

South Lyon Area Democrats: Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire

Application for recommendation by the SLAD to voters in support of your campaign.

City of South Lyon, Lyon Township, and Green Oak Township.

Please email to SLAD candidate endorsement committee: matthew.kardel@gmail.com

Candidate Name (as it will appear on the ballot):

Bridgett McDowell

Office/Position running for (including district number of applicable):

South Lyon Community Schools

Board Member

Partial Term Ending 12/31/2024

Date of submission:

September 21, 2020

Please share a brief biography and personal background:

I moved to South Lyon in 2016 with my family looking for a great community and wonderful schools.

Professionally, I have worked in education for more than 15 years. I am a former middle school math teacher and have worked in math education, research, and assessment since 2004.

I love public education. I received my M.Ed in Educational Psychology at North Carolina State University, where I focused on assessment and psychometrics. I am also a proud Michigan Wolverine. Go Blue!

I live to serve. Currently, I manage social media for South Lyon Area Pumpkinfest. I am a sustaining member of the Junior League of Birmingham, MI, where I most recently served on the Management Team as the Director for Marketing & Communications.

I am the proud mom of a Brummer Bobcat. I live for details and data. I love to research creative solutions to complicated problems. I promise to always keep all South Lyon kids my top priority.

Qualifications for running (include previous appointed or elected public office positions and short resume):

I have worked in education my entire career. I began teaching middle grades math, then transitioned to working in education outside the classroom. I have worked on projects for local, state, and national programs in math education research and assessment. I hold an M.Ed. in Educational Psychology. I currently work for the Michigan Department of Education's Office of Educator Excellence in teacher preparation.

I am a proud union member. I have served as a Precinct Delegate for Greek Oak Township's 6th precinct. I am also a member of Livingston County's Democrats' Executive Committee.

List requirements you have completed for the office (# signatures collected, date filed, fees paid):

As a write-in candidate, I completed the filing paperwork and submitted in early September. No fees or petitions were required.

Amount of money raised as of date of submission:

\$150

Principal duties of the office you are running for:

The SLCS School Board is primarily responsible for overseeing the district's superintendent. A common analogy is driving a bus. The school board acts as the navigation, but it's up to the superintendent to get everyone there.

Top priorities once elected:

Of immediate concern is balancing families who need in-person learning and childcare support during the school day with health and safety for students, staff, and the community at large. SLCS educators are trained in and excel at in-person learning; however, because of the continued need for some amount of remote/virtual school, every teacher – regardless of their tenure – is essentially a first-year teacher in 2020. SLCS teachers and staff need training and resources in e-learning, and they need to be listened to by administration and the Board. They're on the front lines of this new way of teaching, so we need to rely on their professional experiences and respond in a flexible, supportive manner.

Additionally, SLCS lacks a comprehensive, evidence-based early literacy program. This sets students up for struggles across content areas for their entire academic careers. The district needs to shift its approach to teaching reading and developing early literacy skills, especially in JK-2, by using evidence-based instructional methods and resources.

Plans for communicating with constituents once elected:

I look forward to meeting parents, teachers, students, and community members. Many of these stakeholders prefer to have their news come to them, often through social media. In response, I will maintain my public candidate Facebook page as a School Board member page. There, I will continue to share news and events directly relevant to the South Lyon community as well as resources, news, and information about education at state and national levels.

Of course, I will also be available through publicly posted communications (e.g., SLCS email, personal phone). Once safe, I intend to host "office hours" at spaces open to the public (e.g., coffee shops, local parks).

What are your primary sources for information/news?

Local: Hometown Life, community message boards

State: MLive, Michigan Public Radio, several MLive and Lansing-based reporters on Twitter (e.g. @LaurenMGibbons)

National: National Public Radio, New York Times, Washington Post

Local Issues

Indicate your position on the following topics, including solutions. A response is needed only if applicable to your prospective office

City / Township / County's Master Plan:

n/a

Tax Abatement & Business Development:

n/a

Local Environmental Policies:

Not directly linked to schools, but SLCS has schools in multiple counties, which means we need to navigate environmental policies across municipalities. For example, Brummer Elementary School is the only SLCS school in Livingston County, so SLCS needs to keep aware of the Livingston County Commissioners' response to PFAS contamination.

Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services:

n/a

What do you see as the role of the city / township / county in the school system?

The SLCS district crosses multiple city, township, and county lines. The district's leadership has built strategic, effective relationships that directly benefit students. For example, the School Board recently negotiated support from the city and township to secure funding and staffing for School Resource Officers. As a Board member, I will continue to develop these essential partnerships.

Public Safety:

n/a

Public Transportation:

n/a

Other comments:

Which planks of the Michigan Democratic Party do you feel most strongly about on a local level (select all that apply)?

1. Education: Improving Public Education for Children and Adults
2. Economy: Using Aggressive & Comprehensive Economic Development Policies
3. Job Training: Improving the Skills of our Workforce
4. Trade: Using an Approach Based on a Level Playing Field
5. Economic Development: Improving Depressed Communities
6. Agriculture: Protecting our Farms and Rural Communities
7. Transportation: Providing Access to Opportunities
8. Information Technology: Expanding Access to Information
9. Small Business: Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Self-employment
10. Income: Rewarding Work
11. Taxes: Providing a Sufficient, Stable and Fair Tax System
12. Health Care: Providing Health Security for Families and Individuals

13. Children and Families: Providing Help for Working Parents with Children
14. Coping With Misfortune: Bankruptcy, Foreclosure and Homelessness
15. The Environment: Protecting Our Land, Water, Air and Open Space
16. Social Justice: Achieving Equal and Humane Treatment Under the Law
17. Women: Protecting the Rights of Women
18. Veterans: Respect and Help for Those Who Serve Our Country
19. Youth: Building Citizens Who Will Brighten our Future
20. Seniors: Providing Retirement Security and Needed Services
21. Voting: Nurturing Democracy and Promoting Civic Participation
22. Faith: Connecting Our Party with People of Faith
23. Public Safety: Creating Safer Communities for All
24. Energy: Providing Power to the People
25. Judicial System: Serving the People, not Special Interests
26. Government: Freeing Politics from Money Influence and Special Interests
27. Corporations: Insisting on Corporate Accountability
28. Consumer Protection: Protecting People in the Marketplace
29. Financial Services: Protecting People in Credit and Banking Transactions
30. Providing Proper Oversight of Our Financial System
31. Local Government: Defending Our Democracy

Contact Information

Campaign mailing address (if applicable):

n/a

Campaign website:

n/a

Campaign social media (identify platform, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, etc.):

www.facebook.com/BridgettforSLCS

Campaign hashtags:

n/a

Campaign contact name and title (manager / assistant):

n/a

Campaign contact preferred phone number:

n/a

Campaign contact preferred email address:

n/a

Other contact & media info:

n/a

Thank you for submitting your candidate info to SLAD. By submitting this information, you agree that all information submitted, except for the **starred items (candidate preferred email address, phone number, and street address), can be made public and shared on SLAD online platforms and physical documents.