

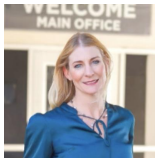
Meet the San Dieguito School Board Candidates

District 3: side by side, in their own words

Schools Beyond Screens does not endorse candidates.

FIND YOUR BALLOT. Not sure which district you live in? Look up your sample ballot at the San Diego County Registrar of Voters: sdvote.com/content/rov/en/sample-ballot-info-lookup.html. **Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026.**

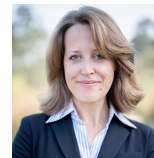
DISTRICT 3



Summer Boger

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Helen Doyle

DISTRICT 3

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1. What does "innovation" in education mean to you? What are some things you would like to see schools do differently—or better—for today's students?

Summer Boger

Innovation in education means giving every student the tools they need to become a functioning adult and good citizen in a rapidly changing world. That includes thoughtful use of technology, but always in service of learning, never as a replacement for it. The most important thing we can offer a student is time with a great teacher. Nothing replaces that one-on-one or classroom discussion. I am very familiar with both the need for technology and its potential harms. My children watched Screenagers, hosted by San Diego Academy, which invited parents and students to watch together. It showed the effects of screen time on the brain, it let to too many dopamine hits, shortening attention span and learning capabilities and training the brain to want instant gratification instead of working toward long-term goals. This is why guardrails matter for children. When we talk about technology, we have to set clear boundaries so kids stay focused on what matters most. Phones in pockets, not in hands aren't placing restrictions, it's positive protections.

Helen Doyle

To me, innovation in education means continually learning more about how students learn best and being willing to adapt as the evidence evolves. Education has always gone through cycles as we learn more about the brain and how learning happens. We should be open to new approaches, but also willing to revisit established practices when research shows there may be a better way.

AI is a good example. We have an opportunity to think carefully about the benefits and risks of this powerful new technology before it becomes even more deeply embedded in our lives. AI has enormous potential, from accelerating scientific discoveries to supporting learning, but students must still learn to think critically, conduct research, evaluate information, and solve problems independently. AI should be a tool that enhances their abilities, not a substitute for developing them.

That starts with strong foundations. Students need to understand basic math, read critically, and develop the skills to reason through a problem themselves. We should also give them opportunities for hands-on learning, collaboration, and exploring their interests, so they graduate prepared for a changing world.

I don't believe any one person has all the answers, and I wouldn't pretend to be an expert in every emerging area of education. As a board member, I want to stay connected with educators, researchers, families, and organizations that can help us understand the latest evidence. My goal is to ask good questions, listen, and help ensure that our decisions put students first.

2. What role should technology play in education, and what guardrails do you think are important to make sure it supports rather than distracts from learning?



Summer Boger

I know that individual teachers establish their own classroom rules, like having students put phones in a pocket or pouch, but I'm not certain whether there's a unified district-wide policy. Legislation limiting smartphone use during school hours is a step in the right direction. I'd want to understand how SDUHSD is implementing new legislation.



Helen Doyle

Technology has an important role in education, but we need to be thoughtful about how, when, and why we use it. The answer may look different depending on the student's grade level, the subject, and the learning objective. A student doing journalism research may need a computer to access information and develop digital literacy, while a student in PE or music will benefit much more from hands-on, face-to-face learning.

I've spoken with students who described using AI tools or browser extensions that can give them answers without requiring them to work through the problem themselves. We need to ask where technology genuinely improves learning and where it may be getting in the way. Students need time to think, retain information, solve problems, and develop their own judgment—not simply find the quickest answer on a screen.

At the same time, technology can help teachers work more efficiently and provide differentiated instruction to meet students' varying needs. We should preserve those benefits while establishing clear expectations for appropriate use, academic integrity, privacy, and age-appropriate access. We should also consider equity: students may not have equal access to the same devices, internet resources, or AI tools outside school.

School is a critical period of learning and development. I want us to be intentional about screen time, regularly evaluate whether technology is improving educational outcomes, and make sure it supports rather than replaces the human connection between teachers and students. The goal isn't to eliminate technology; it's to make sure we are using it in ways that truly serve our students.

3. Are you aware if SDUHSD has a comprehensive cell phone policy for classroom use, and how is it implemented?



Summer Boger

Legislation limiting smartphone use during school hours is a step in the right direction. I'd want to understand how SDUHSD is implementing new legislation.



Helen Doyle

My understanding is that SDUHSD has guidelines for cell phone use during instructional time, and some classrooms use docking stations where students are expected to place their phones during class. Students may generally use their phones between classes and during breaks, subject to school-specific rules.

I would like to confirm how consistently these expectations are implemented across campuses, including our middle schools. Having a policy is one thing; making sure it is clear, consistently enforced, and effective at minimizing distractions is another. I believe we should listen to students, teachers, and families, understand what is working, and make adjustments where needed to keep the focus on learning and in-person relationship building.

4. Can you share your thoughts on YouTube during school hours?



Summer Boger

There have to be guardrails. Parent controls, teacher controls, and clear expectations. A student watching a YouTube video is not the same as a student engaged in a lesson. Technology should never replace the time a teacher spends with a student, and it certainly shouldn't replace real conversation between peers. If YouTube is being used in the classroom, it needs to be purposeful, supervised, and limited. Just playing a video is not teaching. As teachers and parents, we also have to be good examples to our children, and that means we ourselves have to have boundaries. This technology is still new to many of us. We are learning how to navigate this world as much as our children are. Coming together as a community to continue to edify one another helps us to be better role models for our children.



Helen Doyle

I think YouTube can be a useful educational resource when a teacher has intentionally selected a video to support a lesson. Visual demonstrations, documentaries, and expert explanations can help bring a subject to life. However, I don't think students should have unrestricted access to YouTube during school hours.

Content filters and blockers can help, but they aren't perfect, and inappropriate or distracting content can still get through. We need to be thoughtful about both what students can access and how they are using their time in the classroom.

At the high school level, the issue is more nuanced. Students need opportunities to develop independence, conduct research, and evaluate online information for themselves. I would like to see clear expectations that allow teachers to use these resources purposefully while limiting unstructured access that can distract from learning. The goal should be to give students the benefits of technology without losing sight of why they are in school.

5. Can you share your thoughts on the AI tool MagicSchool?



Summer Boger

I haven't personally used MagicSchool, but AI in education is coming at us like a tsunami and we need to decide intentionally how we implement it in the classroom. We need to think about how we help kids navigate the changing world of careers. It is a really big issue: how we allow AI in the classroom without replacing the humanity and allowing our children to be functioning adults and good citizens. I'd want to bring parents, teachers, and students to the table to discuss how we utilize AI.



Helen Doyle

I'm still researching MagicSchool and would like to understand how teachers are using its different features before forming a firm opinion. AI tools may offer real benefits, particularly in helping teachers plan lessons, differentiate instruction, and meet students' varied learning needs.

My concern is how these tools are used directly by students. A parent shared an example with me of a student using an AI tool to help with an essay, where repeated prompts progressively smoothed out the writing process. It made me think about how much students learn through the process itself.

Learning isn't always easy, and I believe some of the most important growth happens when students have to work through a difficult problem, organize their thoughts, revise their writing, and figure things out for themselves. If AI removes too much of that struggle, we risk producing a more polished assignment without necessarily developing the skills behind it.

I would like to understand how MagicSchool is being used in our classrooms, what guardrails teachers have, and whether it is improving student learning. I'm open to tools that support teachers and help students learn, but we need to be careful that AI assists the learning process rather than replaces it.

6. What would meaningful partnership with parents look like to you, and how do you plan to keep families engaged and informed as the district makes decisions affecting their children?



Summer Boger

The surveys are so important, and the benchmarks. If we implement something new, we need roundtables. Bring parents in to share what they support and want to see. After implementation, survey to follow up and make sure you are getting the parent feedback. We are representing the parents, not big tech, any top-down agency, or state mandate. We are there to hear from parents and to serve students.



Helen Doyle

Meaningful partnership starts with listening to parents before decisions are made, not simply informing them after the fact. Parents have valuable insight into how district policies affect their children, both at school and at home, and that perspective should be part of the decision-making process.

Screen time is one area where I believe parent input is particularly important. I've heard from parents who are concerned about how much time their children spend on computers and other devices. We need to take those concerns seriously, ask families about their experiences, and consider that feedback as we evaluate our technology and computer-use policies.

I also recognize that parents are already managing a lot. Between school communications, different apps, and the demands of daily life, adding another platform or responsibility can become overwhelming. We need to make communication clear, accessible, and manageable, using existing channels effectively rather than assuming every family has the time or ability to engage with another app.

As a board member, I would want to hear from families representing different experiences and needs, communicate the reasoning behind important decisions, and make sure parents have meaningful opportunities to provide feedback. I also believe we should regularly evaluate the costs and benefits of our technology investments and policies. Ultimately, partnership means treating parents as valued contributors and keeping our shared focus on what best supports students.

7. Fun question: If you could time travel back to your own childhood with a small group of today's eighth graders, what would you like them to experience?



Summer Boger

Not asked in this interview.



Helen Doyle

My parents actually got rid of our TV when I was growing up, so a lot of my childhood was spent outside. We rode our bikes, explored a nearby creek catching crawdads, and spent time with friends. We also hung out at the mall, which was a big part of being a teenager!

If I could take a group of today's eighth graders back to my childhood, I'd take them to the mall and let them just hang out together. No phones, no agenda, no need to document everything. Just talking, laughing, wandering around, and getting to know each other.

There are very few times in life when you have that much opportunity to spend unstructured time with friends. Those seemingly ordinary moments are where friendships grow, you learn how to relate to different people, and you make memories that stay with you. I'd love for today's students to experience that kind of uninterrupted connection.