

## QUESTIONNAIRE

### GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2014 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

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1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for School Board?

I am running for School Board to leverage my background in education policy, professional expertise in philanthropy, and my passion and commitment to dramatically improve outcomes for Oakland's children and youth.

2. Program and Priorities -- Elected office provides the opportunity to proactively lead by placing new ideas on the agenda for consideration and development. What are some specific ideas you intend to pursue if elected? What do you believe are the main priorities for the School Board?

- Reducing Dropout Rates
  - Drop our rates are too high in Oakland. We need to make sure students have the resources and opportunities needed to succeed and stay in school.
- Qualify More Students for College
  - Our children must have a curriculum that prepares students for success. We need to make sure our students graduate and qualify for U.C. and C.S.U. college admission.
- Prepare Students for Successful Career
  - We need to make sure our students are prepared for careers in this new 21<sup>st</sup> Century economy. I will work to make sure they have the curriculum and resources they need to successfully enter the workforce.

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of School Board member. If you are a current School Board member, what issues can you point to in your time as Board member that have had a positive impact? As a Board member what can you tell us about your service on the Board, and share with us the decisions you have made in this capacity that you believe made a difference in the functioning of the School Board?

B.A. in American Studies from Wesleyan University

M.A. in Education from Stanford University  
Bank Street College of Education, Urban Education Semester

The daughter of a 35-year public high school math teacher, I have long been exposed to issues and concerns impacting teachers in the classroom. I have worked as a teacher's assistant in urban public schools in New York City and in Stockholm, Sweden. I have worked with in the philanthropic and non-profit sector since 2005. For the past 3.5 years, I have worked with a local, family foundation bringing resources and advocating for funding of education projects in the East Bay, including Oakland.

#### 4. School Ratings and Evaluations -- How do you rate the Oakland schools? Name the success and shortcomings?

Overall, Oakland schools have made significant progress in the past 5 years, but there is still much room for improvement. Overall, I am hopeful that there are conditions in place (more collaborative Board, new Superintendent, better economic conditions) that will lead to greater success in student progress and outcomes in the next 3-5 years. I also believe the District needs to focus on fewer strategic priorities overall. I look forward to the full implementation of the Quality School Development Plan which will allow us to better assess how our schools are doing.

#### 5. Budget -- What changes to the OUSD budget would you suggest? (include changes to revenue).

I would like to see more District leadership around financial management and long-term financial forecasting and planning.

#### 6. LCFF & LCAP -- How do you see the impact of the new Local Control Funding Formula and the role of staff and parents/community in LCAP?

I look forward to seeing the Superintendent's timeline and plan for the LCAP engagement process in Year 14-15. The condensed timeline of the LCAP in its first year did not allow for a thorough community engagement process. I believe there are many areas the LCAP can be improved in its second year.

#### 7. School Closures -- What is your position on the schools which have been closed over the past several years, and the eviction of the "People's School for Public Education" at Lakeview School? What is your position on future school closures?

Closing schools is never an ideal option. Without greater leadership from the District to better manage our resources and identify a plan for future sustainability, there will be more school closures on the horizon. I am hopeful our new Superintendent will work to stabilize our budget so that we won't have to face tough decisions about schools closures in the future. .

8. Other OUSD Properties -- What are your views on the use of the District property at 1025 2nd Ave. and the future location of Dewey HS?

We need to continue a comprehensive community engagement process in order to listen to diverse stakeholders including teachers, parents and school leaders at Dewey. I would recommend the District extends its Request for Qualifications (RFQ) deadline to allow for more time for community input.

9. Truants and Drop-outs -- What do you suggest we do about the truants and those who have dropped out?

I believe in greater investments by schools to enhance its case management programs to better service and outreach to truant students and their families. There are a number of successful programs (Youth Uprising, Youth Employment Partnership, Beyond Emancipation, Civicorps, etc.) reengaging students who have dropped out of the K-12 system in Oakland. I support expanding partnerships with public and private agencies and community-based providers working to ensure that "opportunity youth" have access to resources and services.

10. Charter Schools -- What should Oakland's policy be around charter schools? What would you propose, if anything, in lieu of Charter schools? Do you distinguish between the different types? Would you support putting charter schools under the union contract?

This is a complex issue that impacts parent's options for schools, needs of District schools and the OUSD's long-term financial viability.

I support quality public schools in Oakland which meet the need of all of our students. Currently, the District has limited resources to be able to adequately fund teachers, specialized programs, and comprehensive services at district-operated and charter schools, especially schools with students who have the most challenged backgrounds. Under the current Education Code and conditions in the District, charter schools will continue to expand in Oakland over the next several years. I am hopeful OUSD's new Superintendent will bring leadership that will work with charter management organizations to more strategically and systematically engage charter schools in Oakland in a way that is coherent with OUSD's strategic plan and ensures (and not threatens) the District's long-term financial viability.

I also support the rights of public employees to organize. I look forward to engaging in conversations with labor leadership, charter leadership, and District staff, to better understand if charter schools should be under the union contract.

11. Testing and Teacher Evaluations -- What should our policy be around Student Testing and Teacher Evaluation? Do you see alternatives to the use of mandated standardized tests in meeting local, state and national education

goals? How much are we teaching to the test now, and what should we be doing different if you feel it should be different?

Testing: Standardized testing has flaws and does not adequately reflect a teacher or student's performance. However, I support the inclusion of student academic performance growth as one major indicator of a teacher's work performance, but not as the only one. I support multiple forms of assessments to analyze student academic performance growth, not only standardized tests.

Evaluation: I support expanding the approved OEA/OUSD approved performance pilots in all schools.

12. Common Core -- What are your views on the use of the proposed Common Core curriculum?

Philosophically, I support the idea of Common Core and educating our children with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. However, with any new initiatives and policies, success is entirely dependent on its implementation and roll out. Adequate training, professional development, and observation is needed to ensure that common core is being implemented successfully.

13. Small Schools -- What do you think of the current Small Schools?

I support quality public schools in Oakland. Some small schools have been incredibly successful and continue to thrive in OUSD.

14. Central Resources -- How do you think the allocations of central resources should work and how should that relate to local school funding?

Recent policy has capped the percentage that can be spent on central resources which has allowed for more decision-making on budgets at the local level. School governance teams at the site-based level can and should participate actively in the LCAP process.

15. City/Government Relations -- How should the City of Oakland support the OUSD, and education in general?

I believe a healthy, vibrant, safe Oakland begins with building an education system that meets the needs of all of our students. I believe there are many opportunities for the City of Oakland and OUSD to partner. For example, the City and District could work together to incentive Oakland residents to teacher in OUSD.

16. Police -- What is your position on Campus police? How would you create an environment where police are not needed?

School safety is a great concern. I support Black Organizing Project's MOU with OUSD which sets policies on the role and accepted practices of police and security officers on campus.

17. Unions -- What do you think of the relationship between the OUSD and the unions? What would you propose it should be and how would you act on that?

Superintendent Gary Yee was very proactive about meeting with labor leadership and representatives in the past year. I believe that the relationship between OUSD and the unions has improved in recent years. I seek to be a coalition builder and will work to support all parties who have an interest in improving outcomes for our students.

19. Vocational Education -- What is your position on Vocational Education?

The District's plans to expand Linked-learning programs are a promising take on vocational education programs. Linked-learning programs combine rigorous academics with career-based technical skills, workplace experiences, and support services.

20. 'Academics vs. Electives' -- What is the proper balance between academics and sports, arts and other electives? Do you support using organizations such as Play Works to provide sports, arts and other electives formally provided by staff before the series of cutbacks?

I support a holistic approach to education, which includes rigorous academics, as well as sports, arts, and other electives.

21. The School Day -- What is your opinion on the length of the school day and the role of before school and after school programs?

Quality before and after-school programs can play an important role in a child's education if they are well-coordinated and integrated with the school day, and high-quality.

22. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland?

As a candidate, I have already used the campaign as an opportunity to better understand the concerns and priorities of OUSD parents, teachers, principals and other key stakeholders in the Oakland education community.

In the past month, I have:

- **Met with school leaders, teachers (new, veteran, and retired), and/or parents from 10 school sites in District 2** to hear concerns and priorities, with plans to outreach to remaining schools in September
- **Convened and interviewed parents (including PTA presidents)** at Lincoln Elementary, Cleveland Elementary, Franklin Elementary, Bella Vista Elementary, and Crocker Highlands Elementary to learn about their experiences at the school and with OUSD
- **Volunteered at school events** at Garfield Elementary and Lincoln Elementary schools

- **Met with key education stakeholders** including community organizations, labor representatives, community college representatives, District staff (current and former), and Board members (current and former)

As a board member, I will continue to seek input from various community stakeholders and parents. I will:

- **Maintain a consistent and reliable “open-door” policy** and agree to meet with anyone who shares an interest in improving outcomes for our OUSD children and youth.
- **Meet regularly with school leaders and parents** in District 2
- **Commit to producing regular communications** (newsletter, blog, Facebook posts or email blasts) to keep parents and community members informed

23. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you?

I have the support of the former Oakland Superintendent Gary Yee, the current OUSD Board President, David Kakishiba, District 3 Board Member Jumoke Hinton Hodge, City Council President Pat Kernighan, Peralta Community College Trustee Abel Guillen, former District 2 Oakland City Council Member Danny Wan and a host of other community leaders, PTA presidents, parents and supporters including child advocates such as: C.J. Hirschfield (Children’s Fairyland), Angela Louie Howard (Louts Bloom) and Mark Friedman (former Executive Director of First Five Alameda County).

24. Campaign Funding -- How much money do you currently have for this race? How much money do you plan to raise? Where will the money come from? Describe sources of financial contributions for your campaign that you would refuse to accept (if any).

I anticipate raising a minimum of \$30,000 for my race. I am on track to have \$10,000 by the end of the month. The money will come from a broad network of friends, colleagues, family members, and Oakland supporters.

25. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

Thank you for the opportunity to seek an endorsement from the Green Party. I believe I am the best candidate for this position because:

1) **I have a proven track** record working at the Thomas J. Long Foundation with the community to bring resources to Oakland schools. In my personal life, I have also raised funds to support grassroots community projects benefitting refugee and immigrants in the Eastlake neighborhood of Oakland.

2) **I am ready to hit the ground running.** I have familiarity with the policy issues and leadership including past Superintendents (Tony Smith and Gary Yee) as well as the

new Superintendent Wilson and several members of the current Oakland Unified School Board. I also have an established relationship with important stakeholders including District senior staff, leaders of community organizations, and funders.

3) **I understand the diverse needs of District 2.** Both my father and grandfather graduated from Lincoln Elementary and my niece is currently attending preschool in the District. I have volunteered at schools in the District, supported community-based organizations such as Harbor House and Lotus Bloom who working with children in the community, and attend a neighborhood church which serves refugee and newcomer families in the area. I know the past and present issues our students face and am eager to work toward a better future.