

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: **September 26, 2021**

LaLonde	Ryan	C
(Last Name)	(First Name)	(Middle Initial)

Business Address: _____ Phone: _____

Home Address: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Occupation: **Artist**

Employer or Name of Self-Employed Business: **Self Employed**

No. of Years Residing in District: **4+ years total**

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

If yes, what schools? **Lincoln Middle School (Edison Elementary)**

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

Yes, I have had the honor to serve on the governing boards of a few non-profits, organizations, and councils. My tenure and positions were as follows:

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1995 — 1997: Elected Assemblymember, University of Michigan Student Assembly, Art School Representative and Chair/Creator of LGBT Commission (Ann Arbor, Michigan).

2002 — 2008: Board of Directors, COLAGE International (Children of Lesbians & Gays Everywhere) (San Francisco), Board Treasurer 2 years, Board Chair 1.5 years, Board Recruitment Chair 1 year.

2006 — 2008: Board of Directors, Dani Tai Soon Burgess & Co., Korean-American Dance Company (Washington, DC) 2 years, Communications Chair.

2009 — 2012: Goddard School Parent Advisory Board (Vernon Hills, IL).

2015 — 2017: Elected member, AUSD School Site Council (SSC) (Alameda, CA), 1 year Vice President, 1 year Secretary.

2016 — 2018: Edison School PTA Executive Board, (Alameda, CA), 1 year Edison PTA President, 1 year Edison PTA Diversity and Inclusion Co-chair, and 1 year Fundraising Co-Chair.

2017 — 2018 & 2021: Executive Board, Alameda PTA Council, (Alameda, CA), 1 year Treasurer, half-year Auditor, half-year (current) President.

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

I have dedicated most of my time in the four years we have lived in Alameda to committees, organizations, and groups that benefit our schools. It has been some of my most rewarding work. Besides the elected position in Edison SSC, PTA, and the Alameda PTA Council (mentioned above) I have participated in:

2015 — 2017: Member of the AUSD Black Achievers Alliance (Roundtable)

2017 — 2018: Member of AUSD Social Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias/Anti-Bullying/Equity Committee

2015: 2018: Edison Art Docent, Special Day Art Program

2016: AUSD Principal Hiring Committee

2016: Organizing member of the committee for Measure B1 (Edison)

2017 — 2018: Member of the AUSD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council

2021: Member of the AUSD SEP Committee

2021: Currently a Member of the LGBTQ Roundtable

2021: Currently a Member of Alameda Mosaic

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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

My family and I are so lucky to call Alameda home. Prior to moving to Alameda, I have been active in non-profit work and communications. For 12 years I was the Washington, DC COLAGE Chapter leader - running the support group and programming for children with LGBTQ parents. While living in Lake County Illinois, I was honored to be appointed as a court special advocate for youth in foster care. And since our time in Alameda, I have been very active in various community activities. There are so many amazing organizations doing important work across the island. I have always offered my communication skill set and design work to various organizations around Alameda (from Alameda Point Collaborative to ARPD) on different occasions. I have also been fortunate to have the time to participate in the following:

**2015 — current: Participant in ArtWalk Fridays
2015 — current: CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) for youth in foster care
2015 — current: Participated with son in beach cleanup activities
2016 — 2018: Alameda Welfare Council, Yard Sale Volunteer
2016 — 2018”- Volunteer/Communications, Food Shift, Alameda non-profit
2016 — 2017: Alameda Little League (team communications)
2020: Alameda City: designed the COVID-19 memorial materials
2020: current: Alameda County Democrats Club
2021: Alameda City: designed LGBTQ Small-Business Pride Month materials
2021: Urban Park Clean-up
2021: Alameda Recreation and Parks Department, designing
Chochenyo Park interpretive signage**

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

Being a Board of Education Trustee is a great responsibility and I want to be appointed to this position to continue the forward momentum we have seen in the past few years. I feel a responsibility to ensure students like my son are not falling through the cracks of the special education program. I want to be a bold voice that asks questions and brings ideas to the table to create better outcomes for our students who are not reaching their fullest potential. I want to be a clear communicator that speaks to the public about our process and decisions. I was to be a history-maker as the first LGBT person on the AUSD BOE (given our past history in not supporting our LGBT students and families, this is a powerful message of representation).

Most of all, during this time of important transition in AUSD, it is important for a community member to fill this position who can hit the ground running to finish out the term. As someone who has participated in school board meetings (every meeting since COVID began) and who also participates in the policy, state, and

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city subcommittees I know what the current points of conversation are and how AUSD functions in budgeting, operations, and communications. I have built great relationships with AUSD's amazing employees — staff, principals, teachers and administration — and want to continue pushing for our best work.

It would send a powerful message in this time when we are shifting our strategic plan to lift up students who have been under-served (African-American and Latinx students, SpEd students, foster students, and ELL students) with a parent of a Black Special Education student who works as an advocate for youth in the foster system. I have been an active member of the AUSD community in leadership throughout my tenure here. I can feel in every atom of my being that I will do justice to this position by doing the research, participating with thoughtfulness, communicating clearly and promptly, and fully engaging in the process to make sure that our public schools provide quality education for ALL students.

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

I grew up only ever attending public schools, from preschool to college. My grandmother was an elementary school teacher throughout my entire childhood and showed me the dedication that teachers put into their class and craft every year. School was a refuge from home and a place where lifelong friends began. All these experiences have confirmed that a public school serves a purpose greater than the basic answer of simply a place that prepares students for college or the workforce.

Public schools need to provide students with the tools for their individual success and inspire them to enter the world to do better than those before them. It needs to be more than a place for education but also a place of refuge, a safe space. Public schools should be a beacon of quality education and constantly strive to do better.

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

The school board works hand-in-hand with the staff, teachers, administration, students and their families and the community to ensure that the school district stays on track for its goals. The board is elected to make sure that the work, budgets, resources, policies and structures are not only sound, but thoughtful and rooted in a strategic vision. It is paramount that a board member is a partner creating quality education for all students and dedicate their time on the board to understand the issues, raise valid questions, make fact-based decisions and to act in good faith to uphold the mission of the school district. A school board should provide a space where voices are heard, information is shared, and community is built.

Also, the board plays a vital role in the crafting of policy and working with stakeholder groups through the subcommittees. It is important that the board members are stewards of the district and work with leadership to make recommendations and ideas that lead to better outcomes for our students.

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

In the last two years we have seen the role of a superintendent in a different way. Superintendent Scuduri has been on the frontlines of making sure that the district's students, staff, principals and teachers have not only been safe and healthy, but also working to ensure that education could be delivered during an unprecedented pandemic. The superintendent is the chief executive of the school district. Her/his role is to manage the overall operations of the school district, working with all staff to determine which resources, policies and structures need to be implemented. Covid-19 laid bare the importance of having a clear communicator and a leader that makes, sometimes unpopular decisions for the good of the district.

The board's role is to evaluate the superintendent's/district's operations. The board is a public checks and balances. Board members should be watchful partners able to ask hard questions about resources, priorities and structures. The board is in place to make sure the district's operations are indeed responsive to the values and priorities of the community. Board members are there to help set direction and be advocates of quality education for students.

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

We are fortunate in Alameda to have a very active, vocal and passionate community. It is what makes our island so special. A school board should be the eyes and ears in moments of concern as well as an amplifier of communications on procedures and policies. The board should listen to all the information and reflect on how operations and structures may have led to the concern, checking in with the administration as needed. The administration and our school principles are the frontline on all school concerns and should be the first to respond to those concerns. Having open communication with leadership is key to a district's success.

As a court appointed special advocate (CASA) for youth in foster care, I am tasked with the responsibility to be the eyes and ears of the judge and court, making sure the youth in my charge are navigating the system in place with care and success. As a board member, I will continue that mindset of listening, observing, researching and then asking what can be done to make things better.

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

My past experience in my work with the district is exactly how I will continue to move forward the educational process. My unique perspective and background will make me a fresh and bold voice on the school board. I grew up in poor, bouncing on and off welfare in a rural farm town in Michigan with divorced parent, guided mostly by my single lesbian mother. I lived in a trailer for half of my childhood and then as a latchkey kid in town. I am an open and proud gay father of a student in AUSD. My husband Chris and I have navigated the roller coaster of IEPs and racial hate while on our son's education journey. We have been a part of other school districts and have seen how things can work differently as well.

My background in public relations and communications has given me keen insight into how to ask what stakeholder needs are and how we talk about it. My work on district committees and groups has shown that I am driven by equity and creativity.

I will be a board member that is responsive, thoughtful, inquisitive and vocal. I am quite familiar with our LCAP goals and the ways we work to meet not only the States expectations but also our communities. I have worked with finance on school budgets and know how prioritization works.

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

When we moved to Alameda in 2015, we wanted to live here because of the small town feel, the diversity, the proximity to San Francisco, and the neighborhood schools. As a same-sex, interracial family, it was important to be able to find reflections of ourselves. We loved the idea that our son could walk to elementary, middle, and high schools. We knew that having neighborhood schools would have a profound benefit in friendships and independence for our son. The schools were top rated online, but what we found was something so much more than what an online grade can capture.

We have experienced firsthand the strengths of AUSD. From dedicated and passionate teachers and staff to a willingness to do better, I have found AUSD to be a district that balances finance and its numerous needs in a state that constantly underfunds public education. A major strength is passionate faculty: working daily to find better ways of "getting through" to students. They build classrooms to engage their students — out of their own pockets. I have seen the teachers in AUSD being the best stewards of education in the city. Their creativity and passion is not only for their students but for the district as a whole.

I have seen the strength in the students, whose leadership is inspiring. I have powerfully witnessed 5th graders rallying on campus to promote gun control. I have seen students coming together to create talking circles after hate crimes and student leaders pushing for many of the changes we have seen happen at our school sites (recycling, sexual harassment policies, homework policies, and self expression rights). Having a district that empowers our young community leaders is a huge strength.

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

Many of the areas needing improvement in AUSD stem from a chronic lack of State funding. California ranks nationally every year around 41st in the country when it comes to education spending. My hope is that there will be an influx of Federal dollars to aid smaller school districts like ours in many of the areas needing improvement.

Our Special Education system of services and education needs a reimagining. While we have many quality teachers and paraprofessionals, our system is not working for all students. Many Special Education students are receiving services outside of the district while others have not had their service hour goals met. With the State stepping in and focusing on a reconciliation of processes through the CCEIS, there are great strides and plans for improvement in the future. And as a parent of a Special Education student, I am eager to be a part of making the needed changes.

I believe our Early Education programs could be expanded and made more available to help create better foundations for our students as they enter Elementary education. There is so much potential to provide early interventions and education to put our students on equal footing as they start their primary education.

Another area that COVID-19 exposed was our lack of technology. We had to scramble to respond to at-home learning and needed to build many capacities to make it work. Many other school districts are leading the way in technology, with students starting in 3rd grade using personal computers. We need to build a robust technology division. We are in the heart of the tech world and we should be using the best practices of technology-based learning to meet the expectations of the 21st century demands.

While no district is perfect, anywhere, I think one last area would be our pipeline to college and the workforce. We have an amazing partnership with the College of Alameda (which is a strength) but not all students are able to have the privilege of taking college level courses. I would love to take advantage of the great partnership the city and the district has with trade unions and build up our trades program. Gone are the days of woodshop, CAD class, and mechanics. These programs spark interest and excitement for future engineers, carpenters, and even artists. As an art major, I relied heavily on the hands-on-experience these types of classes and programs provided me. They are life skills that build future leaders. While we may focus rightly on AP courses and dual enrollment, I think it is imperative to also build-up the skilled trades and show a diverse path for all our students of their potential.

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

In my letter of intent, I outlined 10 skills or values that are paramount for a school board member to possess and/or embody. These are all skills and values that I truly embody and would bring to the table as the new school board member. Here is a brief outline of those needs that I fulfill with my experience and knowledge.

Given that the strategic plan focuses on uplifting BIPOC, Black, Special Education, English Language Learners and Foster Students, it is important that we have board members that have experience in the education journey of these types of students and their families.

With the urgency of funding issues this year (and every year), it is valuable to have new board member that is familiar with the AUSD budget, LCAP process and inter-workings of the district.

It is paramount that the new school board member be skilled in communicating with the public.

We need board members that have a pulse on what is happening at our school sites and strengths and challenges they are facing.

As we come out of the storm of COVID-19 and its effect on the mental health of students, having board members who are familiar with children's mental health is critical.

Given that AUSD School Board Trustees are Alameda Leaders - it is important that School Board members have a legacy of volunteer work in Alameda and understand the wants and needs of the most vulnerable families in our community.

We need board members that are familiar with how elected governing bodies work and the complex issues that the AUSD BOE oversees.

With a new bond renewal on the horizon (as we have to finish many projects the previous bonds started) it is important to have a board member that understands ballot initiatives and voter-outreach campaigns.

Our school district is made stronger because of solid partnership with our employee organizations. Having a board member familiar and connected to how these partners work will benefit the greater community.

And lastly, but historic - AUSD has never had an openly LGBT board member. And given the board history of problems with truly embracing LGBTQ students, LGBTQ families and their children, it would be a trailblazing "representation matters" move for our community.

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Thank you for completing the Candidate Application and Information Sheet.

Please note that the information provided here becomes public information and may be open to public inspection, including through a California Public records Act Request.

If you have questions about this application, please contact
Kerri Lonergan: klonergan@alamedaunified.org or 510.337.7187