

ALAMEDA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

CANDIDATE APPLICATION AND INFORMATION SHEET

*****Please note: Candidates must reside within the boundary of the Alameda Unified School District to qualify for this appointment. AUSD Boundaries only include the City of Alameda. Candidates please ensure your home address is included below so that your residency can be verified.***

Please complete and ensure your application packet is received on or before October 1 at 5:00 p.m. at:

Alameda Unified School District
ATTENTION: SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE
2060 Challenger Dr.
Alameda, CA 94501

OR emailed to **klonergan@alamedaunified.org**

Application packets should include a completed version of this form, a resume, and a letter of interest.

Date: 22nd September 2021

<u>Johnson</u>	<u>Marisa</u>	<u>M.</u>
(Last Name)	(First Name)	(Middle Initial)

Business Address: [REDACTED] Phone:

Home Address: [REDACTED] Phone: [REDACTED]

E-mail: [REDACTED]

Occupation: Senior Corporate Counsel

Employer or Name of Self-Employed Business: [REDACTED]

No. of Years Residing in District: 3+

Do you have children in the district's schools? Yes X No

If yes, what schools? Paden Elementary

1. Do you have prior experience serving on a governing board, including a school district board?

Please list your prior board experience.

See attached document for answers for questions 1-12.

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Marisa Johnson

1. Do you have prior experience serving on a governing board, including a school district board? Please list your prior board experience.

I have extensive experience serving as a Board member for various non-profit organizations. I began my career in non-profit service as a teenager, when I served as a Board Member, and then Board Vice President for a 500-member regional animal rights advocacy organization in Western New York.

2018-present, Board Member, California Lawyers for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

2016-2018, Board Member and Interim President, ArtWorks Now, Hyattsville, MD

1994-1996, Board Vice President, Animal Rights Advocates of WNY, Buffalo, NY

2. Have you worked on any school committees or participated in any school activities recently? Please list them.

I am a member of the Paden Elementary PTA and I have served as classroom representative for my daughter's 1st and 2nd grade classes, including during the Remote school year. I try to volunteer as much as possible for events like the Paden Walk-a-thon and Field Day.

3. Describe any other community or business activities in which you have participated. describe your role, and whether your work was volunteer or employment-related

2019, Committee Member, Adobe Pro Bono Legal Program. Led Adobe's legal department initiative to partner with local non-profit organizations in three offices (SF, SJ, and Lehi, UT) to enable in-house counsel to provide pro bono legal services. [Employment related]

2016-2018, Committee Member, Sustainable Hyattsville. Organized and participated in the successful community-led effort to stop commercial development of public parkland. [Volunteer]

2012, Volunteer Lawyer, Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts, Washington, DC. Provided pro bono legal assistance to artists. [Volunteer]

2001, Legal Intern, Immigration Equality, New York, NY. Provided pro bono legal assistance to indigent LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers. [Employment related]

2001, Legal Intern, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, New York, NY. Provided low cost and pro bono legal assistance to artists. [Employment related]

1999, Committee Member, Campus Police Review Board, SUNY Purchase, Purchase, NY [Volunteer]

4. Why do you want to be a school board member?

I have a strong sense of public service. In my career as an attorney in the private sector, I have prioritized pro bono work and volunteering for non-profit organizations, particularly for groups and initiatives focused on education, advocacy, and the arts.

As a mother, my daughter's education is one of my top priorities. Since making our home in Alameda, my daughter's school has served as the central point of our family's community. I would like to give back to the AUSD community through service on the AUSD Board of Education.

I have a lifelong commitment to public education that has been deeply instilled in me by my family, and my proven track record of community service demonstrates my commitment to working for the public good.

5. What do you see as the basic purpose of the public schools?

I believe public education is a core component of a functioning democracy, and that we have a civic responsibility to educate our youth.

In addition, public education is a means to social and economic advancement. My grandparents were first generation immigrants living in the Bronx, NY. My grandfather was orphaned as a child during the Great Depression, and forced to leave school after 8th grade to work in a factory. Despite his own hardships, he instilled in his children the value of an education as a means to escape poverty. After finishing high school at 16, my mother studied to become a public school teacher, and later worked as a professor at a public university educating future teachers. Her brother followed a school administration track to become a Superintendent of schools on the east coast. My grandfather's values have been passed down, and I became the first lawyer in my family at age 24.

Finally, I fully support AUSD's stated mission to uphold our community's core values of equity and excellence for every student by providing inclusive and safe conditions for learning that challenge and support every student to be culturally competent and prepared for college, career, and community participation.

6. What is the role of the school board in the fulfillment of that purpose?

As stated above, I am aligned with the current mission of the AUSD Board of Education. Further, I see the BoE as fiduciaries who are entrusted with the responsibility of managing our district's budget, hiring and management of top administrators, and making the often tough decisions that are in the best interests of our students and their education.

7. How does the board's role differ from that of the superintendent?

The BoE is responsible for setting priorities, establishing policies, and evaluating the outcomes of

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district operation.

By contrast, the Superintendent is in an executive role, and serves as the district's educational leader, and reports to the BoE about district operations, activities, and needs.

8. What should be the relationship between the board members and the administration in the handling of school concerns?

Ideally, the BoE and the Superintendent should share the same goals and vision to provide cohesive leadership of the educational community. The BoE should be proactive in establishing relationships and lines of communication with the administration of each school so that issues can be identified and addressed early. The BoE is responsible for management of the administration and dealing with disciplinary or removal proceedings due to misconduct, as well as for ensuring district HQ personnel are responsive to requests from school administrators.

9. Briefly describe how you believe you will contribute to the educational process.

As a BoE member, I would contribute to the educational process by providing community leadership to advocate for children and our schools. Further, I bring over 15 years of legal experience, and while I would not act as a legal advisor to the BoE, my legal expertise will be invaluable in identifying issues that require the opinion of counsel, as well as analyzing and interpreting the advice of counsel. My analytical skills would be key in assessing policies and proposals for Board review. I would welcome the opportunity to apply what I have learned in my professional career for the benefit of Alameda's children.

10. What do you see as the strengths of the school district?

AUSD's biggest strength is its own body politic - the parents, students, faculty, and staff who make up our local educational community.

AUSD is lucky to have elementary and middle schools that are mostly walkable neighborhood schools, and overall good ratios of teachers to students. Most of our schools are high performing and well rated and people move to Alameda to take advantage of our district's good reputation for great schools.

11. What do you see as the area(s) most needing improvement in the school district?

It is easy to analyze the actions and decisions of public officials as a private citizen, but I want to step up to participate in the decision making process. I think top priorities include focusing on emergency protocols for educating students during crisis situations; making capital improvements to facilities, particularly the outdoor areas of many of its campuses; and increasing equitable learning outcomes across the island and Bay Farm.

There is an economic disparity across schools in Alameda that needs to be addressed. When we talk about equity issues in Alameda, we frequently talk about financial inequity. But Title 1

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schools are also struggling to recruit parent volunteers - when parents are facing socioeconomic challenges, including language barriers, they don't have the resources to **volunteer**. At **Paden** alone we have more than 28 languages or dialects spoken at home - the district should inventory the top languages and ensure translation of all school and district communications.

Finally, the BoE is well positioned to engage in advocacy at the State and Federal level for better educational policies and funding resources.

12. What other pertinent information would you like the board to consider?

Prior to law school, I studied fine arts and managed to forge an unorthodox career path for myself. I am a creative thinker and problem solver and I would love to bring my unique perspective to the AUSD BoE. Thank you for your consideration.