



# THE COMMITTEE FOR A STRONG ECONOMY

## 2011 Candidate Information Form & Questionnaire

NAME: Willia Powell

CANDIDATE FOR: Rochester City School Board

PARTY AFFILIATION(S): Democratic Party (cross-endorsed by Working Families Party)

CAMPAIGN WEBSITE: www.votewilla.com

E-MAIL ADDRESS: wpowell@rochester.rr.com

### CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE:

Name: Willia Powell for School Board

Address: 395 Canterbury Road

City, State, Zip Code: Rochester, NY 14607

Phone: 585.442.8360

If the Committee for a Strong Economy – PAC chooses to endorse your candidacy, would you accept that endorsement? Negotiable!

SIGNATURE: Willia Powell

DEADLINE: Email your response to [colleen.dimartino@rballiance.com](mailto:colleen.dimartino@rballiance.com) or fax your response to (585)263-3679 (Attention: Colleen DiMartino) by **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2011**. Please remember to include a resume.

### QUESTION #1

Why should the PAC endorse you? (NOTE: Incumbents should document specific achievements from your most recent term of office.)

I don't expect that the Committee for a Strong Economy – PAC will endorse me. But the reasons I give  
all interested parties apply here. I am "the competent one". I make observations, judgments and decisions  
based upon the facts. If you want sound decision making and governance, you shouldn't leave me out of  
your endorsement recommendations.

### QUESTION #2

Rochester City School District students' attendance, test scores and graduation rates have consistently been among the worst in the state. If elected, what is your plan to address the struggles currently facing the district?

My plan is to hire the best Superintendent of Schools we can afford, consider his/her advice carefully,  
challenge his/her ideas, especially as regards to how to pay for them, and lend as much political and moral  
support to those ideas and initiatives as I can, within the limits of my own conscience.

**QUESTION #3**

*As the school board continues its search for a permanent superintendent, what qualities will you look for when evaluating candidates? Will you seek and recognize feedback from the employer community on superintendent candidates?*

*I am looking for a Superintendent that knows what success looks like, understands the urban education environment, and has an idea how to bring success to urban schools. Listen to my WXXI candidate interview for a more complete explanation. I seek feedback from all constituent groups including the employer community. I don't know what is meant by "recognize feedback from..." Please explain.*

**QUESTION #4**

*In 2010, former Mayor Bob Duffy lobbied for a new governance structure for the school district, which called for greater parental engagement and provided the city with more responsibility in the management of the schools. Although legislation implementing this plan passed in the Assembly, the Senate failed to take action. Would you support a change in school governance that includes increased city and community involvement? Please explain your response.*

*No, and I don't believe any of the eight candidates for School Board on the November ballot do either.  
My position is fully articulated in the media; I don't believe it is necessary to expound upon it further.*

**QUESTION #5**

*Despite a budget deficit that could grow to more than \$100 million by 2014-15, the school board approved a 3.53 percent salary increase for teachers in June. While some current board members did voice concern that the district could not afford this increase, the proposal passed by a vote of 4 to 3. With this growth in personnel expenses, what specific recommendations do you have for closing the school district's future deficit?*

*Private sector salaries went up 3.9% last year. Teachers are our greatest resource, and until another means of educating children can be found, I anticipate supporting teachers with a living and competitive wage. I advocate for full funding of the Contract for Excellence formula of school aid from New York State, and I urge you to do likewise. A successful New York depends on a full and fair investment in education.*

**QUESTION #6**

*In 2010, the New York State Comptroller's office released an audit critical of the school district. The report stated that "Rochester City School District officials failed to develop sound policies and take an active role in monitoring district finances." As a board member, what will you do to ensure financial oversight and transparency?*

*Ensure that Generally Accepted Accounting Principles are employed by the District, and that the Recommendations of the Auditor General are integrated into Standard Business Procedures, where Appropriate.*

**QUESTION #7**

*Parental involvement is a key component of a child's education. How can we engage parents and provide them with a greater role and voice in the city school district?*

    We? I work toward that end by empowering parents with a Parent Involvement Policy that is essentially a  
    Parent's Bill of Rights. I also support a Managed Choice/Parent Preference school choice system that  
    empowers them to make decisions for their child rather than be assigned to a school.

**QUESTION #8**

*How can the Rochester Business Alliance assist you in achieving the goals described in the questions above?*

    By providing a living wage in all areas of employment, so that a parent can reasonably hope to support  
    a family and still have time and energy to engage with that family at the end of the day. After that, we  
    must develop a culture of involvement.