



West Contra Costa Unified School District Board of Education
Candidate Questionnaire, Leadership and Candidacy

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Voting District #5

1. Why are you running for the West Contra Costa School Board?

I am running to represent children, teachers and staff. My experience as a teacher in this district has informed how I view policy and how best to support our students. I believe that it is important to have a trustee that is a product, not just of the district, but this particular ward. As a person of color my coming of age was in this ward and I understand the unique opportunity for kids at the very bottom to climb the socioeconomic ladder via a quality public education like the one I received while attending schools in El Cerrito. That experience coupled with my time as a staff, and volunteer allows me to put myself in the shoes of the folks who do the real work, often staying late or spending time on the weekends checking on families and children I'm running for them. Lastly, I'm running because I promised my grandfather I would. That's a promise I made good on when I decided to enter this race. This district needs someone who will be committed to improving outcomes for all students.

2. As a school board member, you will be required to manage competing interests and inputs. How do you plan to balance the needs of your individual voting district and the entire WCCUSD? How do you plan to research and gather feedback from your community when making important decisions? How would you support a healthy team culture among school board members that promotes dialog?

If elected to the board in Nov my first priority would be to evaluate problems not only my home district but the entire district. Although we are elected to serve in a specific geographic area my commitment is to create and support policies that have an impact on all students, families and staff. My role as a board member is to continuously have conversations with members of my community about the issues they are facing and always keep the voice of my constituents in front of me as I make decisions that affect the district at large.

I plan to use the data available to inform the best way to create policy around these issues. It's also important to fall back on those voices when sufficient data isn't available. In dealing with my colleagues, I would support a healthy team by always making space to dialogue even when I am passionate. We are all passionate about our students and wanting to make points that ensure our constituents' voices are heard. We must make space in the conversation to find the best options that support all of our communities' voices.

3. As a board member you have one employee. How will you hold the superintendent accountable for day-to-day operations, the decisions and actions of his team, and overall student outcomes?

As a board member, my main responsibility outside of serving families, students and staff is working hand in hand with the superintendent. I feel it is important as the elected representative that the vision of the people be communicated and acted upon by the superintendent. I would hold the superintendent accountable by ensuring timely and appropriate evaluations of the c suite team at the district including all direct department heads. I also believe we should reevaluate how we review the performance of the superintendent. The process currently is too political and has been used as a tactic to scapegoat the misgivings of the board. I further believe that the standards should be directly tied to the success measures of the school site and academic performance and outcomes. Having experienced the failed initiatives including the Road to 2020, I support the current board's decision to decline an extension of the contract with Mr. Duffy.

4. COVID-19 highlighted the inequities in our district, as we saw students receiving very different educational experiences, even between classrooms at the same school. What will you do to ensure more consistent delivery of high quality instruction and student supports throughout the COVID crisis and beyond?

Covid-19 showed us that not only does the district have inequities but that many of the programs that the district has in place are insufficient. The district touts its 1 to 1 laptop program as a model. My time as a teacher tells me something different. In the classroom, I noticed how woefully deficient the laptops that were provided to students were. This was amplified in the Covid crisis. Not only did we have inadequate technology, many of our students did not have home access to wifi or internet service that only exacerbated problems for English learners and our African-American students and families. Districts that were successful in transferring to online content were the ones that made certain that online content was being delivered regularly and students were able to access the content. I will review our 1 to 1 program and look into policies that ensure that classroom teachers are fully prepared to deliver content electronically. I do not support the reopening of district schools in the immediate future due to the increase risk associated with Covid 19

5. The WCCUSD budget is in a clear crisis. What would your process look like to gather the key information you need to make decisions to move the district out of a position of deficit? What key actions would you take locally and at the state and federal levels to improve WCCUSD's fiscal situation?

The top item in getting the district out of its deficit is a clear evaluation of the district priorities. Your priorities directly drive where and how you spend money. Once we have come to a clear consensus on what our budget priorities are we can start making decisions that have not only impact in the classroom but fiscal impact that assures financial health for the long haul. My process to gather information would be to collaborate with entities like yourself, CBO partners, families and students. All parties should be involved with the budgeting process and we could pilot participatory budgeting process to create buy in from community members. I also believe we need to address how this district makes money and an immediate solution to our budget gap could be the sale of excess district land and vacant district school sites. At this time, we need to consider drastic measures to get things back on track and I am willing to make those tough decisions to help our families. Ultimately the question we should always have in mind is does the data support our spending and show that it results in greater success of our students or does it show that it is creating barriers?