

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: Brandi Lopez

District: District 1

Campaign email: brandi.lopez77@yahoo.com

Campaign phone: 504-491-0879

Campaign website:

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: Brandi Lopez Date: 8/27/2026

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 election to the St. Tammany Parish School Board because I believe our students, teachers, parents, and support staff deserve a strong voice and a School Board that listens. I care deeply about the success of our students and believe we can continue building on what is already working while being willing to address what needs to change. My three highest priorities are safe schools; student achievement and strong instruction; and transparency, communication, and accountability. I have 12 years of classroom experience, where I witnessed firsthand the needs of our students, teachers, and support staff. This gave me a practical understanding of what works, what challenges educators face, and how important it is for students to have the support and resources they need to succeed. I have attended School Board meetings focused on our budget, funding, deficits, and needs to learn how those decisions affect our schools. I have also talked with parents, educators, and community members to hear their concerns. Voters should judge my success by whether I listened, followed through, and made decisions that improved our schools. Most importantly, I want our students safe, supported, and successful and our teachers' and parents' voices heard.

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:

My experience as a classroom teacher has given me firsthand knowledge of the needs of our students, teachers, and staff, as well as the different needs within our community. I have also begun preparing for this role by attending School Board meetings, learning about the budget and funding, asking questions, and talking with members of our community about their concerns and what they believe needs to be addressed.

What I have learned most is that there is a great deal that goes into making decisions that affect our schools. There are many different needs and perspectives to consider, and those decisions require listening, learning, and being willing to ask questions. That has strengthened my desire to serve—not because I think I have all the answers, but because I can bring my experience, listen to our community, and work to make informed decisions that put the needs of our students first.

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? I need to learn more.

Compensation, finances, and working conditions

5. Employee Compensation

Do you believe compensation for certificated and support employees is competitive? No

6. District Finances

Rate your knowledge of STPPS finances and budget. 3-Working Knowledge

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:

I believe employee recruitment and retention are greatly influenced by the overall working environment. It is not just about compensation; it is about whether employees feel supported, respected, and valued. Workload, adequate planning time, class sizes, caseloads, administrative support, professional growth, and the level of respect employees receive all play a role. Having been in the classroom, I understand that these challenges can look different at different grade levels. At the elementary level, in particular, teachers often have significant responsibilities with limited planning time.

If we want to attract and retain good employees, we need to look at the whole picture and create an environment where teachers and support staff can do their jobs well, feel supported by administration, and know that their work is valued.

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:

I believe educators should have reasonable professional autonomy to adjust the pace, teaching methods, and supplemental resources based on the needs of their students. A scripted or structured curriculum can provide consistency and ensure that important content is being taught, but every classroom is different.

Teachers know their students and can recognize when a concept needs more time, a different approach, or additional resources to solidify learning. I believe we should trust our educators to use their professional judgment while still maintaining the expectations and standards of the curriculum. The goal should not simply be to get through a lesson, but to make sure students actually understand and learn the material.

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:

Safe schools are one of the main reasons I am running. Every student and employee deserves to feel safe and able to learn without repeated disruptions, threats, bullying or violence.

I believe students must be held accountable for behavior that harms others or interferes with learning, with appropriate consequences for repeated or serious behavior. At the same time, we need to recognize individual student needs and provide the support and resources necessary to help them get back on the right track.

I don't believe it is an either-or situation. We can have accountability and compassion. We can protect the rights and safety of all students while also helping students who are struggling learn to make better choices and become successful.

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:

I believe we should focus on providing opportunities that meet the needs of all students and not just some. We need to continue strengthening our gifted programs because we have exceptional students whose needs deserve to be challenged and nurtured. I also believe we should support a wide range of extracurricular activities—not just athletics. Arts, music, theatre, academic organizations, and other activities can be just as meaningful in helping students find their strengths and build confidence. I also

believe we need to strengthen professional development and training for educators working with students in special education, particularly as we see growing needs among students with autism and other exceptionalities. Our teachers need tools and training to meet those students where they are. Ultimately, I want our schools to provide opportunities for every student to discover where they can succeed and have the support they need to get there.

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:

I believe technology has an important place in education, but it should be used intentionally and appropriately for the age of the student. At the elementary level, I believe we need to place more emphasis on foundational skills like handwriting, reading, math, and learning through pencil and paper. I have heard from many elementary educators and parents who are concerned about excessive screen time, and I think those concerns need to be heard.

As students get older, technology skills become increasingly important because it is the world they will enter. With AI, however, we need to be especially thoughtful. We should teach students how to use AI responsibly while also teaching them about its dangers, including misinformation, manipulated images, privacy concerns, and the temptation to use AI instead of developing their own critical-thinking and problem-solving skills.

Before adopting new technology or requirements, I believe educators and parents should have a voice in the conversation. We also need strong cybersecurity and student-data protections. Technology should enhance education—not replace good teaching, critical thinking, and meaningful human connection.

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:

Transparency and communication are very important to me. If elected, I want to maintain open lines of communication with employees, parents, and the public. I want my email and other avenues of communication to be accessible, and I hope to spend time in the schools I represent so I can listen and understand what is happening firsthand.

I also believe employees should feel comfortable speaking up about workplace concerns. I would communicate respectfully with employees and Federation representatives to listen to their

perspectives, even when we may not agree. People should be able to voice concerns without fear of being dismissed or retaliated against.

I also believe that accountability goes both ways. If I make a decision that differs from something I said during my campaign, I will explain how circumstances, information, or financial realities affected my decision. The public deserves to understand the reasoning behind my decisions. I may not always make the decision everyone agrees with, but I will always strive to be honest, transparent, and willing to explain my reasoning.
