIE YANG: I am not waiting to be in office to address concerns that need fixing now. As a community organizer, I've marched alongside SPFE to fight for corporate accountability because for far too long, our leaders have allowed for corporations to take away resources from public education. I've built relationships with electeds and put pressure to hold them accountable to make the right decisions that puts people and families first. I will continue to be the bold voice for the people in city hall. I will continue to partner with our educators to hold our school district accountable to make decisions that prioritizes students. I will advocate alongside educators to ensure our schools have services for students, small class sizes, mental health services for staff and students, healthy and safe learning environments for all, and for dignity and respect for our teachers.

4. Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS) has a diverse student population, with over 75% of students identifying as People of Color. Parents and educators agree that in order for students to be successful, we must have culturally competent curricula and educators that reflect the diversity of our city. At the same time, data shows that our city and our schools are becoming more segregated.

- a. **Segregation and poverty are harmful to all of us, especially our students and their families. How will you work to integrate our city and our schools?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: I strongly believe that I can bring a perspective that is missing to the SPFE table, as I have lived in the conditions that SPFE has dedicated itself to changing. I grew up in special ed programming K-11 so I was segregated. I was marginalized in the space of opportunity and I am dedicated to changing these conditions to get the results that this city so desperately needs. It starts by providing a set of ears for the community to speak to and fully funding our schools so that we can prevent today's students from experiencing my yesterday's experience. Let's do this!

TONY HER: I will help and support to fight for desegregation school because segregation is very racism system school so it very harmful for our children because education should be equal opportunity for every child in this country.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I believe that housing is directly connected to school enrollment. I will be mindful of all intersections that play a role into what makes up a healthy community which directly correlates to what we see happen in schools. By considering what keeps people in their homes and how we can keep people housed in a healthy environment we will stop people from being displaced and segregated based on what you can afford and where you feel comfortable and safe.

TERRI THAO: First, we need to acknowledge that the geographic boundaries that created our current systems of neighborhoods and place were based on racial bias. We also need to acknowledge that poverty is not by choice but again, based on historic and current policies that prevent families from economic advancement. I will work to integrate our city and our schools by acknowledging the interrelated relationship we have and mutual goals of ensuring success for students and our communities. We also need to have hard conversations on why people do not want to integrate and address explicit and implicit biases in concrete ways.

NELSIE YANG: Segregation is harmful and impacts both our schools and our entire city. For many of my neighbors, they are living in a tale of two cities in Saint Paul. In our city, there are many different realities where there are neighborhoods who are thriving, neighborhoods who are the working poor, families are struggling to make ends meet, young people are graduating college and not able to pay rent, and currently, where you live determines the type of education your kids may receive. This is the experience of many of our eastside families whom I've met at the doors. I will work with all stakeholders of our city and school district to study to better fully understand the situation and develop community solutions to dismantle systems of oppression that prevents families for progressing.

5. Research shows the importance of stimulation starting at birth. We know students are more successful in school when they have access to high-quality early childhood education. All students should have access to these programs, whether through our public school systems or accredited independent providers.

a. How will you partner with SPFE to ensure all families have access to quality Pre-K and early learning programs in our city?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: I have been an advocate for Early Childhood since I first asked myself if I wanted to be a product of my environment or if I wanted to be a product to my environment. I ultimately chose the latter. I will first start by figuring out what resources are available, identify loopholes and work in concert with SPFE to move towards measurable solutions that fills those gaps.

TONY HER: Yes, I will work and partner with SPFE to make sure all families have access to quality Pre-k and early learning programs in our city.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I will look at the group of children whose families are not under the income requirements to send their child to Headstart but also do not make enough income to send their child to a montessori school. This was my experience. My children were not able to receive early childhood education. Education should be available to every child and not excluded based on technicalities.

TERRI THAO: The key to any successful partnership is communicating our goals and intent to each other to identify shared goals and outcomes. A city council member can certainly use their communication vehicles to share the value of attending these programs and share where early learning and quality Pre-K programs are located. I would want to make sure that these programs are located in areas along bus or transit lines or within walking distance.

NELSIE YANG: I believe in shared power where we work in collaborative partnership with all stakeholders. The only path to a comprehensive solution is where all stakeholders from across our city come together for community based solutions. I will ensure SPFE is at the table to continue to co-create programs and services for our youngest learners.

b. New research shows that many Minnesotans live in childcare deserts, without adequate access to childcare options for their children. How will you use your role to provide additional options early learning options for parents?

ALEXANDER BOURNE If you view the “priorities” tab on my website www.AlexanderJBourne.com, you will see that we are fighting to make sure that every child under the age of 5 receives complimentary childcare until every child under the age of 5 receives free pre-school. Will you join us in this fight?

TONY HER: I support with early childhood education that is better than childcare education.

DANIELLE SWIFT: We should consider the creativity of the parents who are already making it work. For example providing funding for families and neighbors who rely on

each other to provide and receive child care and offer resources and funding for them and looking at providing childcare for 2nd and 3rd shifts.

TERRI THAO: First, I would review current city rules to ensure that zoning rules allow for childcare businesses to operate across the city. I would be open to having city facilities such as recreation centers and libraries serve as continued or additional areas for early learning options.

NELSIE YANG: I am about creating access and opportunities. We know the eastside and the poorest areas of our city tend to be deserts of all basic services: grocery store options, child care providers, good school options, high quality playgrounds and parks, and much more. I will work to support initiatives to bring high quality child care to Ward 6. I will work with current child care providers, SPFE, and SPPS to assess to understand how we can improve and expand current services. I will also work with future childcare providers to develop high quality childcare services on the eastside. Families need to have high quality childcare providers in their neighborhood and should not have to drive across town for this basic human right service.

6. The current federal Secretary of Education is well-known for her support of “disrupting” public education through “school choice” in the form of online learning, charter schools, and vouchers.

- a. **What is your understanding of how education reform policies impact public education?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Without adequate education, our government is exemplifying nothing less than misrepresentation.”

TONY HER: My understanding reform policies always impact public school because funding and standard.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Education reform is what creates the “norm”. It is extremely important. It is what matters to the experience of black and brown youth to receiving equitable education.

TERRI THAO: One education reform policy I am aware of has been creating teacher evaluation system that uses test scores as a key indicator of teacher performance. This is problematic because most people are aware of the biases in testing itself and using this as a key indicator does not acknowledge all the growth a student does make in an academic year. In a public education system where they have to accept all students, this is hard to expect of educators.

NELSIE YANG: Modern education reforms are backed by big money whose interest is not about thriving families and communities for all. Instead, their efforts are to divide communities and ensure we continue to have an education gap, especially between the richest and poorest, and between white students and indigenous and students of color. It’s clear and simple that education reform initiatives aim to dismantle public education America and divest public funding towards other educational programs.

b. What is your understanding of how charter schools differ from local public schools?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: This question calls for a deeper conversation but in short, Charter schools are public schools but are independent of school districts through contracts with state or local boards – that’s a problem! Charter schools are said to be open to all children (which they are not), do not require entrance exams (which some do), should not charge tuition (but do), and must participate in state testing and federal accountability programs. Each school creates their own “charter” which is a set of rules and performance standards that they are held accountable to. Whereas, public schools are mandated to adhere to education policies outlined by state and federal guidelines. They are governed by the school district, which is run by a fundamentally flawed democratic process that community elects school board members

TONY HER: The different between Charter school and charter school charter school have their own discipline rules and can’t share fund with property tax district funding.

DANIELLE SWIFT To my understanding charter schools are interest specific schools which unlike public schools are not open to everyone. They are responsible for setting guidelines which may differ from the district. They threaten the funding to public schools.

TERRI THAO: Charter schools have a sponsor and do not have to comply with local school districts but instead have to meet their “charter”. They also have less requirements to state regulations such as hiring educators who do not yet have their license but are working towards accreditation and selecting their own curriculum for their schools.

NELSIE YANG: With the inception of school choice, charter schools became an option for families to enroll their students outside of private and traditional public schools. Charter schools receive the same fundings that public schools receive per pupil, but they lack the public oversight that public schools are held accountable with. Public school boards are elected by residents of the district to govern the school district. Whereas charter school boards are not publicly elected. Therefore, charter schools lack oversight of progress and accountability by the public.

c. Will you support a moratorium on new charter schools and charter school expansions so that a comprehensive study can be done on the impact of charters schools in our communities (including segregation, tax base, land use, and neighborhood impact)? Who would you partner with for this study? Who would you include as stakeholders?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Yes, but ONLY if the study is centralized around educators, students and parents.

TONY HER: Yes and no yes if the charter school that have successful academic but no if the charter school do not have successful academic.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Yes I support a moratorium on new charter schools. I would partner with SPFE, SPPS, Ramsey County, teachers, parents and students.

TERRI THAO: I would be open to having a comprehensive study completed but I am not sure if a moratorium is needed for this to happen. For this study, I would partner with a local university to conduct the study and include as stakeholders: parents of children who attend either type of school, educators and SPFE union members and leadership, small business owners, larger business entities, local residents, and representatives from the local school district and charter school association.

NELSIE YANG: I will support comprehensive studies to better understand the impacts of charter schools within our city limits. Although the city does not approve charter school petitions, we do have input on businesses who want to operate within our city limits. This is why I am in favor of a moratorium until a comprehensive study is complete.

The study should include a diverse and inclusive team of people who work in education, people from various government entities, community members and leaders, city officials, businesses, labor partners, charter schools leadership, the department of education, families and students, and all those who have stake in education outcomes of all kids in Saint Paul.

7. SPPS and the City of Saint Paul presently do business with institutions that engage in practices that destabilize our community through predatory lending practices, investing in private prisons, and corporate tax avoidance. These practices have led to economic injustice and racial discrimination in our city.
 - a. **How will you use your role to make sure that the largest corporations in Saint Paul pay their fair share?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Because I have been a victim of these flawed practices, I feel I can leverage my narrative to in a push for Payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT). If a program like PILOT is not implemented, then the only people who will continue to suffer is property owners via rising tax rates and poor people via the slashing of funding. On my website, I state that “once elected, I will embrace and implement policies that appropriately reflects who we are as a community and abolish those that do not.” I mean that wholeheartedly.

TONY HER: Candidate should propose ordinance to enforce the largest corporation to pay their fair share for public education.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I will use my role to speak truth to power and demand that big corporations pay their fair share. I will always center our youth and teachers in decision making at City Hall rather than thinking of the best ways to make money.

TERRI THAO: I would continue to elevate the role and overall benefit that the public education system provides for these employers. I would be open to sponsoring a study that actually tracks whether this is occurring.

NELSIE YANG: I believe that corporations and institutions who conduct business within our city limits and benefit from it should pay their fair share to invest back in our community. For too long large corporations and institutions have been exempted from contributing to their share of our city. Through these exemptions, dollars that should've been invested to build a thriving city are stripped from families who are now the major contributors to fund our city needs. I am a strong proponent of creating access and opportunities for businesses to set their roots in Saint Paul, but they must be good neighbors who contribute to support our families and city. I will work alongside the community and SPFE to build a better Saint Paul where everyone has stake in our city and equitably contributes to improving it.

- b. **Predatory lending practices increase foreclosure rates, destabilizing families. Will you join with SPFE in calling on banks to refrain from foreclosing on homes of school age students during the school year? What steps will you take to separate the city of Saint Paul from institutions that participate in predatory lending?**

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Yes, I will. I do not know exactly what that process looks like right now but knows the importance of modifying and reshaping what that relationship looks like.

TONY HER: Yes, candidate and the city should join SPFE to participate in predatory lending.

DANIELLE SWIFT: We have to divest from those institutions that are not invested in the educations and futures of our youth. We need someone who is going to be unapologetic about putting people over profits.

TERRI THAO: Yes, I would ask banks to not foreclose on families. I am committed to housing options to prevent disruption in the lives of families and education for students. The steps I would take to separate the city from predatory lending institutions would be: 1) review the current banking business relationship the city has and if needed issue a new RFP for financial services (this was done in Minneapolis a few years ago); 2) continue to regulate alternative financial establishments that strip wealth from being geographically located or concentrated in specific neighborhoods but I would continue the public to use institutions such as the East Side Financial Center (a project I worked on creating) to educate on credit and create better borrowers.

NELSIE YANG: I know what it feels like to have your dignity stripped away through home foreclosure due to predatory lending. As a child of political refugees from Laos, my parent's American dream was to raise a family outside of war zone, where they can provide a dream home for their children, put food on the table, afford a college education for all their children, and live a life that is broken from the shackles of poverty and war. However, in 2013, I saw my parents foreclosed their dream home due to predatory lending. Although my parents worked hard, they couldn't make ends meet and in a blink of an eye our home was taken away from us. Due to this experience, I never again want to see families go through this horrific situation that my family did. I believe that a home is a basic necessity and a basic human right that no one should have to live without. Count me in to work alongside SPFE to hold banks accountable to harmful practices. I will be a champion to halt foreclosures on homes with children under 18

years old, seniors, and our most vulnerable populations. I will also champion increasing affordable housing in Ward 6 so that families can live with dignity in our city.

Along with holding banks accountable, we need to hold our city accountable for its business practices. I will work with City Hall to assess different banking institutions for our city businesses. We should not conduct business with institutions who are causing harm that dismantles our communities and hurt families.

c. Will you commit to working with SPFE to seek the revenue we need to have racially equitable schools? What does this look like to you?

ALEXANDER BOURNE: Yes, while I do not know exactly what that process looks like but one idea that we are exploring is rooftop gardens using hydroponics and aquaponics, beginning with buildings that the properties that the city already owns. This can not only serve as an additional revenue stream for the city but also address an array of social issues.

TONY HER: Candidate should not commit seek revenue for racially equitable school but for the school for everyone.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Absolutely. Building racially equitable schools to me looks like relationship building. Listening and learning about what our students are facing, what our teachers are facing and what their needs are. Once relationships are established trust can be built and within that we will be able to come up with solutions that benefit the youth who are most disenfranchised.

TERRI THAO: Yes. To me, this looks like doing some learning to understand the current definition and rationale for seeking this revenue. I would engage local residents, business owners and parents on what this would mean for financial impact. I would ask SPFE and these stakeholder groups to create accountability measures together and report back on them semiannually or annually.

NELSIE YANG: I am committed to support initiatives that will seek for schools to be fully funded and for funds to be allocated equitably to level the playing field for all our students.

Count me in to advocate alongside SPFE at City Hall, at the school district, out in the community doorknocking, phonebanking, and at the state legislature.

8. Traditionally the city of Saint Paul and SPPS have had an arms' length relationship. Each has their own budget, and sphere of influence. However, the actions a city takes impacts the daily lives of students and educators, and the desire to be near quality, local, public schools is often a primary factor in how families decide where to live.
- a. How will you seek out educator and student voice in your decision-making process? What steps will you take to invite SPFE in as a stakeholder? How will you share information with SPFE, parents and students?**

ALEX BOURNE: Strategic partnerships is one of my key attributes. This is a relationship that I sincerely believe that I can strengthen with the support of SPFE. Without community, there will be no unity. Educators, parents and students but be

included at every turn in every process. Anything less than that, is a flawed process. I believe we must distribute information in every language that we have a student speaking at home. This is including digital and print. We need to understand that mailings are ineffective because many parents rent their homes and the database that is used, many times go to the property owner and not the tenant so having a door knocking crew to personally engage with parents at home is something that is necessary. Yes, it can be costly, but certainly a huge step in the right direction when we talk equity and inclusivity

TONY HER: Candidate should support and work with SPFE, students and parents to share decision making.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I will be intentional about being out in the schools and in the community and not wait for issues to arise before making an attempt to build relationships. We live in the age of technology. I will be innovative on how we can use social and other forms of media to communicate with families. Also, we must be mindful of the diversity and languages and provide the proper translations.

TERRI THAO: One option is to literally send flyers home with students about upcoming city issues or introducing the work of the city and role of the city council member. I would hold town hall forums or community office hours at times convenient for parents or even coming to school events or utilizing social media to share information. Another option would be to include explicit criteria for city level policies on how various city proposed ordinances would impact the school system, educators and parents when making decisions. For SPFE I would continue to build relationships and do check ins with members and leadership on a regular basis.

NELSIE YANG: I am done with politics as it is where community has no input in the process and community is left out of the decision making table. I want to live in a community where I am co-creating and co-leading with community. Ward 6 is home to a diverse population, whether that's race, ability, gender, age, profession, and income. Many of our educators are residents of Ward 6. I plan to host community meetings regularly across Ward 6 to engage all of my neighbors. Social media is a platform that's utilized by many people, especially young people. I plan to meet people where they're at by using different communication tools in multilingual to reach out to people: email, social media, online forums, announcements at neighborhood councils, and traditional mail. I want to be added to SPFE's email list and be invited to attend SPFE meetings and events. I also want to meet regularly with SPFE leadership and its members to work to improve our city and education system. As a collaborator, I will be in close relationship with SPFE and invite you to be represented and be at the decision making table. I expect to be held accountable and will seek for support and understanding, in return I have the same expectation with SPFE.

- b. Where do you see opportunities for city and the school district to partner? How will you invite input from SPFE, parents and students on what those partnerships look like?**

ALEX BOURNE: We might have to look at streamlining this relationship by consolidating the City Council and School board. It's too many elected officials who can't share data with one another which is depleting resources that we better leverage to better serve our community. We have too many elected officials that are meeting too much about topics they have not experienced which is preventing us from getting the resources necessary for our students to truly thrive. I bring energy. I understand the urgency and have the bold mindset to tackle these challenges head-on to get results with your support.

TONY HER: In the city of Saint Paul the city council and the super attendant should work together to support SPFE, parents and students.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Having something such as a joint agreement that states exactly what we need to accomplish as a city for our youth guided by the expertise of SPFE. We have to stay in constant communication to keep from operating in silos. I will always be listening for the voices of SPFE because they are listening to the voices of the teachers and students.

TERRI THAO: I see the city and school district partnering on the issue of homeless families and housing overall. The district can easily notify city officials when families move or when a number of them are losing their housing due to increased rents (as in the case of the city of Richfield). The city can move quicker to addressing this issue when we have this information. Again, communication will be key to not just inviting input but maintaining relationships from SPFE, parents and students.

NELSIE YANG: It is vital that the city maintains a strong relationship with the school district since they both are entities that are interconnected and cannot operate without one another. There are many current initiatives that the city has with the school district that need to be sustained: youth programs, recreational programs, transportation, facility usage, etc. I am interested in exploring how we can reimagine our schools to be community hubs. I want all day, weekend recreation programs for youth and families that take place inside our schools. In addition, I believe that our city and schools can work in partnership to address homelessness. We know that the home dynamic impacts how our students show up in the classroom. The school district has as much stake in addressing homelessness as much as the city. I am a proactive leader who approaches stakeholders for input directly instead of waiting for them to approach me. Through the grassroots engagement listed in 8a, I will co-govern with SPFE, parents, and students to ensure we tackle systemic issues in our communities together.

9. In 2018, SPFE joined our institutional partners in calling for elected officials to engage in co-governance and people-centered democracy. As a practice, this means engaging with your partners in all areas of public work, a willingness to be held accountable to promises, and on-going, open communication.

- a. **What do the terms co-governance and people-centered democracy mean to you?**

ALEX BOURNE: co-governance means the St. Paul City Council and School Board working in concert for the betterment of our community.

TONY HER: If candidate get elect he or she must work for the people and let the people to make a decision.

DANIELLE SWIFT: This is the purpose of my running. To bring people back to the center of decision making at a city level. This is the what true democracy looks like.

TERRI THAO: Co-governance means leading together but to get there we need to have shared agreement on the definition and cause of the problem and co-create the solutions together too. A people-centered democracy means that all voices are included in both the process and the outcomes. My current position right now is training leaders of color and indigenous communities to be seated at decision making tables so this is not just an idea for me but an actual practice.

NELSIE YANG: Co-governance is being in deep relationship with stakeholders, inviting them to be a part of decision making table instead of status quo of power which is people making their own decision about communities. It is about consistent and regular communication with stakeholders instead of only going to them when it's needed to check off a box. We hold each other accountable to making sure that all voices are considered before making a decision at the decision-making table.

People centered democracy is about being in relationship with people in community across all identities. I am here to open doors for the community so that changes that are needed in the community can happen. I serve the people. I bring along people to find solutions. Sometimes I will need to be vulnerable and reach deep into communities who have been silenced from democracy to share their stories and bring them along too.

b. What groups and individuals will you look to for guidance?

ALEX BOURNE: SPFE and its allies as wells as educators, parents and students

TONY HER: Candidate must work with everyone instead of one group or individual.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I will look first to the students. Children and youth are incredibly profound. In addition I will look to SPFE, teachers, EA's and our school board.

TERRI THAO: I would start with parent groups at schools, leaders of the various cultural groups such as the Hmong Parent Association at SPPS. I also have relationships with several non-profit grassroots organizations such as Voices for Racial Justice and Neighborhood House who have relationships with St. Paul Public Schools. I also have a personal network of other parents I would ask for guidance as well.

NELSIE YANG: I am not and do not seek to be the expert. I will seek guidance and knowledge from all groups of people, especially those who are relevant to the issue at hand.

They are, but not limited to the following:

Cultural community leaders, elders, indigenous communities, diverse communities, students, youth, parents, teachers, educators, labor unions, District Councils, different entities of government, electeds, organizations, businesses, and community members.

c. What steps will you take to make sure decisions are made with communities, instead of for communities?

ALEX BOURNE: I am 100% opposed to practices where government tells the community what is best for the community. I believe the community should tell the government what they need, and the government musters the resources to satisfactorily address those needs.

TONY HER: Candidate must set up a public meeting and take the majority voice to help to make the decision.

DANIELLE SWIFT: I will lead the engagement process. We have to be intentionally inclusive. Meeting parents and families where they are at and not expecting them to always come to us. Knowing what we know about the challenges that many families face, we must create a path of little to no resistance when it comes to hearing from families.

TERRI THAO: Communication is key to this work. To ensure we are doing with and not for communities they foremost need to be at the table since they will often raise up problematic issues ahead of time. After this we need to make sure criteria for decision making is based on the benefit to various communities and evaluate decisions based on this agreed upon criteria. Finally, we need to ensure transparency in this process and communicate this to community as well.

NELSIE YANG: I want to see a thriving eastside where schools are a community hub, families are thriving, students are challenged with a rigorous education, educators are respected, families can open businesses to achieve their hopes and dreams, young people want to stay in the community, and the community is driving all changes in their neighborhood. This vision is only possible through co-governing. I am committed to continuous and regular communication with my constituents. Please refer to 9a about my values in co-governing.

d. How will you separate your accountability to the public good you're your personal feelings?

ALEX BOURNE: The East Side deserves a representative who is from the community and who brings energy, urgency, and the bold mindset to tackle challenges head-on to get results. Once elected, I will embrace and implement policies that appropriately reflect who we are as a community and abolish those that do not.

Governing through an equitable and inner-generational lens that is aligned with the rights of our immigrants while promoting gender equity, racial justice, our youth, veterans, senior citizens and environment is what the East Side deserves. In short, my vision of Saint Paul is vibrant, inclusive and livable, a city that gives encourage people to reimagine possibilities!

TONY HER: Candidate should always put their service first and put their personal feeling away from their work.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Noone is perfect. It seems realistic that at times personal feelings create blind spots in the thought process. However, having strong, transparent relationships with community that is made up of teachers, educators, students and parents.

TERRI THAO: My commitment is to the public good and I am able to separate my personal feelings from the broader goals of equity that need to be accomplished. I have learned from working on these issues over the years that having personal feelings in this work of seeking justice is not necessarily a bad thing. If I am angry about an issue then I know I need to channel this into the larger structural changes that need to be made. By sharing our anger this helps spur collective action too.

NELSIE YANG: My stake in this race and why I am running for office is not to check off a list of accomplishments. For too long there has been a lack of investment in Ward 6. The lived experience and voices on the eastside has been neglected and silenced at city hall. My personal stake in this race and why I've dedicated my life to community organizing is to build a world where we dismantle systemic racism and oppression so that families can prosper.

10. What specific steps will you take to protect the right of workers – especially public sector workers – to bargain collectively? How will you encourage all workers to be part of a union, should they choose to?

ALEX BOURNE: Candidate Response: While I do not know the intricate details pertaining to each individual union contract, I do know that I will do nothing to alleviate the protection of works. I also know and appreciate that unions can train, employ and protect workers. I just want to see unions do more to assure those things for people of color. That is something that I have been discussing with labor and trade unions on the East Side in recent months. I believe I can strengthen the relationship with unions and communities.

TONY HER: Candidate must support the Unions so I will encourage every public sector workers to join the unions the unions so the union can protect the employee.

DANIELLE SWIFT: Relationships equate wealth when it comes to building up communities. I will maintain relationships throughout the district with decision makers and always practice active listening in order to learn how I can best support workers and their rights. I will always encourage all workers to join unions. Unions are what movements are made of. Unions are what keep people active and keep things moving towards a more progressive and equitable workforce.

TERRI THAO: I would ask organized labor how to best share their stories of why this matters. I would learn about current city agreements with public sector workers so that I would not be assuming any ideas about our relationship. I would educate workers on the benefits of being part of a union and ask them what their preconceived notions are so that we could work towards a mutual understanding.

NELSIE YANG: I am a member of MN Newspaper & Communications Guild, Local 37002. In order for us to protect the rights of workers in public sector jobs and to have equitability for everyone I believe that we need to create healthier, positive and productive workplaces for everyone from employee to management; create an arena

where it gives employees a voice to not be afraid to voice their stress and opinions; I'm a strong supporter and believer that Unions promote economic justice for all, it dismantles classism and corporate greed. As a city councilmember, I will Champion for collective bargaining centered on working class families; promoting economic justice for everyone: livable wages and benefits to bring workplace dignity and respect. All this is to level the playing field in the workplace dismantle harmful power structures.