

# If I Were Mayor

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If I were mayor I would improve the education system, fight food insecurity, and fund mental health resources. There would be a lot I would have to figure out, but I know some of the things I would change. Before I did anything though, I would talk with the previous mayor. I would figure out what their goals had been and what they were able to accomplish while in office. I would also hold a city meeting and listen to what the people have to say. After all of this is done, I would make my changes.

I would put better funding into the local education system and start a program to teach children real-life skills. Schools are underfunded, especially in the music and art departments. In the 1999-2000 school year, 20% of schools offered dance and theater classes. In the 2009-2010 school year, only 3% of schools allocated funds for dance, and only 4% offered theater opportunities (McDonald, 2016). Not only are music and arts underfunded, but teachers are also underfunded. 44% of public schools in the U.S. are reporting teaching vacancies. These openings are because of a mix of underpay, low respect, and poor working conditions (NCES, 2022). My primary goal would be to raise the salary for local teachers. I would also give them better funding for supplies in their classrooms, which they normally buy themselves.

Also, the school system doesn't always teach children real-life skills. Some kids go off to college and do not know how to do laundry. Studies show that 81% of college students wish they had been taught more life skills before graduation. Of those, 17% of them admitted to not knowing how to do laundry before leaving for college (SWNS, 2021). I would create a class that taught people how to pay bills, cook, do chores, write a resume, and other things needed to function as an adult.

The next thing I would do as mayor is to build a community kitchen and garden. Food insecurity is a rising problem in the United States and is only going to get worse. More than 34 million people, including 9 million children, in the United States, are food insecure. In 2021, 53 million people turned to food banks and community programs to put food on the table (Feeding America, 2022). Community kitchens have other benefits as well. People who volunteer in community kitchens have said that the social aspect is one of the best benefits (fraserhealth, 2017). Additionally, teenagers who volunteer in the kitchen would earn extra credits for school and volunteer hours.

The community garden would go hand and hand with the community kitchen. It would help combat food insecurity by producing food and ensuring people get healthy food. Some people in cities like to grow food and garden, but they can't because they

don't have a big yard. A community garden would give these people a chance to do what they love while helping others.

Next, I would fund mental health resources. People, especially teenagers, struggle with mental health disorders and suicidal thoughts. Studies show that 36.7% of high school students report feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year and 18.8% of students have seriously considered suicide. That is over 28 million teenagers (CDC, 2020). There are not nearly enough resources to help the people that struggle with this and the programs that exist are underfunded.

In conclusion, I would work to make my city a better place for everyone regardless of income, profession, or mental health. The mayor of a municipality is responsible for everyone and everything in that city. Often, certain people and things get swept under the rug and ignored. I would make sure that everyone is seen and heard. These are the things that I would change if I were to become mayor.

## Sources:

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