



# **FORWARD** ***New Orleans***

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## ***Forward New Orleans for Public Schools Announces Candidate Scorecards Majority of Candidates Pledge Support to Platform Mandates***

*New Orleans (October ##, 2012)*– Today ***Forward New Orleans for Public Schools*** released a scorecard of Orleans Parish School Board candidates' responses to its seven-issue platform, which calls for the elected members of the Orleans Parish School Board (OPSB) to serve all public school students in Orleans Parish regardless of school district, school type or governance structure. A majority of the candidates in the school board race pledged to uphold the mandates and support the education of every child in public school.

Coalition members reviewed and discussed the *Forward New Orleans for Public Schools* mandates with candidates during interviews conducted over the past few weeks. Upon review, candidates were given the opportunity to sign a written pledge and commit to each of the issues within the platform. A scorecard of their responses is attached.

Candidates Heidi Lovett Daniels, Ira Thomas, Durrell Laurent, Sarah Newell Usdin, Brett Bonin, Lourdes Moran, Seth Bloom, Woody Koppel, Jason Coleman, Nolan Marshall Jr. and Thomas Robichaux signed the pledge while Cynthia Cade and Kwame Smith did not provide a response. Dwight McKenna, Karran Harper Royal and Leslie Ellison declined to participate in interviews.

"The newly elected Orleans Parish School Board must use its authority and resources to enhance the likelihood of success for all public school students," said Suzanne Mestayer, chairman of the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region. "These pledges not only bring a promise of meaningful reform, but also of accountability, providing a yardstick to measure the elected candidates' follow through and commitment to the success of all our public schools."

*Forward New Orleans for Public Schools* requires equitable support for all public schools regardless of school district, school type or governance structure. The platform identifies six specific issues that now exist as critical challenges and includes a seventh item to require the OPSB to approach future issues fairly and equitably. Full descriptions of the platform may be found in the attached FNO for Public Schools document. The platform addresses the candidates' positions on the following actions:

- High-quality, high-performing schools
- Coordination to enable choice
- System-wide strategic planning process
- Resources management for facilities
- Resource manager for taxes and bonds

- Resource manager for the fund balance reserve
- An abiding promise of fairness and equity for all public schools and students

According to Urban League of Greater New Orleans President Nolan Rollins, "We believe in the power of education to transform our city, and the platform developed by this diverse coalition is a step towards further empowering our education system."

He continued, "As Election Day comes and goes, we will monitor the decisions of the newly elected school board members and report publicly on progress to implement these essential improvements."

*Forward New Orleans for Public Schools* coalition members include: Agenda for Children, Bridge House/Grace House, Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region, Children's Defense Fund, Citizens for 1 Greater New Orleans, Common Good, Cowen Institute, Crimestoppers, Educate Now!, Greater New Orleans, Inc., Living Witness Church of God in Christ, Loyola University Institute for Quality and Equity in Education, New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau, New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, New Schools for New Orleans, Orleans Public Education Network, Partnership for Youth Development, STAND for Children Louisiana, Urban League of Greater New Orleans, Young Leadership Council and Youth Empowerment Project.

Details about *Forward New Orleans for Public Schools* can be found at <http://schools.forwardneworleans.com>. To schedule an interview, please contact Bradley Charlesworth at [bradley@gambelpr.com](mailto:bradley@gambelpr.com).

*\*While numerous attempts were made to meet with all of the announced candidates, some candidates could not be scheduled or chose not to participate.*

*Forward New Orleans for Public Schools is an outgrowth of Forward New Orleans. Forward New Orleans is a diverse, issue-focused community initiative led by the Business Council of New Orleans and the River Region in collaboration with more than thirty civic, neighborhood and business organizations, all of which are committed to improving the quality of life in New Orleans.*

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