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. Candidates must also be registered to vote in California.

Please complete and ensure your application packet is received on or before 5:00pm on Friday, September 11, 2026 at:

Ryan LaLonde, Board President
c/o Pasquale Scuderi, Superintendent
2060 Challenger Drive
Alameda, California 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 7, 2026

Bell, Erick O. [redacted]
(Last Name) (First Name) (Middle Initial) (Birthdate: mm/dd/yyyy)

Occupation: Professor

Employer or Name of Self-Employed Busines[redacted]

No. of Years Residing in District: 15

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

(Staff will use the following information to contact potential candidates and confirm Voter Registration status. The information below will be redacted prior to being published as part of a Board agenda packet. All other information contained in this application will be posted publicly and may be open to public inspection, including through a California Public Records Act Request)

CA Driver's License #: [redacted] Last 4 SSN#: [redacted]

Home Address: [redacted]

Business Address: [redacted]

E-mail Address: [redacted]

Cell Phone: [redacted] Business Phone: [redacted]

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

I see the fundamental purpose of public schools is to provide every child, regardless of background, circumstance, race, ability, or family income, with an quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential.
Public schools should do more than teach academic content. They should also prepare young people to become thoughtful, capable, and engaged members of their communities. Schools should help students develop critical-thinking skills, curiosity, confidence, resilience, and the ability to work with people whose experiences and perspectives may differ from their own.
As an educator and a parent, I believe excellence and equity must go together. We should have high expectations for every student while recognizing that students may need different resources, supports, and pathways to meet those expectations. A strong public school system opens doors rather than allowing circumstances outside a child's control to determine their opportunities.

1a. What is the role of the school board in the fulfillment of that purpose?

A school board's responsibility is to provide vision, governance, accountability, and stewardship for the district. The board should establish clear priorities and policies, adopt and oversee a fiscally responsible budget, hire and evaluate the superintendent, monitor student outcomes, and ensure the district is meeting its obligations to students, families, and the broader community.
I also believe the board has an important role as a steward of public trust. Board members must listen carefully to the community, ask difficult questions when necessary, and make decisions based on what is best for students and the long-term health of the district.
More specifically, I see the board as responsible for making sure that educational opportunity is not dependent on a student's location on the island, family circumstances, race, disability, or other factors unrelated to their potential. Achieving this responsibility requires both a commitment to equity and a willingness to examine whether our policies and resources are designed and allocated to produce the outcomes we want to achieve.

1b. How does the board's role differ from that of the superintendent?

The board governs; the superintendent leads the administration and manages the day-to-day operation of the district. The board sets the overall direction through policies, goals, priorities, and the budget, and should hold the superintendent accountable for achieving those goals. The superintendent is responsible for implementing the board's direction and overseeing the district's staff, schools, programs, and operations.

I think maintaining that distinction is essential. A board member should be engaged, informed, and willing to ask challenging questions, but should not attempt to manage individual schools, direct staff, or substitute personal judgment for the expertise and responsibilities of the superintendent and administration.
Ideally, the board and superintendent operate as a productive partnership. The board receives sufficient information to exercise its oversight responsibilities, and the superintendent has a board that provides clear direction and supports effective implementation.

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

I have been deeply involved in education both professionally and as a parent and community member.
I currently have two sons attending Earhart Elementary, and I have served on the PTA board as chair of the DEI Committee. I also previously worked within AUSD as a K-12 substitute teacher, including Island High School. I have been involved in Alameda youth athletics, including basketball and Alameda Little League, as well as boys' and girls' middle school and high school sports for AUSD. I currently serve as a city commissioner for the Recreation and Parks Commission. Professionally, I have spent approximately 20 years teaching and serving as an Academic Dean at community colleges and universities. I am the former Executive Director and Chairman Emeritus of a nonprofit organization designed to encourage high school students to pursue careers in finance and accounting. Beyond academia, I am an active CPA with over 30 years of professional experience, so I bring both an educator's perspective and substantial experience with financial management, budgeting, and fiscal accountability.

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

The relationship should be collaborative, respectful, and clearly defined.

Board members should listen to concerns from students, parents, staff, and community members and make sure that appropriate issues are brought to the attention of the superintendent. However, individual board members should not attempt to investigate or resolve operational matters themselves or direct staff.

I would want the administration to know that I am accessible and willing to ask questions, but also that I respect the chain of responsibility. When a concern is raised, my role is to understand the issue, determine whether it reflects a broader policy or governance question, and make sure the appropriate district process is being followed.
I also believe concerns should be addressed with facts and empathy. Sometimes a parent or staff member may be frustrated because they feel unheard. Listening respectfully does not mean promising a particular outcome. It means making sure people understand how decisions are made and that legitimate concerns receive appropriate consideration.

4. What would you like to accomplish as a board member? Which of those is your highest priority — and why?

I want to be part of the architectural team that is building a school district where every student has access to a high-quality education, feels that they belong, and has the support necessary to succeed. My priorities would include:
**Strengthening academic outcomes while maintaining high expectations for every student. **Advancing equity in access to educational opportunities, resources, enrichment, and support. **Ensuring that students with different learning needs can fully participate and thrive. **Supporting teachers and staff so they have the resources, professional support, and working environment necessary to be effective. **Maintaining strong fiscal discipline and ensuring that limited public resources are directed toward the greatest educational impact. **Improving communication and trust among the district, families, educators, and the broader Alameda community. **Preparing students for college, careers, and meaningful participation in civic and community life.

My highest priority would be ensuring that every Alameda student has a genuine opportunity to succeed academically and personally. The question I would continually ask is: Are our decisions improving the educational experience and opportunities of all students, particularly those who may otherwise be left behind?

5. Describe how you would balance the following when deciding how to vote on a matter: community concerns, student needs, state/federal law, staff recommendations, and your own values or beliefs.

I would approach these decisions by recognizing that a school board member has a responsibility to make decisions based on the interests of the entire district rather than any single constituency.
Student needs would be central to my analysis. I would also listen carefully to parents, educators, staff, and community members because they bring experiences and information that may not otherwise be visible to the board.
State and federal law establish boundaries within which the district must operate, and compliance is not optional.
Staff recommendations are also extremely important because administrators and educators bring professional expertise and operational knowledge that board members may not have. At the same time, board members have a responsibility to ask questions, examine assumptions, understand the evidence, and ensure that recommendations are consistent with district priorities and policy.
My own values matter, however personal beliefs should not override evidence, law, or the board's responsibility to the entire community. I would seek to distinguish between what I personally prefer and what I believe is the best decision for Alameda's students and schools. Ultimately, I would do my best to make decisions that are lawful, fiscally responsible, evidenced-based, student-centered and consistent with AUSD's mission.

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6. If a parent approached you outside of a meeting (e.g. in the grocery store) about a "hot issue," what would you tell them?

First, I would listen. I think people deserve to feel heard, particularly when they are concerned about their children. I would thank the parent for bringing the issue to my attention and possibly ask questions to ensure I understand their concern.
I would also be extremely careful not to make commitments or promises outside of the appropriate public process. I would explain that, as a board member, I have an obligation to follow district procedures and, when appropriate, address matters through the board's public process.
If the issue were something the superintendent or district staff should handle, I would direct the parent to the appropriate channel rather than trying to personally resolve the matter. If it were a policy issue that belonged before the board, I would make sure I understood the concern and consider it as part of my responsibilities as a board member.
I would also be mindful that I am speaking as a board member, even in an informal setting. I would want parents to know that I am approachable and willing to listen, while also respecting confidentiality, appropriate processes, and the board's collective role.

7. What questions do you have for the board to help you prepare to take on this responsibility?

I would want to understand both the district's current priorities and the board's expectations for effective governance. Here are five, of many, questions I would ask to best prepare me to serve our students:

**What information and data do you believe a new board member needs to understand first in order to become an effective member of the board?
**Where does AUSD see the greatest gaps in educational opportunity or student outcomes, and what strategies are currently being used to address them?
**What are AUSD's most significant fiscal constraints, and what assumptions are being made about the district's financial outlook over the next several years?
**How does AUSD gather and incorporate meaningful input from students, parents, and families who may not traditionally participate in district decision-making?
**Finally, what would you hope a new board member could contribute that would strengthen the work of the existing board?

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