

QUESTIONNAIRE

GREEN PARTY OF ALAMEDA COUNTY 2016 ENDORSEMENT DECISION

Please email your responses to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com

In the subject line, please include "Oakland School Board" and your district number.

If it is not possible for you to email, please mail your responses to:

Oakland School Board Questionnaire

c/o Green Party of Alameda County,

2022A Blake Street * Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 27, 2016

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

A simple, straightforward question and the most difficult. Thank you for asking it. I first moved to Oakland 42 years ago. My 1968 Chevy and I arrived with less than \$400 in my pocket, a less than adequate high-school education, and no life guidance or direction. A sympathetic Oakland landlord (not many of those left around) allowed me to rent a \$160 a month apartment without an initial security deposit. The JC Penny Department Store at Eastmont Mall gave me a job selling electronics (with no experience or knowledge of electronics). I made friends, primarily within the Latino and African-American communities, from whom I received guidance and some quick and necessary tutorials in city-ways. Without going into detail, I was able to go to college, grad school, have a career as a teacher and administrator, buy a home, and be able to retire and stay in my city. At the risk of sounding trite, it's time for me to give back to this city that has become so much a part of me. I fear the same opportunities that benefited me are no longer there for Oakland youth today. Additionally, I've followed the Oakland School Board for decades; I'm confident that my education, experience, and passion for our city will make me a good fit.

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?

I am a big proponent of nutrition education. One in three children, and nearly half of African-American and Latino children, are predicted to develop diabetes in their lifetime. I live a few blocks from West Lake Middle School and it saddens me to see our children, many of them already obese, consuming large sugary drinks and eating potato chips and candy while walking to school in the morning. I support the Oakland sugar tax initiative and Michelle Obama's "letsmove.org".

Additionally, and I know this may sound a little obtuse, but I'm interested in returning to a somewhat old-fashioned concept of "teaching the whole child." Standardized testing has become very important to

everything from teacher, principal, superintendent, and school evaluations to real estate prices. California's adoption of Common Core appears to have escalated this importance. Academic achievement is important, but a child's social and emotional development is also important. Schools are not factories and teachers are not technicians. I see our schools as an extension of the community it serves and our teachers as extensions to every student's family.

The main priorities of the BOE is to make broad policy decisions; however, there are two other very important roles – the BOE hires and fires the superintendent.

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?

I have spent a career in CA public education as a teacher and administrator; many of those years as a teacher in the Oakland Unified School District. My personal education includes the following:
BA Political Science, MA Political Theory, MS Educational Technologies, CA Teaching Credential, CA Administrative Credential.

I know public education from the curriculum, technologies, and the financial business of running a school district. I have real world experience in every facet of public education.
I've been a resident of Oakland's District Three for 42 years. I know my community and I'm committed to the City of Oakland.

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

There are many great things happening all over Oakland schools. It's the classroom where the magic happens. The only low ratings I can give OUSD is in its central administration. We've been successful in teaching the "whole child." Many children come to us from dysfunctional and unhealthy homes. Our teachers have done a valiant, and in some cases heroic, job in treating every child with respect and emotional support. All we need to do is refocus on our classrooms as a district and we will be the most successful school district in California.

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

We should cut many of the six-figure administrative jobs that have been created in the past two years under our current superintendent and send that money to our schools. I'm an advocate of "site based budgeting;" school principals know best how to spend the money on the specific needs of his/ her school. California ranks number 46 in school funding. I am an advocate for Prop 13 reform to better fund education.

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 love it! The first priority (as mentioned above) should be the school's specific needs. Parent involvement is essential for determining how each school can best serve its community. I am optimistic this will improve

communications and relations between staff and the community.

7. School Properties: What are your thoughts on maintaining current OUSD sites/properties? Should any sites be shared with charter schools?

I think it's an outrage that we've been closing community district schools and then leasing them (in some cases with a 40 year lease) out to charter schools.

8. Discipline: Do you believe the current OUSD policy on suspensions is effective? What role do you envision for restorative justice programs?

No, it is not effective! Students need to be in the classrooms. If we focus our money and time on our community schools, hire more counselors, improve community relations, and better support our teachers we'll drastically reduce the percent of discipline issues with all students. I've worked on a team implementing restorative justice in a school district; not only does it work, but it teaches a culture of respect and consideration.

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

By investing in our community schools we drastically reduce truancy and increase our graduation rates. Let's focus less increasing our standardized testing scores and make our curriculum more relevant for today's children. Again, teaching "the whole child" will cause students to want to stay in school.

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? What are your views on 'common enrollment' and the 'equity pledge'?

Yes. My hope and plan for the first meeting of the new school board is a call for a moratorium on new charter schools with a yes vote from Shanthi Gonzales, Rosie Torres, Chris Jackson, and Benjamin Lang. However, I am not in support of the closure of "mom and pop" charters that are currently serving their school community well. 27% of Oakland students attending charter schools in enough. Let's take a few years to closely evaluate the ones we already have.

Common Enrollment is an example of bringing outside solutions to our uniquely Oakland challenges. When I first started my campaign, I read over the District's proposal for Common Enrollment; ostensibly it appeared to be a plan to "level the playing field;" however, parents "on the street" and various parent organizations have educated me to its true colors. The more I learn about it, the more I'm outraged by the disingenuous nature of the program. If the Superintendent, GO, and several BOE directors want to privatize education in Oakland then they should be honest about their objectives; their insidious and devious methods are unforgivable.

Like Common Enrollment, I was originally misled by the "Equity Pledge." Even then, I questioned the feasibility of its nonbinding nature for charters. Again, I am appalled at its disingenuous nature. Existing charter schools need transparency and accountability. I am suspicious that what was recently revealed in the Livermore District to be just the tip of the iceberg. The positive side to the Equity Pledge and Common

Enrollment is they were not quite devious enough to accomplish their goals. They exemplify the desperate nature of GO, the Superintendent, and several BOE members. I'm confident that in this election, the Oakland voters will see through the election mailers, billboards, and phone calls and vote against the privatization candidates.

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?

In California, we do not ostensibly evaluate teachers based on standardized test scores. Districts receive substantial funding for participating in Common Core. We cannot afford to not accept these funds. However, we do have control over our own attitudes and expectations regarding standardized testing. I've spoken with many teachers who say that the joy and creativity in teaching has been taken away and replaced with teaching to the test. I've also spoken with students and parents who would prefer to see less emphasis on testing. I'm interested in returning to a somewhat old-fashioned concept of "teaching the whole child." Standardized testing has become very important to everything from teacher, principal, superintendent, and school evaluations to real estate prices. California's adoption of Common Core appears to have escalated this importance. Academic achievement is important, but a child's social and emotional development is also important. Schools are not factories and teachers are not technicians. I see our schools as an extension of the community it serves and our teachers as extensions to every student's family.

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

Please see the above response. The curriculum of Common Core is not bad; it's the emphasis we put on the outcomes.

13. Small Schools -- What are your ideas on the experience in the OUSD with 'small schools' and/or 'academies'?

The Gates funding that allowed OUSD to create the "small schools" experiment is no longer available. The Gates Foundation has even admitted that it was less than what they had hoped for.

14. Central Resources -- How do you think the allocations of central resources should work and how should that relate to local school funding? How can there be greater balance in different socio-economic communities in the city?

A difficult question. Central resources should be allocated to the greatest need; it already is to some degree. In the more affluent communities within the City of Oakland, parent clubs raise an astonishing amount of money to fund their community OUSD schools. This results in inequitable services between affluent school communities and less affluent school communities. Examples in library services (often with a credentialed librarian). Computer labs (often with a credentialed technology teacher). Teacher aides, physical education equipment, etc. I do not believe the answer is to tell the affluent community parent clubs not to do this. However, as a talk with many city leaders, business people, and entrepreneurs, I find so many people who are interesting in helping Oakland's children and schools; they just have no clear and easy pipeline for doing it.

I'm interesting in setting up an adopt a school program city-wide. This may serve to illuminate some of the disparity in school funding.

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

Oakland is currently seeing many hi-tech companies competing for space. I would like to partner with the Oakland City Government in making agreements with these new Oakland companies to support our schools; this could take the form of apprenticeship programs, supplying technology, or direct funding.

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

When children grow accustomed to negative interactions with police on school campuses, they expect similar interactions outside of school. The police we do have should be used to protect students and schools from their surrounding environments, not policing students in their classrooms. Restorative Justice teaches a culture of respect and consideration. Implemented appropriately, it has the potential of creating a school environment where police are not needed.

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?

OUSD has had a moderate to good relationship with its teachers union – OEA for decades. I believe in the healthy dynamics that a reasonable public education union creates; it maintains a respect for worker's rights and compensation. I would love to find some way to have charter school teachers join OEA.

18. Adult Education -- What is your position on Adult Education?

Our current superintendent has decimated our once vibrant Adult Education Program; however, now that he (and the BOE) are seeing the negative results, they're starting to bring back some parts of it. Adult education is essential to our city; particularly for recent immigrants. I've seen some research that suggest there is a direct relationship between a city's adult education and crime; the better prepared our adults are to get a good paying job, the less likely they are to be involved in criminal activity.

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

I'm very supportive of vocational education. Every child should be given the opportunity to go to college; however, not every child wants to go to college. There should be access to training that allows a young person to choose a respectable vocation that does not require college training. There are so many high paying vocations out there. My plumber makes more money than I do.

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?

The core curriculum is important and essential; however, learning has to be tailored to each child's abilities and interest. School should be exciting, stimulating, and fulfilling. Every school should be full of music, art, drama, and as many electives as we can afford. Interestingly enough, making school more relevant to students will also increase our funding by reducing truancy and drop-outs. I do not believe in outsourcing our education.

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?

I do not believe that extending the school day will improve our schools. Before and after school programs are great as electives. It is also good for parents who are not always available immediately before and after school.

22. Accountability/ responsibility -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland? How might this relate to policies advocated for by the superintendent?

I am retired and plan to put my whole self into this job. I plan to regularly visit all the schools in District Three. I plan to meet regularly with a parent advisory committee. If the Superintendent's policies are sound and in direct support of students and the community, I will support them to the best of my ability.

23. Money in Politics -- Do you support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights and getting money out of politics? Have you Taken the Pledge to Amend? (<https://movetoamend.org/take-pledge-amend>)

I have not yet taken the Pledge to Amend. Nationally and locally, money can buy elections. Please look no further than this school board election; corporate and billionaire money is being spent to reelect the incumbent for District Three. Yes! I am in support of the Pledge to Amend. I want to see a democracy that is accountable to the people, and not money.

24. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? By whom do you expect to be endorsed? Who are you endorsing, from President all the way down ballot to local races?

I am endorsed by two of the current Oakland School Board members. I'm currently going through the endorsement process with the various labor groups, including OEA, and I fully expect their endorsement. (of course, it would be really great to get the Green Party endorsement)

25. 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 am self-financing my campaign. I am accepting endorsements and volunteers (lots of volunteers), but no money.

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

I will be the pragmatic, experienced, and mature voice of reason on the Oakland School Board. The objective of public education is not a vehicle for the implementation of political objectives (or political ambitions). Our objectives should be the health, wellbeing, safety, and education of our children. All of us, regardless of political orientation, should be able to agree on this. There are a lot of great things happening in Oakland's classrooms (I know, I've been there). Let's share those best practices throughout Oakland's schools. We've had way too many failed attempts at transplanting outside solutions to our uniquely Oakland challenges. Let's stop the divisive bickering and build a community consensus that focuses on our children and our teachers.