

Santa Monica Democratic Club

2026 School Board Candidate Questionnaire

General Information

Candidate Name: Harry Leshner

Email Address: harry@leshnerforsmmusd.com

Candidate's Current Occupation: Partnerships and Alliances Executive

Candidate's Employer: Snowflake

Campaign Contact Person (if other than candidate): N/A

1. What qualifications do you bring to this office?

Professionally, I bring almost 20 years of experience in business strategy and executive leadership. I've spent my career managing complex budgets and leading large organizations through major technical and structural shifts. I will bring analytical rigor and stakeholder management skills to the Board to ensure we navigate the district's separation with fiscal precision, fairness, and forward-thinking academic leadership.

In addition to my professional experience, I have volunteered in education my entire adult life. I started as a classroom reader and then became a grade-level coordinator for a program called Reading to Kids, volunteering primarily at Hoover elementary in Los Angeles. Since 2021, I have served on the Board of an education non-profit called America on Tech, which provides technology education and career pathways to students in under-estimated communities in the greater Los Angeles area. In this role I advise on strategy, budgeting, outreach, among other responsibilities, and I'm proud that the organization has thrived despite the Trump administration's attack on DEI.

2. Why are you running?

I am running for the SMMUSD Board of Education to be the voice that supports working families, because right now, we are missing from the table. If elected, I would be the second Board member with children attending schools in the district, and crucially, the only member with elementary-aged children. As I've engaged with voters for the campaign, everyone I've met thinks it's common sense that we should have at least some school board members who are current parents with children attending schools in the district.

I have four policy priorities that I would like to drive, which I have outlined in detail in the next question: 1. Affordable After Care for All, 2. Safe Routes to School, 3. Green and Healthy Campuses, and 4. Excellent STEM for All.

I am also running to improve community engagement, which is currently lacking from the district and is eroding public trust in the institution. I have extensive change management experience, including stakeholder management and communications experience through my professional work and I am uniquely qualified in this race to improve the district's approach to community engagement. I believe this is critical to improve parent satisfaction and reverse the downward trend in enrollment.

3. What are the top issues of your campaign, and how do they differ from other candidates in this race? How do you plan to address those issues once elected?

I recognize that my views are likely 90% aligned with the current Board Members in that we all believe high-quality public schools are an essential resource for everyone in our community. Here is how I am different:

1. Affordable After Care for All: We need a school board policy that assertively supports working families and acknowledges the absolute necessity of after-school care. LAUSD has already acknowledged this need and is aiming to provide a full day of coverage for working families. While SMMUSD has programs in place, they are very expensive and simply do not have enough space for everyone who needs them. If elected, I will push to get a resolution passed in the first 30 days of the term that directs staff to begin engaging with our partners to ensure there is sufficient capacity for afterschool care for everyone who needs it, and then start exploring options to bring the costs down to ensure it is affordable.

2. Safe Routes to School: It is incredibly stressful for parents to start the day dealing with frenzied drop-off scenes and near-fatal misses in crosswalks. SMMUSD needs to commit to deep collaboration with the City of Santa Monica on creating safe routes to schools with safe landing zones around the gates. The recent Waymo incident at Grant Elementary was a wake-up call. That status quo is going to lead to a tragedy. I will engage City Council leaders to start a pilot program to create a pocket park and safe landing zone. Lincoln Middle would be a possible candidate to align with the Washington Greenway plans the city is considering.

3. Green and Healthy Campuses: We need to support open spaces and green spaces at our schools, because every child deserves a place to play. Many families rely on the school grounds as their primary park. But the current board is reducing open space and eliminating green spaces. LAUSD has a goal that 30% of their schools need to have green spaces; SMMUSD is moving in the opposite direction and needs to adopt a similar policy goal. I was part of the sub-committee for this club that came up with the resolution to ban artificial turf on public land and I am the only candidate advocating for this position. The incumbent candidates are actively obstructing this goal.

4. Excellent STEM for All: Lastly we need a school board that understands the role of technology in our modern world. From my work on the Board of a non-profit that provides technology education to students from under-estimated communities, I understand how these opportunities are critical to ensure every child can reach their potential. I have spent my career

on the innovation side of the technology industry, giving me a clear view of how our modern labor force is rapidly evolving. To prepare our kids for what's next, we need to bolster the high quality education SMMUSD offers with more support for STEM learning, including extracurricular activities, and make them accessible to every student regardless of income level. I also support a slow-tech policy in our schools, because you don't need to teach a kid how to use an iPad. If elected, I would immediately push for a resolution to get us parity with LAUSD to limit screen time at school (Res-048-25/26: Using Technology with Intention: Establishing Guidelines for Student Screen Time), then I would engage a working group of experts, educators and parents to look into how we can improve upon that policy.

4. Please list all endorsements received to date (individual and organizational).

I am new to the race, I am just starting to seek endorsements. I believe endorsements should be made after a fair evaluation of all of the candidates in the race based on their substantive policy goals and an evaluation of their ability to achieve them.

5. How long have you lived in Santa Monica or Malibu? Where else have you lived?

I have lived in Santa Monica for 18 years. I grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, attended college at Pomona College in Claremont, California, and moved to Santa Monica immediately after graduation. My wife and I were married in Malibu, and our oldest daughter of two is finishing Kindergarten at Franklin Elementary this Spring.

6. Will you pledge to serve on the School Board for your entire four year term?

Yes, and I fully understand the commitment and sacrifice that entails. I have never quit anything in my life and I take my commitments very seriously.

7. What is your history of watching, attending, or speaking at SMMUSD School Board meetings? (If incumbent, prior to your own service.)

Like many, I have always thought and indeed know that we have excellent public schools, which was a critical factor for my wife and I in deciding to lay down roots and raise our daughters here. For this reason, we have historically voted for the incumbents running for reelection to the Board, at least those also supported by the Santa Monica Democratic Club, and we've always supported measures to increase funding for our schools.

Since enrolling our eldest daughter at Franklin, however, we have been disappointed by the Board's decision making on several important issues: in managing enrollment for the new early education Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program, their lack of attention to after-care capacity constraints, their lack of due diligence and resistance to credible scientific input on artificial turf, as well as the use of digital technology in the classroom. Furthermore, we have been troubled by their overall approach and reception to community input.

In early 2025, my wife and I helped organize a group of community members to provide public comment opposing the installation of plastic turf fields at the schools, and we were disheartened by the Board's reception of our comments. Since then I have regularly attended or watched recordings of the meetings, and I have provided public comment at the meetings.

Campaign Finance

1. How much money have you raised for your campaign to date?

I am running a grassroots campaign. At the time of this writing, I have raised about two-thousand dollars from friends, family and other community activists to cover start up costs. I don't have deep-pocketed family money, and I have not and will not take money from corporate or other special interests that intend to profit off of our school bond money.

2. How much do you intend to raise by Election Day 2026?

Based on my review of public records from previous elections, incumbents have raised as much as \$80,000 for this seat, and recently the lowest amount raised for a newly elected candidate was almost \$14,000. This clearly demonstrates that the system is fundamentally broken and we need more regulation to take money out of politics. I can run a competitive campaign if I raise between \$5,000-\$10,000 by focusing on face-to-face engagement and outreach to existing community groups. Whatever remaining funds I don't spend I would like to donate back to the community here, possibly to a parks fund to expand access to parks across the city and maintain the natural grass fields.

3. Candidates for local office often choose not to take campaign contributions from particular types of organizations or industries who are out of step with their own values. Are there any such sources from which you would decline donations? If so, which?

As I alluded to in my previous answer, some of the incumbents have accepted five-figure checks from organizations that stand to profit from our school bond money, including the trade organization that represents companies that install artificial turf. I will do my best to vet any donation from an organization to ensure its values align with mine, and I will return the donation if something is later called to my attention. I absolutely will decline any donation from any organization tied to the fossil fuel industry.

Party / Activism

1. How long have you been a registered Democrat? Have you ever been registered as a member of another political party, or as Decline To State? If so, which party and why?

I have been a lifelong Democrat and registered as a Democrat when I turned 18. I believe the Democratic party values align most closely with mine in terms of equal economic opportunity, treating everyone with dignity and respect, and a shared responsibility for making the world a better place.

2. What is your experience with political activism? Have you ever volunteered or worked for a political campaign other than your own, and if so, in what capacity were you involved?

My political activism until recently has been primarily focused on national offices and issues. I have volunteered for Get out the Vote campaigns for Democratic candidates, and I have attended protests and marches. A highlight for me was I participated in the Women's March in Washington after Trump's first election.

Since Trump's second election, I've come to realize how important local politics are, hence my active engagement in this club and attending local city commission meetings to provide public comment.

In 2025, I was accepted into a leadership program with the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles called the New Leaders Project (NLP), a program designed to train the next generation of civic leaders. Ben Allen is a notable alumni of the program. Over the course of the year, I engaged with civic leaders, including non-profit leaders and community organizers to learn about key issues in Los Angeles, such as housing and food insecurity. I also had the opportunity to lobby in Sacramento for Rick Zbur's AB715 to protect Jewish students from anti-Semitism by enforcing curriculum standards for new ethnic studies courses. That experience taught me the value of organizing, and how to engage in respectful dialogue with those who may not agree with you on a particular issue.

After that experience, I helped organize and lobby the district and the city to place a ban on artificial turf on public land. To date, our group has been successful in driving resolutions with this Democratic Club, various city commissions, and even the City Council, but we still have an unachieved goal of having the school district adopt a similar resolution.

Currently, I am still working on the turf issue, and I am also working with Schools Beyond Screens to drive a resolution within the school district to place limits on screen time. I also recently volunteered with the Club for Get out the Vote for the primaries and to help our fellow Democrats get elected this year!

3. Which political candidates and/or ballot measures have you endorsed or supported publicly in the past? Please list as many as possible, especially where you endorsed during a contested primary.

I am not currently a public official, so I don't have a public voting record, but I'd be happy to share how I've voted in the recent past for key races and ballot measures.

- President: 2024 - Harris, 2020 - Biden (general), Harris (preferred), 2016 - Clinton (general), Sanders (preferred)
- Other notable contested primaries: Rick Zbur 2022, Ted Lieu 2014
- California Ballot Measures: Prop 1 to protect abortion rights, Prop 3 to recognize all marriages
- Santa Monica: Supported Measure LC to close the airport

4. Have you ever signed for or publicly supported efforts to recall a public official from office? If so, please list the name(s) of the officials and why you felt they should be recalled.

I have not.

5. Please list any organizations with which you are a member, including any leadership position you have held in each organization.

Board Leadership:

- America on Tech, Advisory Board Member - serving second three year-term, since 2021. America on Tech is an education non-profit serving students from under-estimated communities.
- Santa Monica Synagogue Board Member - One two-year term 2021-2023.

Local Organization Membership: Santa Monica Democratic Club, Franklin Elementary PTA, Santa Monica Forward, Santa Monica for Renters Rights.

6. Please confirm that you have read the latest version of the California Democratic Party Platform, as found below. List any items in the CDP Platform with which you disagree. <https://cadem.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/CDP-Platform-2026-FINAL-Platform-Adopted-2.22.26.pdf>

I have read it in detail. It's hard to say I disagree with anything because there are many areas that are relatively vague, but here are some items that I'd like to clarify my position on:

1. I absolutely agree we are in a climate crisis and should declare a climate emergency, but I think our party needs to more forcefully drive an adequate response. Transitioning away from fossil fuels by 2030 is a significant undertaking and shouldn't only be taken in cases where it makes immediate economic sense; many of the economic impacts of climate change are long term and diffuse. According to climate experts, 75% of the Paris Climate Accords goals will be met by state and local action. If our school district is spending millions of taxpayer dollars to acquire large sheets of plastic to carpet the

school fields, because it's too challenging to explore newer grass maintenance methods, we are never going to make it. An emergency means we need to pull out all of the stops, and we need to get really serious about reversing the harm we've already done to the planet. Furthermore, it means adapting to the coming extreme weather and higher temperatures that are now inevitable due to anthropogenic climate change. In our region, this includes preparing our communities for wildfire impacts, heat waves, and atmospheric rivers.

2. I believe a more progressive income tax is an imperative. I believe that inequality is the root cause of most of our problems. I fully support measures on the ballot currently to raise revenues for critical services, but it's frustrating that our party continues to push regressive taxation policies out of fear of taxing the rich. The highest tax bracket in California for Married filing jointly is about \$1.4M in annual income and is taxed at 12.3%. We should tax income above \$2M, \$5M, \$10M, and so on at even higher rates. CEOs shouldn't have so much of an incentive to take such large pay packages at the expense of the rest of their employees.
3. I agree with the concerns around adverse impacts of technology, but our party needs to be a lot more effective at regulation. The industry is not going to self-regulate in a way that directly conflicts with its own self-interests. Innovation is important to this country, but our party cannot abandon our values of consumer and worker protections, and enabling the formation of monopolies is in direct conflict with these aims.

District Governance & Finance

1. What are your top priorities for SMMUSD over the next four years?

These priorities are specific and achievable within four years:

1. Improve the approach and processes around public engagement and transparency.
2. Adopt a resolution to ban plastic turf, pilot organic field management, and work with the city to develop more field space.
3. Adopt a district-wide policy around screen limits, including how these tools are used for instructional purposes.
4. Adopt a resolution to recognize that families come in all shapes and forms and prioritize affordable after care access for everyone who needs it.
5. Form a committee to investigate the best path forward to place term limits on this office; short of that I will use the position to recruit new candidates to run, building a culture of expected turn-over and competitive elections to give voters choice and hold office holders accountable to their constituents.

2. How do you assess SMMUSD's current approach to public engagement and transparency? What specific steps would you take to strengthen public trust, ensure meaningful community input, and maintain accountability in Board decision-making?

SMMUSD's current approach to public engagement is very weak compared to my professional standard. I have extensive experience leading stakeholder management for large corporate initiatives that have impacted as many as 500,000 people; that's five times larger than the city of Santa Monica, and in these initiatives, the stakeholders all have competing priorities and their own personal agendas. From this experience, I understand how critical stakeholder engagement, communication, and buy-in are for successful outcomes. I would work with staff to create a public engagement playbook, which would define who we need to engage with, how, and how often.

For example, it's a critical gap that currently the Board's main avenue for engagement with parents is through email announcements to parents of enrolled students and the PTA. When they are working on campus development plans, the majority of current students will graduate from their school before those impacts are felt. If the Board broadened engagement to the community at large, parents with young children, or young adults who haven't had children yet would have an opportunity to weigh in, and more people would feel invested in what happens with the schools, which is good for the community, and supports future funding initiatives the district might need to pursue.

Additionally, conversations around a number of even seemingly mundane topics tend to explode into public outcry and defensive posturing on the part of the district. This is a clear indication that stakeholders are not being brought into decisions in a thoughtful and timely manner.

3. How would you approach working with the Superintendent and district staff to effectively implement Board policies?

Based on his background working for the district for several years before becoming the Superintendent, it seems that Dr. Shelton possesses a lot of deep institutional knowledge and a strong academic background. I expect the district staff are also experts in their work. As I mentioned, I am an expert in organizational leadership and change management. I would help set measurable targets with the Superintendent, and expect him to do the same with his employees. I would track the performance of these targets with him, and help to proactively identify risks and remove any roadblocks that may inhibit success. I would also explore a system of enhanced incentives, rather than any sort of penalties, for achieving performance targets. Lastly, I would apply my skillset in planning a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy to drive efforts to engage the community, including teachers and parents, to align everyone on shared goals.

4. How do you assess the district's current financial position, and what steps would you take to ensure long-term fiscal stability?

The district seems to be doing relatively well in meeting its financial obligations and maintaining reserves. Budget forecast accuracy is poor; there is a history of projecting financial deficits, which the Board this year directed staff to correct for, but there are improvements I would still

recommend to this process. Our district also has a high level of funding on a per student basis relative to the rest of the state and certainly the rest of the country.

My biggest concern lies with the declining enrollment over the last 10 years, about a 25% reduction in enrollment, and this trend is projected to continue. The implication is not only a loss of state funding, but also a loss of resources PTA members bring to each school. My focus on the Board would be taking steps to ensure better retention of families in the district, which starts by addressing their critical needs. I'd like to collect more data, but anecdotally, the most significant factors driving families out of our schools are 1. lack of childcare coverage, 2. concerns over college admission competitiveness, 3. screens in the classroom, and 4. bullying.

5. Given the district's Basic Aid status, how should funding priorities be set during periods of economic uncertainty?

Basic Aid means that our property tax revenue exceeds our district's entitlement of funding from the state, which is based on our enrollment. This is an odd question because theoretically our budget should be more stable since we have Basic Aid status. Santa Monica property tax values have remained very resilient even during periods of economic downturn; if we instead relied on state funding, we could be more vulnerable.

Ironically, many people position our Basic Aid status as a benefit; however, if we had sufficiently more enrollment, our Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) would entitle our district to additional revenues from the state. If we could reverse the 25% decline in enrollment from the past decade, and restore it back to previous levels, our enrollment would be high enough to change our district from a Basic Aid district to a State Aid district, or one that receives additional funding from the state. It is true demographics may play a role in the enrollment decline, but it is relatively minor; a far greater factor is families that continue to live in Santa Monica are enrolling their children in private schools at a much greater rate than in the past because our public schools aren't meeting the needs for those families.

Regardless of the Basic Aid status, we should set funding priorities to:

1. Protect programs for the most vulnerable and with the greatest needs
2. Maintain equal opportunity
3. Provide academic excellence
4. Offer enrichment programs

On the topic of funding, it is also important to note that when the district raises additional monies from the community, either in the form of parcel taxes or bonds, while functionally different for the district, for the tax payer both come from the same household budget. For this reason, it's especially critical that the district's operating expenses and most crucially teacher and teacher aide pay, should be prioritized before expensive school construction projects. If not, the district runs the risk of facing tax fatigue, and may find voter opposition or rejection of measures designed to support its most critical functions.

6. Do you support the currently proposed parcel tax measure for SMMUSD? Why or why not? In your answer, please address how you evaluate the measure's structure, its relationship to the joint use agreement, and how the District should ensure accountability for the use of these funds.

First, I think it's important to clarify that the parcel tax measure is for city funding; it does not provide net new funding for SMMUSD. Currently SMMUSD is not in financial distress, the city is, and the authors of this measure are putting it on the ballot because of the risk that the City Council may take away approximately \$12M of city funding annually that is allocated to the school district. I think the fact that no one from the City Council is willing to publicly state that risk is not real, and in fact they all support it, shows us how real that risk is. Therefore, I intend to vote for the parcel tax measure, because although the district is currently not in financial distress, it will be if it loses that amount of money from its annual budget.

In terms of the measure's structure, there are a number of aspects of it that I don't like. First of all, I don't like that this measure is regressive in that a small condo parcel pays the same as a hotel and it carves out exemptions based on age rather than means. I find the structure deeply unfair and that it adds to the already high barrier to entry for new homebuyers in our community. Additionally, the convoluted nature of its design and promotion leads to voter confusion and distrust, to which I also object. Nonetheless, as stated above, because of the risk to SMMUSD's budget, which has been demonstrated to be real and serious, I feel I have no choice but to vote for it.

Regarding the joint use agreement, I understand the history of why the funding was provided as a condition for that purpose, but the School Board finally voted publicly to ensure the school fields and playgrounds will continue to be made available to the public no matter what, so I think that issue is resolved.

Regarding accountability, the parcel tax initiative stipulates that the funds are to be spent on educational purposes only, and it explicitly excludes spending on administrator salaries, land acquisition, or construction. The Financial Oversight Committee (FOC) is the current body that monitors and reports on compliance of existing tax measures to ensure the funds are spent as intended, and this committee should oversee these funds as well. The Board has a duty to work with the FOC to ensure compliance and transparency.

Lastly, if the parcel tax initiative does not pass, I pledge to advocate aggressively for the district to the City Council to ensure our schools do not lose any funding. I understand difficult times require difficult choices, but I just don't think that cutting funding for children and schools is an acceptable choice to make.

7. What is your assessment of Malibu unification, and what remains to ensure financial and educational equity for both Santa Monica and Malibu students?

My understanding is Santa Monica and Malibu negotiated a deal in December of 2025; what remains is to ensure both parties execute on that deal. I would expect the incumbents who have been part of closed sessions on this topic to have more details on the particulars, but what I can add is the experience of someone who has been part of the execution of large organizational separations. I may be a unique candidate in this respect – I am not sure if anyone else running has this type of experience.

Organizational separations are incredibly complex, and if not executed flawlessly, services will not function on day one of the separation. It's common in this type of change for even seemingly basic things to fall through the cracks. For example, you might encounter issues where buses aren't correctly insured for the new entity and consequently can't run in Malibu, or a contract for a special Ed teacher for the separated district wasn't renewed. We need to direct staff to come up with a detailed plan, and it's likely neither the staff nor the consultants we hire have ever pulled off anything like this either, so review and guidance from the Board will be critical. Additionally, communication will be paramount, otherwise either party might suspect the other side is in breach of the contract.

8. Based on results from the first few years of implementation, do you believe that 2022's Measure GS should be amended? If so, how and why?

Based on the first few years of implementation, I think it's too early to conclude that Measure GS should be amended. It currently provides necessary funding for the schools, it collects the revenue from wealthy land owners, and the shortfall in the expected revenue for homelessness prevention and affordable housing is clearly being impacted by surging interest rates, rather than any fundamental flaws in the legislation.

When Measure GS was passed by voters in 2022 it was projected to collect approximately \$50M annually, the first \$10M going to the schools, and the next \$40M going to homeless prevention and to build affordable housing. Since it passed, the measure has fallen short of its revenue goal, but the full \$10M annually for schools has been realized. I am open to amendment suggestions to increase the shortfall in revenue for homeless prevention and affordable housing, but we cannot afford to sacrifice funding for the schools. I am hopeful that long term revenues will pick up given more stable interest rates, and that some of the negotiations the city has made with the affordable housing developers will yield positive results.

Students & Learning Climate

1. What specific steps would you take to improve student outcomes across the district? How should success be measured?

SMMUSD has a reputation for excellent public schools, and let's give the district credit for continuing to adapt based on modern education research and best practices. For example, some of the policies the district has implemented to address the achievement gap seem to have

yielded positive results. However, we should keep in mind that curriculum buy-in from the teachers, along with adequate standards and training, and keeping small class sizes are critical for the success of these programs.

Despite our success, there are legitimate concerns that our district is losing ground to surrounding schools based on data post-COVID. For example, our literacy rates had a minor drop of 0.73% last year, and our UC-admissions rates have actually fallen behind surrounding schools compared to 2019 when we led the pack. To address these concerns it's critical we take action.

Some policies that are worth accelerating due diligence on include limiting the use of screens in the classroom, implementing a seven period schedule, and offering an International Baccalaureate program. Limiting screens in the classrooms would help create a more focused learning environment and improve foundational learning (more on this later). The seven period schedule would allow students to take a greater breadth of foreign language and other college-readiness courses. Data on these programs suggest they would increase our district's UC-eligibility rate, however the district abandoned the initiative to review this for Santa Monica High. International Baccalaureate (IB) is a globally recognized framework that provides academically rigorous programs that aim to produce critical thinking, open minded and globally conscious citizens, rather than focus on rote memorization and preparing for standardized tests.

As far as measuring success, I support formative testing versus standardized tests. Data shows standardized tests are problematic, many students don't take them seriously, and they provide an assessment only at the end of a semester when it's really too late to make any course corrections. The district is already doing formative assessments, which are smaller, more frequent knowledge checks that are lower stakes for the students and allow teachers to monitor progress more closely and intervene earlier. My main issue with the current formative assessment is that they are done on digital tablets. This is unnecessary; I would prefer more hand-written or oral assessments that empower the teacher rather than rely on unproven software.

In addition to these assessments, which put more trust in our teachers, we can and should still measure literacy, math, grade level progression, graduation rates, grade point averages, UC-eligibility, and UC and other college admission rates.

[2. How should SMMUSD support student mental health and well-being, and what role should schools play in this area?](#)

The core mission of public schools is to prepare students for active participation as adults in their communities and our democracy. To that end, schools do have a role in supporting student learning around mental health and supporting the mental health of its student population to support learning.

Strong social-emotional learning and stress management skills are an excellent foundation for student mental health and well-being and should be paired with age appropriate education around mental health and psychology as part of the curriculum. Understanding emotions and brain health are just as important as learning about the rest of biology and physical health.

In addition to more direct learning about mental health, there are cultural, physical, and institutional environments that have been demonstrated to impact student mental health considerably. The district must consider these impacts when creating and adjusting policy. Some of these include:

1. As mentioned below in the technology focused questions, an important reason for reducing and removing distracting, and addicting technology (e.g. screens and phones) from classrooms is improved mental health of students. There is undoubtedly a causal link between children's technology use and mental health outcomes.
2. All students need to feel safe and supported, which means a more effective anti-bullying and anti-harassment policy with clear, trauma-informed pathways for parents or children to find resolutions to situations where there is bullying. Unresolved bullying is one of the more common reasons cited by parents who exit the district.
3. Bolstering students' sense of community and school-connectedness via increased support for student groups and peer to peer networks can be another multi-benefit solution to student mental health issues, bullying, and student retention.
4. Increased green space and time in nature has been shown to support human mental health. Expanding access to outdoor learning like at the Regenerative Farm at Will Rogers and increasing green space on campuses will contribute to student mental health. By that same token, heat can worsen mental health outcomes. Cooling campuses by reducing asphalt and synthetic turf and replacing it with green space can improve mental health outcomes.
5. Increased physical activity either in P.E., recess, or in active or outdoor learning can improve mental health and focus during classroom time.

[3. In light of increasing political pressure on public education nationwide, how should SMMUSD approach decisions around curriculum, instruction, and inclusive learning Environments?](#)

There are several issues and risks this question raises. First, there is an implication that our district's budget will be impacted by cuts to the Department of Education. This risk is relatively limited, given only 2-3% of the budget comes from federal programs, but they are for federal block grants that support some of our most vulnerable students. If these programs are defunded, ideally we would pass legislation at the state level to make up the difference, but we need to prioritize funding these essential services.

Second, when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion, we need to continue to uphold our values. The situation in the White House is temporary and the state of California provides a firewall of protection for our district. It is important to continue improvements to ensure the teacher population demographics are reflective of the students they teach. This can be a challenge in light of the political environment, however it is not insurmountable. In my

professional career, I was able to recruit and promote diverse talent, not because it was expected, but because it aligned with my values and I understood diverse teams delivered higher performance. I believe a diverse teaching staff that looks like the students they teach will foster a more inclusive learning environment and one that will enable all students to thrive.

Lastly, when it comes to the curriculum and what is being taught, the state also provides protection. We must hold steadfast to maintain a separation of church and state, and by that I mean we must keep religious education out of the classroom. Teachers also need guidelines and training to protect free speech but ensure students aren't singled out and hate crimes aren't being committed. This is a real issue at the moment as AB715, which was authored by Rick Zbur, is currently being implemented. The district is adhering to a state-wide requirement to make ethnic studies a required course for graduation. This teaching is important, studies show that taking ethnic studies improves student outcomes including grade point averages and graduation rates, and it's important for students to gain a more complete depiction of history, learning more about the contribution of marginalized groups. However, the state still lacks a comprehensive set of guidelines for how this course is taught, it lacks learning objectives, and in many cases the instruction has been filled with biases that blame or shame certain groups, including promoting Anti-Semitic tropes. Our district should look at this as an opportunity to lead in offering truly inclusive learning that lifts up cultures without putting any others down and providing adequate teacher training to protect students from discrimination and hate.

[4. How should the district address persistent disparities in educational outcomes among different student groups?](#)

It's clear that this is a long-standing struggle the district has spent many years, a lot of effort, and funding trying to rectify. A report from a renowned specialist, Dr. Pedro Noguera, in 2015 indicated a number of institutional and structural changes were needed to successfully implement programs to support success for all students, and in fact, successfully operate as an institution in all capacities.

It's clear much of that was taken on board and implemented, however, disparities remain persistent. While much of that may be structural in our community and a product of deep economic inequality in our society, some of it may still be rectifiable in SMMUSD.

Policy research suggests that the earlier the intervention, the more impactful. In fact, even earlier than Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is often cited as most critical. The impactfulness of early intervention is one of the main reasons for the state mandated universal TK program. The TK rollout in SMMUSD was a bit rocky, and not as inclusive as possible. The lack of aftercare availability continues to hamper parental uptake, yet students are also being told there are no slots for them at their home school in TK. Additionally, the TK program displaced some of the district's existing early childhood opportunities that served even younger students. A re-evaluation of how the district wants to approach early childhood opportunities in the context of the TK mandate is probably merited at this time.

For TK-5, with regards to addressing achievement gaps as early as possible in the district, SMMUSD does take a proactive approach to early elementary literacy gaps. With frequent and early formative testing so as to be able to support those with early signs of struggle quickly with literacy specialists. An important correction, that I hope to see continued, and which aligns with that 2015 institutional assessment, was the decision to retain the literacy specialists after announcing they would be cut. While the right decision was ultimately made, this unnecessary and culturally damaging conflict was another casualty of the overly cautious budgeting approach that the district plans to right size, and is emblematic of the lingering of some of the structural issues that the Noguera report pointed out.

Outside of regular instruction, enrichment and extracurricular activities are another important area where the district needs to do more to close the gap. While there is a patchwork of enrichment and extended learning opportunities available, frequently these programs are still quite expensive for families that may not qualify for assistance and quality is not consistent. Funding gaps persist for important STEM opportunities (e.g. the defunded robotics club) which are often backfilled by parents who can afford to, but might create barriers for certain students to participate. A district recognition of the importance of these programs being high quality, universally available, and subsidized or free if needed is lacking. You should not have to be on your computer at 6:01AM the day CREST classes open to have a chance at getting a spot. As one teacher put it, CREST slots are hotter than Taylor Swift tickets. These opportunities matter, not only in college admissions, but educationally, as well.

In the upper grades, there is some evidence that the English detracking pilot program pursued at the high school might contribute to improved performance for student groups that traditionally did not pursue AP or honors courses. It appears this approach can lead to improved outcomes for all students, but it requires consistent support for teachers who must take on higher work loads. Also critical is a commitment to the smaller class sizes this approach necessitates to allow teachers to teach to different levels within one classroom. I believe this approach merits more time and study.

Finally, regardless of specific strategies, programs, and plans to address this issue, competitive teacher hiring, retention, and development are the most critical factors in the performance of all students. Continuing to improve this aspect of district operations should be a core focus at all times.

[5. What is your approach to school safety, including the role \(if any\) of law enforcement on Campus?](#)

My approach to school safety is a holistic one that integrates physical security, social and emotional well-being, the safety of our facilities, and safety surrounding our schools.

Regarding the physical security of the campuses, the current visitation policies could use some tightening. Currently, the enforcement of visitor sign-in isn't enforced outside of bell-to-bell time, meaning visitors can slip in a few minutes before school starts or gain easy access to campus

during after school programs when children are still present on campus. Clear, easy-to-understand, and enforceable policies should be rolled out district-wide.

The current policy of only allowing law enforcement on campus for specific requests of administrators is the correct one. Police don't need to be present in campuses any more than they should be in any workplace. A secure perimeter with strong visitor management policies is more appropriate. In addition, ICE does not belong on our campuses, and our students deserve to feel safe regardless of immigration status. Furthermore, guns don't belong in schools, and arming teachers is the worst idea.

When looking at school safety, it's equally important to review threats to student safety that arise from individuals that contribute to a hostile learning environment. There is room for improvement in investigating complaints about harassment or inappropriate conduct on the part of adults, and steps should be taken to ensure the anonymity of the victim, and enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation.

My plan for an updated technology policy and placing screen limits is also important for the social and emotional well-being of students. The current policy has unfortunately enabled digital harassment, including cases of students sharing unwanted sexual images on school devices, and students accessing other violent or hate-filled content online on school devices. Parent's requests for basic monitoring tools have been resisted due to a belief that they cost too much; this would be akin to resisting adding seat belts to a car because they are too expensive.

We must also ensure our facilities are conducive to keeping our children safe and healthy. All buildings must have adequate air filtration to mitigate environmental hazards during wildfire seasons. We need to ensure we have air conditioning so our children don't overheat on days that are too hot. This is another reason we should eliminate the use of artificial turf on school grounds, as surface temperatures can exceed ambient temperatures by 35 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit due to surface absorption. In the meantime, we should close the school's artificial turf fields when the surface temperatures exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit, per the guidelines from pediatric environmental health experts and public health agencies. It's worth noting that some say they are unsafe to play on when surface temperatures exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit, particularly for younger children, as smaller children are even more vulnerable to heat impacts.

In my view school safety should also consider the safety surrounding our schools and particularly on the roads to the schools. In Malibu, we need to ensure adequate hardening and evacuation plans for wildfire safety, and better address the specific needs of our schools in Malibu. It's vital that we have representation, currently missing today, from our community members that drive on these roads every day in Malibu so we can prevent dangers from forest fires and mudslides. For our schools in urban areas, we need to ensure students arrive and are picked up safely. Our children are much more likely to be injured on their way to school or at drop off due to reckless driving than they are from any other threat. Our crossing guards, school

staff, and PTA helpers do an incredible job, but they need more support from the district and from the city to make their jobs easier. My school streets plan would do just that.

Lastly, since I have raised the value of community representation, it's worth noting the Health and Safety District Advisory Committee was suspended last summer. While surely the core safety operations of the district have shifted to internal departments, I believe this has likely led to a gap in community engagement and public oversight.

6. How should SMMUSD balance the use of screens and digital learning tools with concerns about student attention, social development, mental health, and academic outcomes? What role should technology play in the classroom, and where, if anywhere, should limits be placed?

I support a balanced, data-driven policy regarding technology use in school that ensures students' educational, cognitive, and social-emotional wellbeing while at the same time affording teachers the autonomy, flexibility, and resources they need to do their jobs effectively. Classroom technology tools can be both incredibly useful and potentially harmful all at the same time. But as of now, the district has not instituted a thoughtful, comprehensive policy that includes meaningful and understandable rules, limits, or guidelines about the way technology is used in the classroom. This has caused so much confusion among teachers, students, parents, and administrators about the ways in which and how much these tools may be used, and it results in uneven implementation, confusing opt-out policies, and a concerning level of access to inappropriate content on school devices. I have heard parents recount numerous instances of students spending an inordinate amount of time watching YouTube videos, playing video games, scrolling social media sites, and browsing inappropriate content on the internet on school devices, sometimes evading ineffective firewalls.

Technology is an important part of our modern world and economy and our students absolutely need to be prepared to interact with it in a healthy and productive way in their professional and personal lives. As I have personally experienced, technology can also be an excellent career path but developing the core skills needed to pursue a career in STEM doesn't mean playing with an iPad during kindergarten free "choice" time.

Our approach to screens and digital learning should be undergirded by a few core principles:

1. Reducing distraction, improving foundational knowledge retention, and eliminating access to potentially harmful material: Neuroscience tells us that using a pen or pencil and paper can greatly improve knowledge retention, and that repetition is critical for consolidating our internal mental "schemata" or maps of knowledge. Screens and AI actually interrupt this process and don't allow students to fully build out their mental maps. Intentional use of screens should actually mean using them for specific learning opportunities that are computer related, like learning design or database software. Even the principles of coding, computer science, and media literacy can be taught with a pen and paper before incorporating screens at higher levels. District policy therefore needs to ban devices entirely for TK-2nd grade, ban internet connected 1:1 devices for grades

3-8 instead using a centralized lab or cart model, and limited use and limited connectivity on 1:1 devices in high school with teacher directed activity only. At the same time, there needs to be a robust technology education program which features an array of computer lab-based electives to teach students meaningful tech-based skills such as computer science, coding, digital graphic design and film editing, complex financial accounting, deep digital research skills, etc.

2. Prioritizing uniquely human skills and relationships: Computers can't replace teachers, period. Screens also tend to consume one's focus and crowd out everything else, resulting in less peer interaction, less physical play, and less time spent creating art or playing in social imaginative games. Devices distract students from interacting with each other in a healthy way, and prevent children from developing critical social emotional skills, interpersonal skills, and relationships. The district policy should ban screens during lunch, recess, passing periods between classes, and after-school programs. It should also eliminate screen-based rewards and behavioral incentives and reinforcement, such as allowing playing video games after finishing an assignment early. The dopamine-driven nature of computer games means using them as a reward creates an unhealthy relationship with technology. And, as it goes without saying that students should not be exposed to advertisements at school, all smartboards and other devices used by students and teachers easily can and must have premium ad blockers preinstalled.

3. Transparency, openness, and good governance: Parents deserve to know the basics about what and how technology is being used in their children's classrooms. The district should require that all apps, programs, and content used in the classroom be independently verified for their educational efficacy and necessity to further the prescribed curriculum, and that any technology-related procurement or policy decisions are made entirely free from corporate or industry influence. If the computer programs the district implements gathers students' personal or behavioral data, they must first obtain affirmative consent from parents, and even then, that data must never be shared with any third party. All technology must have a way to monitor and audit its use, and that information must be shared with parents. It's not acceptable for parents to be held completely in the dark as to how, when and what their children are doing on digital devices provided by the school. Furthermore, parents must be permitted to opt their children out of technology use in the classroom, and be provided meaningful alternative analog instruction. Lastly, internet connectivity should never be a requirement for homework assignments, as doing so poses a great equity issue as it places the burden on working families to continually monitor their children's device use at home.

7. What is your position on the use of artificial intelligence tools in classroom instruction at SMMUSD? What specific guidelines or limitations, if any, should the district adopt to govern their use?

My position is that artificial intelligence tools must have independent proof of their merits and proof they are safe to use before we implement them in the classroom, especially when it comes to our youngest students. Additionally, it is a best practice to retain a “human in the loop” or “human in the lead,” meaning AI can be an assistant to teachers but it should not replace teachers.

Currently, there isn’t enough data about the merits of AI-based education tools that supports their adoption at this time, particularly for elementary-aged children. Further, some studies show that certain tools may actually be hampering learning development and are rewiring children’s brains. There is evidence that they inhibit students’ ability to fully engage with material and do the repetition and framework development required to eventually achieve subject mastery. Students also need to learn resilience, failure is a fundamental part of learning. Many AI tools are programmed to avoid struggle and failure, because they are optimized to maximize the amount of time a student is engaged with the lesson. Because of this, I think TK-8 should have limited to no interaction with AI, and only through the moderation of an adult.

In the upper grades, high school students should be taught about what AI is, what AI isn’t, and how to use it effectively in the workplace. They need to learn how to use AI responsibly and securely, so they can use the technology in the workplace, without allowing it to copy their cognition, memory, or learning ability, and without allowing it to comprise proprietary data. They also need to develop strong media literacy skills, learning how to identify deepfakes, how to properly vet sources when using AI to conduct research, and think critically about generative AI output or answers.

Separate from student interaction with AI, there is opportunity in the near term to allow teachers to use AI to help with lesson planning to lighten their administrative load, such as some types of grading, to enable them to spend more time with their students. For example, AI could potentially be a useful tool to help teachers evaluate formative testing assessments that are completed by students with a pen and paper. Historically digital devices were used to collect these assessments because the data needed to be available in a structured format for analysis. AI on the other hand is very adept at pattern recognition with unstructured data, like images of handwritten notes, and it could help teachers with early intervention to address learning disparities.

8. Do you support a “bell-to-bell” ban on student cell phone use, similar to the policy recently adopted by LAUSD? Why or why not, and what considerations should guide how such a policy is implemented at SMMUSD?

Yes, there is ample evidence of the harms of phones at schools: the risk of addiction, increased bullying, distraction and degraded learning environment, etc. Commonsense bell-to-bell ban policies have been successful in curbing distractions and improving academic outcomes. SMMUSD’s existing policy of Yondr pouches for middle schoolers and phone pockets for high schoolers could potentially be tightened further. Some of that research suggests a few key elements that could support successful implementation with better outcomes.

1. Bell-to-bell phone policies are effective only if they are coupled with meaningful rules, limits, and guidelines about school-issued devices, which I described above. After all, an unregulated school-issued iPad or Chromebook that is connected to the Internet can be just as distracting and harmful to a students' educational outcomes as a personal device.
2. Stakeholder engagement is key. Parents and students should be involved in conversations around the goals and purpose of the policy and how it will be implemented in detail.
3. Physical distance or separation from the device is more successful in creating psychological distance and therefore, in reducing distraction. This means using Yondr pouches (as they do at the middle schools) or phone lockers, rather than just out of sight policy. The phone pockets used at the high school might not be sufficient to avoid distraction.

9. What is your assessment of how the district handled recent changes to the music education program, and what principles should guide decisions involving arts education, program restructuring, and community engagement moving forward?

The district failed to follow basic community engagement best practices and reversed the changes as a result after causing an uproar. The issue is the district made a decision and reported it to parents as a final decision that had been made, without gathering any input. Many parents were reasonably concerned about the impact this decision would have on their child's learning and they organized to push back.

Going forward, the district should be more proactive about involving parents in program restructuring. It should start with developing a change management playbook that identifies all of the stakeholders who may be impacted by the change, or who may have an interest. A first meeting should involve a dialogue with the stakeholders that identifies problems the district perceives and gather input from the community on those problems. In this example, it's something like "we see a significant drop off in music participation as students transition to Middle School, we feel we need to provide music education earlier to students, what are your thoughts on this?" When you involve parents, teachers, and community members in the policy shaping process, there's a greater sense of buy-in, including a willingness to experiment with changes, and significantly less pushback.

Furthermore, after a change is made, there needs to be a process in place to measure and evaluate the change to identify whether it is yielding the desired outcomes, including a process to collect feedback. There must also be a plan to roll back the policy if it isn't performing as expected.

Community

1. What role should the district play in providing early childhood education, and how should expansion be funded while maintaining accessibility and quality?

Evidence supports the need to provide early education to drive more equality, but the district has some serious gaps in its roll-out of the Transitional Kindergarten program. Currently the program isn't providing access to everyone, which is a major problem. Some families are being excluded altogether, and after-care capacity is another issue I've drawn attention to. At the same time, the cannibalization of local private early education center enrollment has driven up their prices, which places an even heavier burden on those families that are excluded from TK or can't make it work for their family due to a lack of aftercare.

LAUSD had less funding than we did but still managed to provide universal access to transitional kindergarten in their districts. An LAUSD Board member told me they achieved this because they were committed first and foremost to inclusivity and made it their top priority to ensure access without sacrificing quality.

2. Do you support the Club's resolution calling for a citywide ban of artificial turf on locally owned public land?

Yes, I helped organize the sub-committee and draft the resolution. Here's why everyone who calls themselves a Democrat should care deeply about this issue.

1. According to experts, 75% of the Paris Climate Accord goals will be met by state and local action. Artificial turf is made out of plastics derived from fossil fuels. The school has approximately 27 acres of field space, 12 are covered in plastic turf so far. Even if we were to install the "modern" turf without the crumb rubber, this would still be over 3 million pounds of plastic. To put that into perspective, the same amount of plastic if they were garbage bags, you could tie them end to end around the entire Earth. The CO2 emissions from all of this plastic would be the equivalent of taking 200 cars off the road for the entire year. And much of this plastic sheds and ends up in the ocean since we're in a coastal area. If we agree we are in a climate crisis and strive to transition away from fossil fuels by 2030, a citywide ban is non-negotiable.
2. This plastic is detrimental to human health. There is more emerging research on the impact of microplastics on the human body. We don't know everything yet, but there are significant concerns that this plastic exposure is impacting our hormone levels, and even causing children to go through puberty early, which comes with its own health risks later in life like increased rates of cancer. Currently the district has installed artificial turf under every playground structure at every school and is planning to install turf at the elementary schools. Small children are the most vulnerable to the impacts of plastic. As Democrats we should be protecting the most vulnerable in our community.
3. As Democrats, we should also reject spending our public dollars to benefit the fossil fuel industry. In 2024, fossil fuel companies donated approximately \$1M to the Harris campaign. By contrast, they donated well over \$100M to Donald Trump. The district has spent millions of dollars on plastic turf fields, which adds to the bottom line of the fossil fuel companies, which they use to fund the campaigns of Republicans and put them in office.

3. What role should public schools play in preparing students to be engaged, critical thinkers and participants in civic life?

Public schools should play a major role in preparing students to be engaged, critical thinkers and participants in civic life. Students should and currently do learn civics. I think there's room for improvement in teaching critical thinking, which is especially important in this age with social media and AI. We need to bolster our curriculum to teach media literacy, including how to conduct research, how to validate the credibility of a source, understanding who is paying for the message that's being distributed, and so on. This is even more important as the quality of deepfakes improve.

I also believe students should have volunteer service requirements. I volunteered extensively when I was in school growing up and I believe that shaped me into a person who is deeply committed to serving his community. This extends the public benefit of public schools and there is also evidence this improves educational outcomes for students.

Ballot Measures

1. Do you support the California Billionaire Tax Act, which would impose a one-time emergency 5% tax on those worth more than \$1B? Why or why not?

Yes I do. Billionaires are a drain on our economy and society, not a benefit; don't be fooled. They disproportionately benefit from the economic environment our government maintains, like a stable financial system, an educated labor force, the justice system, among other things, and they do not pay their fair share in taxes. I agree with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez that every Billionaire is a policy failure. We should pass this measure and then work toward further taxation of Billionaires, and we should support a more progressive income tax.

2. Do you support the state ballot measure which would require voters to present government-issued identification when casting ballots? Why or why not?

Absolutely not, this is a Republican-led initiative intended to disenfranchise voters who may not have the appropriate documents, targeting to disenfranchise women, people of color, and those based on socio-economic status. This measure is a solution looking for a problem, the incidence of voter fraud is miniscule, and the real motivation behind it is to pervert our electoral system.

3. Do you support the proposed state taxpayer initiative which would limit the ability of local governments to raise revenue through certain taxes and fees including real estate transfer taxes? Why or why not?

I do not. This initiative is funded by the Howard Jarvis Association, a Republican group that opposes any taxation of any kind. This initiative would effectively eliminate the ability for local

governments to raise taxes for critical needs, such as our ability to raise funding for our public schools.

4. Do you support the proposed ballot measure which would set aside 25% of the airport land for 3000 units of affordable housing, in addition to the remainder which would become a Great Park? Why or why not?

In general I'm very sympathetic to the need to build more affordable housing. Our city has exceeded the amount of market rate housing from RHNA but we are well short of below market rate housing. In some cases it makes sense to build this housing on public land, because it serves a greater public good, and because it's more practical since land values are so high in this city.

On the other hand, we have a once in a never opportunity to create a regional asset with the Great Park. I think the community engagement process the City conducted for the Great Park set the benchmark for how we should be engaging the community - it set a vision, proactively gathered extensive input from many groups, etc. and through that process the community consensus was to maximize the park space. I respect that process and therefore think we should be looking at other sites for affordable housing.

Additional Questions

1. If elected, how would you attempt to interact with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations to ensure community buy-in on new proposals?

I believe that elected officials need to represent their constituents. Engaging with the Santa Monica Democratic Club and other political organizations is an important way to gather input from the community, listen to concerns, and get feedback on proposals before they are finalized. In my professional experience, this is exactly how I work on new proposals and gain buy-in. If you present a fully baked solution and aren't receptive to feedback, that's certainly a recipe for rejection from your stakeholders. It's imperative to come with proposals that are still in development, gather input and feedback early and often, and the end result will be something where people feel a sense of ownership in.

2. What is the most important topic that was left off of this questionnaire?

As I've engaged with voters, a common topic that comes up is term limits for the School Board. Many voters state their highest priority is establishing term limits for the School Board and express a frustration that current members are serving five or six terms. I think this is a legitimate concern, it creates a culture of uncontested elections, contributes to the lack of proactive community engagement, since there's less accountability, and generally less diversity of perspective and thought. I think it's likely also how we have a Board with only one parent with school-aged children, which creates a significant blind-spot for the Board in addressing the

needs of the district. A clear example of this type of blind spot is how the current Board is struggling with an appropriate technology policy. The advent of ubiquitous devices, social media and 1:1 access for students is very recent and the current Board members weren't raising their kids in this type of environment.

3. Please describe whether and how you used generative AI tools in preparing your responses. If elected, how would you use these tools in governance, if at all?

I am a technology expert so I feel compelled to demystify generative AI. If anybody answers this question that they did not use generative AI tools, and they didn't use pen and paper, and conduct their research completely in a library, then they just don't know they were using AI.

I used a word processing application on my laptop to draft my responses. Word processing applications have generative AI built into them, including features such as autocorrect for spelling or grammar and sentence autocomplete features. One could also use generative AI tools to autocomplete an entire answer, but I did not use these features because I wanted my answers to be completely from my voice.

I also used a search engine to conduct research for my responses. Google search also has generative AI built into it. While helpful, in my research I always made sure to review the sources, rather than quote anything from Google directly. This is critical to ensure your sources are trustworthy but also to avoid hallucinations from the AI tool.

If elected, I would use these tools for governance in the same way. It's important that Board members are able to stay very well informed on items that require decision making, and for staying on top of community concerns. I would use AI to help with research, and to help me analyze trends and themes with community input, but I would also be diligent in fact checking and ensure I am following strict data privacy and security best practices. I use AI extensively professionally to help me scale my work; it's expected of me, and I think we should expect the same level of productivity from our government.