

2026 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

St. Tammany Federation of Teachers and School Employees • Local 3952

PURPOSE

The Federation uses this questionnaire, candidate interviews, public records, and other relevant information when considering endorsements. We value responses that are specific, candid, and grounded in the responsibilities of a School Board member. Candidates need not agree with the Federation on every issue but should explain the principles and evidence that would guide their decisions.

Candidate information

Candidate: Amanda Reed Martin

District: District 6

Campaign email: areed90393@yahoo.com

Campaign phone: (225)603-0782

Campaign website: N/A

Submission and endorsement request

- ☒ I am seeking the endorsement of the St. Tammany Federation of Teachers and School Employees.
- ☐ I am not seeking the Federation's endorsement, but I am returning the questionnaire for member information.
- ☐ I am seeking consideration for an eligible political contribution.

Return by: Friday, August 28, 2026, at 11:45 p.m. **To:** union@stfed.org

Response guidance

Please keep each response to 200 words or fewer. Specific examples are encouraged. It is entirely appropriate to acknowledge that a question involves an area you would like to learn more about; if so, please explain how you would become informed and what principles would guide you in the meantime. The Federation may publish responses in full or in substantially complete form, with only formatting corrections.

Candidate certification

By typing my name below, I intend for my typed name to serve as my signature and certify that these responses reflect my own positions. I understand that the Federation may also consider my public record, candidate interview, and other relevant information.

Typed Signature: Amanda Reed Martin **Date:** 8/29/2026

Background and priorities

1. Priorities and Preparation

Why are you seeking election to the St. Tammany Parish School Board? What are your three highest priorities, what experience or preparation do you bring, and how should voters judge whether you have been successful?

Response:

I am seeking re-election to the St. Tammany Parish School Board because our school system is the heart of our community. As a Mandeville High graduate and a mother of five children, four currently attending our schools and one recent graduate, my investment in this district is deeply personal. Serving as Board President has been the ultimate preparation; I have navigated the steep learning curve, passed more policies than any other member, and initiated an unprecedented administrative compliance review. My leadership is rooted in my weekly campus presence as a parent and veteran volunteer. During my next term, I am fully committed to addressing three critical areas: decreasing excessive Chromebook usage to restore classroom focus, enforcing robust discipline policies to decrease bullying and disruptions, and decreasing administrative micromanagement to empower our elementary teachers. Voters and educators should judge my success over the next four years by visible improvements in our schools. Success means fostering a safer, more focused learning environment with less daily screen time, and building a supportive culture where teachers feel respected, trusted, and free from unnecessary administrative burdens. District 6 does not need a newcomer who must learn the system, but a proven leader who demands absolute transparency and delivers results.

2. Record or Readiness

NEW CANDIDATES: What have you done to learn about the St. Tammany Parish Public Schools? What have you learned that most influences your decision to run?

INCUMBENTS: What are three important votes or actions from your current term? What promises have you kept, what work is still unfinished, and is there a decision you would make differently today?

Response:

Every vote is vital, and nothing truly prepares you for this unique governance role until you are in the seat. My most important actions center on deeply educating myself before casting a vote and refusing to fear holding the administration accountable. For instance, I am the only board member who has directed a compliance review of one of our departments. My goal was to ensure our superintendent and curriculum team strictly followed our Pupil Progression Plan regarding student placement. Beyond that, Mrs. Fauntleroy and I initiated key changes to how that plan is developed. My promise to this community has always been an unwavering, objective dedication to our students. Through this work, I've realized the job is never truly finished; we must continuously strive for better. Our strategic goals for student achievement remain ongoing priorities. With the wisdom I have today, I would change how I handled the steep initial learning curve by demanding even deeper administrative context on day one. True preparation comes from the work itself, and I hope to bring this hard-earned experience into a new term.

Governance and employee voice

3. Parliamentary Procedure

How familiar are you with Robert's Rules of Order and the use of fair and consistent rules during Board meetings? 3-Working Knowledge

If elected, would you be willing to participate in training on Board governance and parliamentary procedure? Yes

4. Collective Bargaining

Do you support collective bargaining in St. Tammany Parish Public Schools? Yes

Compensation, finances, and working conditions

5. Employee Compensation

Do you believe compensation for certificated and support employees is competitive? Yes

Yes, I believe St. Tammany's compensation package is competitive on paper, especially when compared to Louisiana districts of similar scale. Evaluating our compensation requires looking at peer systems of similar size, such as Jefferson or East Baton Rouge, rather than tiny rural parishes with skewed averages. Among Louisiana's largest districts, St. Tammany ranks near the top, offering strong health benefits and a stable pension. Additionally, our safe communities offer undeniable quality-of-life value. However, a true assessment must account for our local economy. Some areas within St. Tammany Parish feature a significantly higher cost of living and housing market than our large-district peers. When adjusted for these local expenses, our competitive edge narrows. This directly impacts operations. Finding certified teachers and vital support staff has been difficult for several years, and it remains a persistent problem. If we want to attract high-quality talent to our system and ensure employees can afford to live in the communities they serve, data benchmarks are not enough. We must actively raise salaries and leverage local stipends to combat ongoing staffing shortages and attract the best talent for our students. While our benefits and salary data are highly competitive, we still must progressively increase compensation to overcome local cost-of-living barriers and solve our staffing needs.

6. District Finances

Rate your knowledge of STPPS finances and budget. 4-Strong Knowledge

I rate my knowledge of district finances as strong, collaborative, and continuously evolving. School system finance is highly complex, fluid, and heavily dictated by state mandates and changing legislation. During my time on the board, I have dedicated myself to understanding our budget structure, revenue streams, and mandatory state obligations. I respect the expertise of our highly experienced CFO and her dedicated finance team. I view my role as a partner in governance, asking thoughtful questions and ensuring I am fully informed on the impact of every dollar before casting a vote. Looking ahead to my next term, I want to leverage my financial knowledge to maximize how we use

taxpayer dollars. I believe we can find significant cost savings by reducing our reliance on expensive outside curriculum vendors. Instead, I want to reinvest those resources by empowering our own highly qualified, intelligent St. Tammany administrators and teachers to develop local curriculum materials. This will keep money in our district, support our educators, and ensure our students receive a high-quality education tailored to our community.

7. Recruitment, Retention, and Working Conditions

What do you believe affects the district's ability to hire and keep good employees? (Examples might include workload, planning time, duties, class sizes or caseloads, administrative support, career growth, morale, and professional respect.)

Response:

Every factor listed, from manageable workloads to professional respect, is important and affects our ability to hire and keep the high-quality educators our students deserve. My perspective on this is deeply informed by my time on the school board, my service on multiple PTA boards, and my experience raising five children. Over the past several years, I uniquely had kids enrolled in our elementary, middle, junior high, and high schools all at the same time. This gave me a front-row seat to see how much teacher environments, needs, and daily workloads vary across different grade levels, geography, and demographics. Over my next five-year term, I would like to focus on three targeted improvements to boost retention and morale. First, we must trust our elementary and middle school teachers by replacing micromanagement with professional autonomy. Second, we need to provide practical training and real administrative backing so teachers feel fully supported handling classroom discipline. Finally, we must build a stronger culture of collaboration and openness. This starts at the top with the superintendent and must flow seamlessly down to the classroom level. Teachers should never feel out of the loop on major district shifts, and leadership must actively listen to the feedback coming from the front lines of our schools. By treating teachers as trusted partners, supporting them in classroom management, and opening transparent lines of communication, we can make our district the premier place to work.

Teaching, learning, and school climate

8. Professional Autonomy and Instructional Decisions

When a school uses a scripted curriculum, how much freedom should educators have to adjust the lesson, pace, or teaching methods to meet their students' needs?

Response:

Teachers are trained professionals who know exactly how to adapt curriculum to accommodate diverse student needs. When we restrict that expertise with mandatory scripts, we fail to meet our students where they are. No two children learn at the exact same pace or possess the same academic strengths and weaknesses. I believe a scripted curriculum or a pacing calendar should be an available resource rather than rigid mandates. It should ultimately be a choice, utilized if an educator wants to use it or genuinely feels the need to use it to support their classroom. I do agree that a scripted curriculum can serve as an effective tool in specific circumstances. For instance, it can provide guidance and a structured safety net for brand-new teachers, or offer necessary, targeted support for an educator who has received a poor observation score and needs clear benchmarks for improvement. However, for our experienced workforce, we must let them do the job they were trained to do. True professional respect

means trusting educators to adjust their lessons, pacing, and teaching methods to fit the real children sitting in front of them.

9. Safe and Supportive Schools

How should the district handle violence, threats, bullying, repeated behavior problems, and other behavior that makes it hard to learn or feel safe, while also protecting student rights and giving students the help they need?

Response:

This complex issue deserves days of discussion, and because multiple root causes drive these behaviors, solutions will not appear overnight. However, there are things we can immediately change to ensure our classrooms are safer. First, we must better support our frontline staff. The district needs to provide targeted training on the exact documentation and data tracking required to efficiently secure specialized services and placements for students with special needs. I know these detailed procedures exist because I have seen them. Yet, students remain in general classrooms far longer than they should before being moved, signaling clear confusion somewhere in the pipeline. This disrupts learning for everyone and must be fixed. Second, accountability must flow through every level of leadership. Classroom teachers need to know their school administrators back them up, and building administrators must know the district office backs them. Going home with bruises at the end of the day is completely unacceptable; bad behavior must have reliable consequences. Finally, we must redefine how we address bullying. We can no longer dismiss it as "kids being kids," tolerate it because a parent is a donor, or ignore it because it is difficult to manage. I will advocate for deeper institutional understanding of bullying and actively lobby our legislators for stronger laws to protect our children.

10. Educational Opportunity and Student Success

What school programs and opportunities for students should the district improve or add? (Examples might include reading, math, job and career programs, advanced classes, libraries, special education, English language support, gifted programs, art, music, sports, clubs, and other activities.)

Response:

Our district's success relies on targeted, level-specific investments that meet students exactly where they are, while universally strengthening foundational supports like English language programming and the arts. To build a school system that truly thrives, we must move away from one-size-fits-all solutions. At the elementary and middle school levels, we should expand extracurricular clubs to foster a deeper sense of belonging and improve attendance early on. As students transition to junior high and high school, we must pivot resources toward lowering barriers to sports, ensuring more students have the financial and logistical support to participate in athletics. Critically, we must substantially increase English language support across all grade levels to ensure equitable academic achievement for every child as our demographics evolve. Beyond these updates, my highest personal priority is revitalizing our music and arts departments. Our parish is home to incredible educators, and it is time we truly listen to them. I have met directly with several of our music and art teachers; they have brilliant, actionable ideas but are held back by scheduling struggles and obligations outside their expertise. In my next term, I am fully committed to working hand-in-hand with our educators to optimize scheduling, protect their instructional time, and implement their grassroots ideas to build a thriving arts curriculum.

11. Artificial Intelligence, Technology, and Screen Time

How should the district approach AI, technology, student devices, and screen time? (Consider topics such as instructional value, age-appropriate limits, academic integrity, AI literacy, student data privacy, cybersecurity, and the role of educators and parents before new technologies or requirements are adopted.)

Response:

This single question is actually asking four different things to be addressed. Respecting the word limit, I am going to focus my response entirely on the most important issue I see within the district: screen time. Our junior high and high school students look at screens continuously between personal phones and school Chromebooks. While we cannot control phone habits outside of school, we must regulate device usage during the school day. We need to establish a policy that balances necessary screen time, like state-mandated online intervention and enrichment minutes, with the unintended consequences of too much technology. Excessive computer use is harming foundational skills, leading to a visible decline in handwriting and grammar. Constant device access also distracts students, eroding their ability to listen and take manual notes. Furthermore, the invaluable opportunity to physically review a paper test and learn from mistakes has been stripped away. This takes a physical toll, too. Students report headaches, and many now wear blue light glasses during class. I have already initiated conversations with district administration to collect usage data. This will help establish a formal policy setting responsible, healthy screen-time limits for all students.

Accountability

12. Accountability and Accessibility

If elected, how will you stay available to employees and the public, communicate with Federation representatives, and protect employees' right to speak up about workplace concerns? If you make a decision that is different from what you said during your campaign, how will you explain that decision to the public?

Response:

My leadership style is rooted in active, face-to-face engagement. Serving on multiple PTA boards and volunteering continuously in our schools has made me highly visible and accessible. While I am admittedly slow with email, constituents easily find me because I prioritize direct phone calls and in-person conversations. I will maintain this hands-on approach during my next term. It is a huge honor that so many parents and employees trust me with their concerns, and I do not take this deep trust for granted. Navigating our school system can be very scary for a parent and frustrating for an employee. A board member's true superpower is being able to find answers and solve problems for people when they feel lost or have no one else to turn to. A good board member helps navigate that process to find solutions. I am committed to protecting employees' rights to speak up by listening to frontline staff and honoring their confidentiality. Regarding campaign promises: as a board member, my duty is to make decisions based on the most current facts. If new evidence or unforeseen fiscal realities force me to make a decision that differs from a previous stance, I will be transparent. I will own the change directly, publicly share the data that forced the shift, and meet with the Federation to explain the rationale. Accountable leadership means having the integrity to explain your choices honestly.