

Tampa Bay Times Know Your Candidate Responses
Eileen Long (Incumbent) for Pinellas County School Board District 4

1. **First name:** Eileen
2. **Middle name:** Mary (M)
3. **Last name:** Long
4. **Occupation:** Retired PCS teacher of 34 years, PCSB district 4 representative of the last 8 years
5. **Age:** 63
6. **Length of time residing in jurisdiction where seeking office:** 26 years at listed residence
7. **Party affiliation:** No-Party Affiliate (NPA)
8. **Office seeking:** Re-election to Pinellas County School Board District 4 Seat
9. **Other personal/biographical information pertinent to the role (Limit to 200 characters, which is about 30 words):** 34-year veteran teacher, experienced with special education and drop-out prevention. Mother of 2 PCS graduates, and wife of a current PCS math teacher. Advocate for all students, staff, and parents.
10. **Education:** University of South Florida (USF), B.S. in Special Education with an emphasis on psychology
11. **Attach recent headshot photo (you must have the rights to the image):**



12. **Previous times you have run for elected office and previous elected offices held. List years of elections won and lost and years in office:** Elected to PCSB district 4 in 2016 (term 2016-2020), re-elected to PCSB district 4 in 2020 (term 2020-2024)
13. **Three top priorities (Limit to 500 characters, which is about 75 words):** Maintaining education access for ALL students – as a former ESE and drop-out prevention educator, I

fear students losing access to key resources like books. Recruiting, and more importantly, retaining teachers – advocating for educators’ rights and the importance of their role remains a priority for me. In such tumultuous times, I also remain very invested in maintaining mental health access for students and staff, as I feel this is an important part of school safety.

14. **Why you’re running (Limit to 500 characters, which is about 75 words):** In the era of extreme groups like Moms for Liberty, I think it is more important that ever that we as a community reinforce that politics have NO place in education. Regardless of religion, race, sexuality, etc., all students deserve high quality education and a safe learning environment. I remain committed to keeping PCS an equitable place for all students and staff, and it is a mission I consider an extension of my life’s work as an educator.
15. **Do you support renewal of the local-option property tax? Why or why not? (Limit to 500 characters, which is about 75 words):** The referendum is a critical component of ensuring that our students can continue to participate in art, music, and technology initiatives in all of our schools – this ensures high quality, well-rounded education. It is also critical for our teachers, who depend on the revenue from taxes to increase their salaries – teachers deserve livable wages, at the very least. I support renewal of the tax, as I truly believe we as a community all benefit.
16. **What's your plan to change schedules so high schools start after 8:30 a.m.?(Limit to 500 characters, which is about 75 words):** My priority with any schedule changes would be to ensure that the needs of students and staff are met to the best of our ability as a district. I think a plausible idea would be to move middle school start times up, perhaps taking over the current elementary start time. In doing so, buses for schools like ELMS and ELHS could be combined thus reducing costs and time spent waiting on or within buses.
17. **What does the term “parental rights in education” mean to you? (Limit to 500 characters, which is about 75 words):** Parental rights in education should mean that individual parents have the right to determine what available resources their student(s) will use. This has been the standard in PCS – parents, for instance, have been able to sign forms to prevent their child from reading a particular book if they have issue with its content. “Parental rights” should not be an excuse for anyone to promote targeting vulnerable populations – education should NEVER be political.