

I am Rebecca Gagnon, and I have served Minneapolis Public Schools and our diverse communities for the past 8 years as your At-Large School Board member. I am proud to stand together with educators, community, parents, rank & file union members and other elected leaders. Together, we have fought for public education and against privatization. Together, we have advocated for increased mental health supports, less testing and more culturally relevant curriculum. Together we can get a lot done.

Now more than ever, we must stand strong together. The past few weeks have been difficult, not because I've had to make difficult decisions, but because of the misleading and false rhetoric being spread about my work, my intentions, and recent Board decisions. I am comfortable with conflict and divergent opinions and believe we can disagree constructively. I also believe we can tell our truths with civility but we MUST be honest with one another and we MUST be able to agree to disagree. When the majority of the Board makes a decision, we made an oath as Directors to move forward together as one voice. Instead, actions to intentionally misrepresent the facts and incite communities against each other has divided our efforts to effectively govern. Divided, we erode trust while naysayers and ed reformers benefit from our dysfunction.

But together, we can do better.

That is why I fought alongside the community to save North High, a successful campaign with state championship teams whose student scholar athletes are predominantly on A & B honor roll. I fought for improvements to high school athletic facilities like South and North, because many students thrive academically when they are engaged in sports. I fought to expand and reopen schools in south, SW, North and NE Minneapolis because of terrible overcrowding. I'm not through fighting. And I know I'm not alone in this fight.

As a trusted public servant, I lead with solution-oriented actions. What I REFUSE to do is simply criticize the Superintendent and Administration. Instead, I come to the table proposing solutions. Not voting on our budget is NOT a solution. Accepting a budget without question that devastates school communities is NOT a solution. Requiring our students to bear almost \$20 million or 60% of the \$33 million budget shortfall cuts is NOT a solution.

Restoring union jobs that have a direct impact on our students' academic experience IS a solution. Reducing our admin overhead at Davis center in order to restore academic opportunities for current and future secondary students IS a solution. Let me be clear, we restored funding to 16 middle and high schools and did it without impacting school budgets or dipping in to our reserves. We did it by reducing admin positions at Davis Center. I believe keeping the South High media center open is more important than keeping the Office of Innovation open at Davis Center. I believe maintaining the integrity of the IB program at Henry High School is more important than maintaining money for landscaping and more department admin at Davis Center. And RETAINING our talented school employees that we have already invested in is more important than retaining our Human Talent Acquisition and Talent Management Dept at Davis Center.

That said, I don't think the personal attacks against me have anything to do with the resolution. I know why ed reformers are against me, that is nothing new. But, it is startling that ed reformers and union leaders are together in their efforts to discredit me. This unintentional alliance only serves to give power and credibility to ed reform leaders.

In my 8 years as your At-Large School Board member, I've seen ed reform organizations in Minneapolis rise, fall, regroup, rebrand, and rise again with the same players. MinnCan, Minnesota Comeback, Ed Allies, Black Advocates for Education (BAE), Educators 4 Excellence (E4E), & Students for Educator Reform (SFER); Different name, same game, and most importantly, the same players. They have the money and national backing from billionaires like

the Kochs, Waltons, and Bloomberg to continue to reinvent and rebrand their efforts to dismantle public education. That is why NOW we must stand together as leaders, labor, parents, and community.

I am asking for your support today, for you to consider my eight years of hard work and advocacy for our schools. Even if you disagree with some of my decisions, look at the entirety of my efforts, as an informed, engaged, tireless leader for our public schools. I want to continue to improve our educational system for ALL students, together, in partnership and collaboration. I am proud to be endorsed by Senator Hayden, Mayor Frey, Representative Hornstein, Council Member Warsame, Park Board Commissioners Severson and Hassan, and School Board members Jourdain and Felder. I work with every level of government to remove barriers for our students, for ALL students, in every corner of the city. Yes, for SW Mpls. Yes, for the Northside. Yes, for South and Northeast. I am your at-large school board member, representing all students, all schools, and want to continue to fight for public education together.