



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

Kelly Reck
Voting District #4

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

It's a mix of things really. My husband and I are planning on starting a family in the next few years and were considering moving to be a part of a different school district. However, that idea didn't sit well with us and drove me to look for ways I could help make our schools better not just for my kids, but for my neighbors. Schools are where children learn about what's possible, our kids deserve the opportunity to dream big and to be equipped with the tools to make those dreams come to life. Outcomes should not be dependent on zip codes.

I have always been a problem solver and bridge builder. I believe my ability to dig into the details without losing sight of our most pressing needs—in this case, our students—has positioned me well to effectuate change for West County schools.

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?

Navigating life is an exercise in competing interests. This is where I will lean most closely on two things—My deeply-held belief that systems must strive to work for least-served populations first, and that wise-counsel and real-life experiences must be taken into consideration before any decisions are made.

This will happen through conversations with teachers and parents, with policy experts and researchers, with trusted mentors and assistants. I will work to ensure that the voices around me are diverse in thought. I want to know what I don't know and learn from different perspectives.

In all things, my first guiding force will be what is best for kids. Next will be on what my community is telling me they need. As their representative on the board, I will use my voice to amplify theirs.

Because fellow members of the board will also be focused on what is best for kids, my goal will be to be in communication often, to better understand the needs of their parts of the district. I will always be looking for common threads and championing a shared vision for all of WCCUSD.

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?

I will start by setting clear expectations, standards, and consequences if not met. I will mean what I say. Accountability will be the floor, not the ceiling. We will set desired outcomes and measure success as we go. We will be thorough.

With those perimeters set, my goal will be to have open dialogue and collaboration to facilitate an interactive process. We rarely know everything we need to know at the start of anything. I will be focused on the spirit of the task, better outcomes for students, and be quick to adjust as new information is found. My belief is that good management feels like partnership.

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?

This is a huge challenge that I don't think I have an answer for. What I do know is that providing all children the ability to learn must be our number one priority and that the best way to find meaningful solutions is to ask the people who have already been trying to address the problem. Starting with the folks on the ground allows you to leverage their earned experience. In partnership, I would look to data on access to learning devices and internet to inform a plan on how to get all students access to education. I would turn to data on housing and lunch programs to inform how we ensure all students have the food they need to fuel their bodies and the space they need to learn. I would gather information from state and local government about how facilities can be safely utilized. I would hear from teachers and work to equip them with what they need materially and emotionally. Same for parents.

Given the timing of the election, I sincerely hope meaningful progress has been made before I get there and my goal would be to keep running in the well-informed and most effective direction.

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?

I would start by trying to understand how we got into the position we are in. Until failures in oversight and execution are addressed, we have no hope for different outcomes. Those who contributed must be held accountable.

Next, I would work to understand the financial needs of the district and how money is currently being allocated. The most vulnerable must be prioritized first, always. From there, a new budget and plan must be made for how we move forward. My intention here would be to get granular and pragmatic, stretch funds and keep things moving forward.