

LEAH WILSON

Seeking Position of: Berkeley School Board Director
www.wilson4berkeleyschoolboard.com

1. **If elected, what are your top priorities during your term? What would you like to accomplish and how would you go about doing so? Please be specific.**
 - a) ***Clear articulation of a discrete set of priorities grounded in evidence, not politics or personality:*** I think it is critically important that we build consensus around a discrete and limited number of priorities, rather than each School Board Director operating under his/her own individual ideas of what constitutes a key district initiative or program. That being said, I believe that the 2020 Vision's focus on early childhood and elementary education is the right one – we know that investments in the early years have huge and lifelong dividends. So, for me, programs falling under this rubric should be prioritized.
 - b) ***Aligning funding with our stated priorities:*** Too often priorities are identified, yet no corresponding funding or implementation plan is developed; these plans must necessarily include roll-out from the district to the school-site level.
 - c) ***Evaluation of what we are doing to see if it actually works:*** Another and related key area of focus will be on constant evaluation to determine if what we are doing is resulting in any concrete results. This simple step is often overlooked in our district, with many seeing the end product as the adoption of a plan, or the establishment of a new program. Clearly, we must be equally committed to evaluating our efforts to see if they are actually working.
2. **How have you in the past and how will you in the future use your position to expand the presence and influence of Asian Pacific Americans in public policy and politics?**

I have a M.P.P. from the Goldman School as well as a J.D. from Boalt. While at the Goldman School, I was involved in the Public Policy Students of Color, a multi-ethnic student group which focused on recruiting students of color to policy school.

As a member of the Berkeley School Board, I will certainly focus on increased participation of Asian students and families in school governance. I think that, because necessarily we are very focused on the achievement gap, which is typically portrayed as a black/Latino/white issue, Asian students and their needs are often overlooked. While typically “good” students, Asians are definitely under-represented in school leadership and governance universally across the district.

3. **What have you done that demonstrates your commitment to and effectiveness in promoting Asian Pacific American interests in the**

following areas (and if you have not contributed in these areas, please discuss any area(s) in which you have made a contribution):

I work for the California Court system, and specifically manage juvenile court programs in all 58 counties statewide. In this work I specifically address issues impacting children and youth in the foster care and juvenile justice systems. With respect to foster care, in some communities within California's Central Valley, there are large numbers of children of Southeast Asian immigrants being brought into care on physical abuse allegations. Many of the parents report that they are utilizing traditional discipline practices, and are bewildered that their children are being taken away from them. I have organized and facilitated a series of community meetings involving advocates, families, the courts and the child welfare agency designed to bridge the divides between these various stakeholders, and to try to develop standards acceptable to both the community and the courts for application in the child welfare context.