

Thank you for participating in the 2023 Activist Toolkit Voter Guide to the Oak Park consolidated election. This year's guide will collect articles, videos, relevant web links, and contact information and post them online at [activisttoolkit.org](http://activisttoolkit.org) for easy access by voters. It will be published on or before March 20, 2023 and updated periodically through election day. The guide is non-partisan and will not include endorsements.

We hope you will complete the attached questionnaire and return your responses to [activisttoolkitop@gmail.com](mailto:activisttoolkitop@gmail.com), along with a digital headshot, by March 15, 2023. Late submissions will not be included at launch but may be published late at our convenience. You are also welcome to include links to any online material you would like to have appear in the guide.

Activist Toolkit ([activisttoolkit.org](http://activisttoolkit.org)) is a resource for progressive activists in and around the near west suburbs of Chicago. The site was created in early 2017 by Paul Goyette and Carollina Song, Oak Park activists looking for ways to help people connect with local political initiatives and facilitate connections between progressive organizations.

**DISTRICT 97 SCHOOL BOARD**  
**2023 ACTIVIST TOOLKIT CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please limit answers to 200 words.

- 1) What motivates you to seek this office? What makes you qualified to serve? What metrics of success do you plan on holding yourself accountable to?
- 2) How do you make decisions?
- 3) How will you work to ensure that D97 provides an excellent educational experience for all its students? What metrics of success do you plan on holding yourself accountable to?
- 4) How would you approach the budgeting process?
- 5) What would you say to voters who are worried about the tax burden?
- 6) Special education is mandated by federal law. How can District 97 better work to provide an excellent education for students in need of special education?
- 7) How do you define equity? Have recent discussions in the larger community informed or changed your thinking?
- 8) How do you plan to solicit feedback from people who may be experiencing our schools in a different way than you? What barriers do you believe may exist in this process?
- 9) How should the District assess its policies and progress with respect to the racial disparities in its learning outcomes? As a Board Member, how will you determine whether the District is succeeding?
- 10) Public schools have been faced with deciding whether or not to remove books from their shelves if a parent or group of parents deem the content to be inappropriate, too controversial or objectionable. How would you handle this issue and how should District 97 handle this question?
- 11) After a two year hiatus, District 97 recently adopted a new intergovernmental agreement that creates a partnership with the Oak Park Police Department. What is your vision for a safe school environment? How do police officers in the schools relate to that vision?
- 12) What approach should District 97 take towards intergovernmental cooperation initiatives such as the Collaboration for Early Childhood Development? Are there other specific initiatives that you would like to implement or expand upon?

- 13) What approach should District 97 take towards intermunicipal cooperation with neighboring communities? Are there specific initiatives that you would like to implement or expand upon?
- 14) What lessons learned from the pandemic's early years do you believe will continue to be applicable to the ways that schools operate?
- 15) The School Board's primary responsibility is oversight of the Superintendent. District 97 hired a new superintendent, Dr. Ushma Shah, who started with the district in 2022. What criteria will you use to evaluate the success of Dr. Shah's tenure?
- 16) Do you see a role for the Board in ensuring that the climate at District 97 schools is welcoming to students in minority populations, whether racial, religious identity, LGBTQ, etc.? What specific actions or policies would you propose?
- 17) A new report issued by the Centers of Disease and Control found that in 2021, very large numbers of students experienced poor mental health. Twenty-two percent of students seriously considered attempting suicide and ten percent attempted suicide. These feelings were found to be more common among LGBTQ+ students, female students, and students across racial and ethnic groups. What can D97 do to address this trend?
- 18) For those who are currently serving or have previously served on the D97 Board: What vote are you most proud of, and what vote do you most regret? Why?