

Hello, my name is Tamar Galatzan, and I'm a candidate for L.A. Unified Board of Education.

I am running because we must improve our public schools. Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

I'm the mother of two young sons, one of whom starts kindergarten in the fall. My husband and I are concerned that our boys will not receive the same quality education that we received attending LA Unified schools.

We must stop depriving our children to satisfy the selfish interests of an entrenched bureaucracy.

We must shift education dollars away from downtown bureaucrats and into local classrooms.

We must give teachers the freedom and the tools to be innovative and creative.

We must allow parents to be full and equal partners in their children's education.

We must reduce class sizes, so every student gets the attention he or she deserves.

And, we must make our schools safer. A year ago, I read a newspaper series about high school drop outs in the San Fernando Valley.

I was stunned that the articles focused on my alma mater, Birmingham High School. When I attended Birmingham in the late 1980s, we did not have large numbers of students quitting school.

Today, I will not sit quietly by while this intolerable situation is allowed to continue -- at Birmingham or anywhere else.

I work everyday with community leaders, police, and school officials throughout the Valley.

And everyday I see the consequences of high truancy and drop-out rates: Crime, drugs, gangs. The system has failed these young men and women. We can't let the bureaucracy fail the next generation, or the one after that.

Growing up I watched my mother, a high school English teacher, discover new ways to keep kids interested in learning.

Thanks to her, I realized we must engage young people early and show them the value of a high school diploma. Otherwise, we will continue to see as many kids dropping out as graduating.

LA Unified employs hard working, dedicated professionals with good ideas on keeping kids in school and other issues.

But without implementing meaningful reforms, their efforts are wasted.

As a Deputy City Attorney, I have worked closely with law enforcement to make our schools safe. We are doing better, but much more work lies ahead, including improving safety along routes to and from school.

I intend to use my experience as a prosecutor and as a parent to reform the school district.

I want to be part of the team that implements these reforms.

I will support City Controller Chick in conducting a top-to-bottom audit, so that we get more resources into our classrooms.

I will support parents who want to play an active role in their children's education.

I will fight to get higher pay and the freedom to be innovative for our best teachers.

I have been endorsed by LA Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and former Mayor Richard Riordan, as well as local community leaders, teachers, parents, and educators.

My name is Tamar Galatzan and I am a mom who wants all children to have the best education possible.

I hope to earn your vote and I thank you for considering my candidacy.