



## **ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE 2022**

**Kila Murphey**

**Running for  
Orange County School Board  
District 3**

## Candidate Information

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### 1. **What motivated you to run for this position?**

As an ardent community advocate and supporter of public education, I wanted to run for office in the hopes to bring a community voice to the School Board. I believe I can make a difference in OCPS through this position because I bring a unique perspective given my experience in advocacy within the community as a parent of two students with disabilities. I have seen how students with disabilities have been marginalized in schools and have taken action to advocate for them. I am passionate about public schools being a safe haven and an inclusive, diverse learning environment for all students. I feel it is important that a candidate work collaboratively with the district to not only advocate for our students but teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and all other staff within OCPS. Our community needs a board member who will be the voice for their constituents and their communities.

### 2. **What does being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ community mean to you?**

Being an ally or advocate for the LGBTQ+ community means taking a vested interest in not only understanding the issues they face but supporting and affirming them and taking a stand for their rights. A good ally listens to LGBTQ+ people and takes the initiative to educate themselves on the issues and struggles LGBTQ+ people face instead of asking the community to do the emotional labor for them. A good ally puts in the work instead of caring about the title, checks their privilege, and examines their biases so they can be a better advocate.

### 3. **Please summarize your history of community involvement. This may include city boards, civic associations, non-profits, etc.**

2022: Volunteered at CommUNITY Fun Run for Kids, Attended Student Rights Rallies at Orange County School Board, and participated in the Bans Off Our Bodies and March for Our Lives Rallies.

2021 Donated Communication Boards at my son's school so students with extra communication needs will have a way to communicate with others.

2021 Hosted a teacher forum regarding issues they face with work conditions and concerns for their students.

2020 - 2021 Created and donated over 130 adaptive books for students who have issues with traditional reading in the classroom.

2020 Passed the ESE teaching certification exam through the Department of Education (DOE) during COVID to support my children's education during the Covid lockdowns.

2020 - Present Support paying teachers as professionals, reflecting the important work they do.

2019 - Present Founder and President of Orange County ESE Parent to Parent Alliance

2019 - Present Proud Partners in Policymaking graduate, where I was trained in advocacy and intense, innovative leadership development.

2019 - Present Work with parents to ensure they received their procedural safeguards translated into their native language-Spanish or Haitian Creole.

2019 - 2020 President of ESE Parent Advisory Board for OCPS

2018 - Present Advocate for teachers at my son's school to receive training based on the science of reading.

2018 - Present Regular attendee of Orange County School Board Meetings.

2017 - Present Accompany and support countless families in IEP meetings.

2015 - Present OCPS ADDitions volunteer

2015 - 2021 The Foundation for OCPS Teach-In "Teacher for a Day" participant

2015 - 2021 PTA Member

2015 - 2017, 2021 SAC Member

**4. Please summarize any work you have performed in the past five years to further LGBTQ+ rights. This may include paid positions, volunteer work, and donations.**

As a Nurse Practitioner, I have provided affirming health care for trans and gay patients. I have participated in Student Right Rallies speaking out against the Don't Say Bill. I have advocated for LGBTQ+ students in the school setting regarding Individualized Education Plans.

## Questions

5. **The rise in anti-LGBTQ+ legislation barreling down from Tallahassee has caused a sharp increase in discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community in Orange County. How would you go about reducing discrimination in your district or local community? How would you measure your progress?**

I would work on increasing the number of Gender and Sexuality Alliances in schools and work with our LGBTQ+ community partners to create resources for teachers, staff, and students to learn how to better support LGBTQ+ students in schools.

6. **Elected officials and office staff are still woefully under-educated on the transgender community. This means that the services their offices provide are often ignorant of the needs of the transgender community. What actions would you take to ensure that the services your office will provide will be educated on and cognizant of the needs of the transgender community?**

I would advocate for district staff to be trained on trans issues and how to appropriately address and speak to trans individuals. I would reach out to our LGBTQ+ partners to facilitate these trainings or direct us to groups that conduct them. I would advocate by encouraging my colleagues, faculty, and students to address and refer to trans students by their affirmed name. I would support gender-affirming bathrooms and locker rooms and trans students participating in any sports activity or team that best represents their identity. I would review current policies in place to ensure that students who wear affirming clothing are not penalized. I would advocate for proposing a new proclamation for the Trans Day of Visibility.

7. **The Florida Republican Party is leading the country in stripping away LGBTQ+ rights, starting with our children. Students are having their lives and livelihoods placed at risk by laws such as the Transgender Sports Ban, the so-called Parental Bill of Rights, and now Don't Say Gay. These shamelessly discriminatory bills are forcing LGBTQ+ families to reconsider their future in Florida. What would you tell the parents of LGBTQ+ children in your district who feel they need to leave Florida in order to protect their children?**

I would validate their reasoning for wanting to leave Florida due to their children's rights being stripped away and them being targeted. However, I would assure LGBTQ+ students and their families that I stand firmly in support of them and their rights and will work hard to advocate for them with elected officials against discriminatory legislation.

8. **The Trevor Project's 2022 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health found that 45% of LGBTQ+ students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1-in-5 LGBTQ+ attempt it. How**

**would you lead on this issue and work to decrease these statistics over the course of your term in office?**

I believe we are at a critical point in the community and in schools and desperately need to expand mental health services. OCPS currently only has 33 Licensed Mental Health Counselors which is not sufficient to meet the need of our student population. The district does not follow national guidelines for school guidance counselors set by the Association of School Guidance Counselors which is 1:250 students or the Florida Department of Education's recommendation of 1:500 students.

**9. The same survey by The Trevor Project found that nearly all transgender and non-binary students have had to worry about their access to gender-affirming healthcare, bathrooms, and sports teams being taken away from them. How would you work to take this fear off their shoulders so that they can go back to just being kids?**

I would support and speak with elected officials about fighting anti-trans legislation. In the school district, I would encourage faculty and students to address and refer to trans and non-binary students by their affirmed names. I would support gender-affirming bathrooms and locker rooms in schools. I would support trans students participating in any sports activity or team that best represents their identity. I would review current policies in place to ensure that students who wear affirming clothing are not penalized. I will work to ensure that schools continue to recognize trans students with the appropriate Pride flag. I would advocate for proposing a new proclamation for the Trans Day of Visibility.

**10. Far-right groups are pushing to ban books on any topic they find disagreeable, such as books on Black history and experiences, immigration, the LGBTQ+ community, climate change, etc. Do you support these book bans? If not, what is your plan to counter them and ensure students have access to a full array of age-appropriate knowledge and experiences?**

No, I do not support book bans. I support organizations such as Florida Freedom to Read Project who are putting pressure on local school boards to keep these materials in classrooms and libraries. If elected, I will continue to advocate for students' rights to have access to diverse and inclusive reading materials.

**11. During a town hall in your district, a constituent describes being gay or transgender as a "lifestyle choice." What is incorrect about their description? How would you constructively respond in this situation?**

Describing being transgender or gay as a lifestyle choice is incorrect. The term "lifestyle choice" would imply that someone has a choice in the matter. Why would someone choose to be discriminated against, harassed, and marginalized? Being gay is sexual orientation and

transgender is gender orientation, it is who they are since they have been born. I would tell the constituent they need to better educate themselves and provide resources to them.

- 12. During a board meeting, the board chair purposely refers to a transgender woman as “he” and “him” as the woman attempts to give her public comment. The woman corrects the board chair each time, insisting that her pronouns are “she” and “her.” The board chair continues to misgender the woman until she eventually leaves the chamber in tears. How would you respond in this situation?**

I would first leave the chambers to speak with the transgender woman and apologize for the chair’s ignorance. I would tell her that I will be speaking with the chair regarding their actions and how offensive they were. I would then ask the chair to issue an apology to the woman and encourage them to better educate themselves on gender-affirming language.

- 13. A parent approaches you at an event, insisting that her son’s teachers have “groomed” him into liking boys. Her son is at her side when she says this. How do respond to the parent’s statement such that the young boy leaves feeling better about himself?**

I would respond to the parent and assure her that her son’s teacher is not grooming him. I would reassure the parent that if her son likes boys there is nothing wrong with that and that you cannot be convinced into being gay. I would then turn to the student and I would reassure him that there is nothing wrong with liking who he likes, reaffirming the fact it is okay to like who you like, and reassure him that his teachers are not grooming him.

- 14. Orange County continues to embrace urban sprawl, despite a plethora of data that links urban sprawl to severe strains on our housing, employment, healthcare, and public transit systems (to name a few). What are your thoughts on Orange County's growth? What could Orange County in terms of development that would better serve the communities in your district?**

Orange County is growing exponentially and a rate that is too fast to support itself. Our elected officials need to pass legislation regarding affordable housing, and relief or assistance programs for our community. As a community, we need to create more clean, equitable housing options that allow for community members to use bicycles and walk to meet their transportation needs. We need to look for creative ways to provide food relief for those in need, such as community gardens and working with local food and service industry companies to provide additional resources. Our community is in desperate need of local community health centers that can provide access to affordable health care. These community healthcare centers can provide care tailored to the local community’s needs.

**15. Do you support the idea of constructing more multi-family homes in neighborhoods traditionally zoned for single-family homes? What impact would this have on your district?**

I am in support of more multi-family homes within neighborhoods traditionally zoned for single-family houses. I support this because it would increase the supply of affordable housing within our already strained market.

**16. Homeowner Associations often prevent homeowners from transitioning their lawns away from non-functional grasses such as turf and towards sustainable options such as native Florida plants and edible landscapes. HOAs insist that moving away from the traditional pristine green lawn would lower housing prices. What is your opinion on this issue?**

In my opinion, our community needs native Florida plants instead of non-functional grasses that often require non-eco-friendly maintenance such as pesticides. Generally, I am for more environmentally friendly policies and eco-friendly ways to support our local communities.