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Candidates for United States House, Michigan's 11th District K-12 Education Questions Answered by the Candidates

Presented by the Advocacy Committees for the Northville Council of PTAs and the Livonia PTSA Council

The Northville Council of PTAs and Livonia PTSA Council Advocacy Committees reached out to the Candidates for United States House, Michigan's 11th District - Democratic Incumbent Haley Stevens, Republican Challenger Eric Esshaki and Libertarian Challenger Leonard Schwartz. Four questions about K-12 education were submitted to each candidate which are included with their answers. On the following pages the reader will find the submissions received from each candidate.

As of this publication no answers have been received by Libertarian candidate Leonard Schwartz. Per the National PTA Advocacy guidelines, this document can be shared as it currently stands.

Candidates' answers were not edited, however they were formatted to fit the page: some spacing, sizing and font changes may have been made.

The Northville Council of PTAs and the Livonia PTSA Councils are nonprofit, 501C3s that cannot and do not endorse candidates, but can provide information about relevant candidates to applicable stakeholders.

Dates to Know:

10/19 Last Day to Register to Vote in ways other than in-person. After this date you must register to vote in-person

10/20 If not going directly to the clerk's office, the PTA recommends mailing ballots by this date with two stamps

10/30 Last Day to Request an Absentee Ballot by mail

11/2 Last Day to Vote via Absentee Ballot, but you must vote at your clerk's office

11/3 Election Day

Absentee ballots have been mailed. Please reference the Livonia [City Clerk](#), Northville Township [Clerk's Office](#), Northville [City Clerk](#), or Novi [City Clerk](#) to find more voting information as well as extended hours during election season.

For more information on voter registration and how to track your ballot please see: The Secretary of State at michigan.gov/sos/ or websites such as ballotpower.org that also will allow you to track your ballot.

Looking for additional information on all ballot candidates? vote411.org and ballotpedia.org.



Questions Regarding the Impact of the Coronavirus on Public Schools:

- 1. Please address how you think CARES money was supposed to help address K-12 public schools and going forward what, if any, further federal assistance Michigan’s schools should be getting to address education children during this pandemic?**

Haley Stevens

The CARES Act was an important first step to get schools the funding they needed to continue operating safely during the pandemic. Now that the school year has begun, it is more important than ever for Congress to step up to the plate to ensure school districts can continue keeping teachers employed, and conduct operations -- either in person, remote, or hybrid -- as safely as possible. That is why I supported passage of the Heroes Act, first in May and then another updated version on October 1, which would provide \$208 billion for a State Fiscal Stabilization Fund. This fund would require \$175 billion to be directed to elementary and secondary schools and \$4 billion for Governors to address educational needs in their States. The Heroes Act would also provide \$5 billion in grants to ensure elementary and secondary school buildings are set up to protect the health of students and staff.

Eric Esshaki

The entire pandemic situation remains fluid. The CARES Act was intended to help stabilize the funding of school districts. The problem is the long-term flow of federal dollars will eventually have more mandates and an erosion of local control. The stop gap funding, particularly for health safety, is critical. Hopefully, we will shift away from pandemic driven policy, and put in place funding to increase school quality and teacher pay.

- 2. Most schools in District 11 have begun the year with remote learning, highlighting inequities such as access to special education services, internet, childcare as well as food instability. How do you plan to address this fluid situation as your term begins?**

Haley Stevens

When the pandemic hit, one of my first actions was writing to Secretary DeVos to provide oversight and ensure our students with disabilities maintain access to a free and equal education. Since being sworn into Congress, full funding of IDEA has been a top priority. After COVID hit, I have made child care a top priority in each package that has been considered by Congress. I introduced the Child Care is Essential Act, which passed the House in July. This legislation would create a \$50 billion child care stabilization fund to keep our child care centers' doors open and ensure working parents have a safe place to bring their children. This legislation was also included in the October 1st House passed updated Heroes Act. As a member of the Education and Labor Committee, I have also supported numerous pieces of legislation and letters urging Congressional leadership and the administration to prioritize school meals, SNAP, and other vital nutrition programs to ensure our students do not go hungry, even if their school is not open in person.

Eric Esshaki

Solutions are going to have to come from school leadership. We need to strive to be more innovative. That means not thinking we can suddenly go back to the way schools were in 2019. We are all learning the remote learning strengths and pitfalls. Without a doubt, students that already face educational hurdles are going to see their learning gap grow worse. There is a lot of experimentation going on, I would work with school administrators and parents to give them more information, more resources to tailor the right healthy solutions for them.

3. Would you support any infrastructure bill coming before the House that includes public school buildings?

Haley Stevens

Yes. I am a proud cosponsor of the Rebuild America's Schools Act, which would allocate \$100 billion to public school infrastructure. I supported the passage of this bill through the Education & Labor Committee and supported the House passage of the Moving Forward Act, which included this important legislation.

Eric Esshaki

I certainly would support funding infrastructure that includes public schools. The specific details of the bills will matter. Of course, in non-pandemic circumstances, most school funding comes from state and local sources not the federal government.

4. Since its inception, the IDEA has never been fully funded by the Federal Government. Michigan's children are especially impacted by this because each student receives the same per pupil amount from the state regardless of their educational needs. What is your plan to address the underfunding of IDEA? Do you believe in a weighted model for educational funding?

Haley Stevens

IDEA has been historically underfunded by the federal government. I have been a strong supporter of increasing the full 40% federal matching rate of this vital program. That is why I am a proud cosponsor of the IDEA Full Funding Act. I have also prioritized fully funding IDEA each year during the appropriations process, and I have engaged closely with families in Michigan's 11th district who are impacted by IDEA's chronic underfunding, including by hosting a Special Education focused Town Hall. I will not stop fighting until the federal match for IDEA is fully realized.

Eric Esshaki

The politicians in Washington failing to fund IDEA is typical of the broken system that is a disservice to our schools and country. The whole point of IDEA was funding must help raise the standards by giving every school a greater ability to help disadvantaged children. How specifically Michigan should design its formula fundamentally lies with the state legislature. The allure of having Congress make that decision will inevitably lead to complete federal dictation of school policies that will not be good for our schools.