

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 was an Oakland parent and I understand the challenges real people face everyday. My children attended charter, public and private schools here. This experience gives me a larger context of the challenges and benefits of each, and how these schools can work better for our children. I had to make very tough choices regarding education for my children and I vowed that I would make life easier for other parents in Oakland.

I bring an outside, independent perspective; I have worked for nearly 20 years in technology sales, and I bring a needed skill set to the board. I've excelled in negotiating contracts, building relationships, managing budgets, identifying problems and providing solutions

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?

Modernization of antiquated systems-thousands of parents fill out student forms annually, making it cumbersome and expensive practice to sort, store, and dispose of records each year. We should allow parents to add input online. There are also several redundant measures made by the district for employees.

Pave the path to college for our students. As the Director for Oakland School Board, I will introduce policies that will give our students the motivation and the tools they need to succeed. This includes, but isn't limited to, providing our middle school students with academic rigor and robust options to prepare them for strong high school programs, creating new STEM programs, expanding our vocational education program, and partnering with local colleges so that students graduate with dual AA degrees and greater matriculation to those institutions.

Promote fiscal responsibility and better resource allocation. It is a wide-known fact that the School Board's central office, with its gargantuan infrastructure, is a black hole for all of our hard-earned tax dollars. We need to take money out of administrative pockets and put those dollars to work, educating our students.

Promote public-private partnerships. We need to identify and leverage private resources to benefit and complement the needs of our public school system. Both systems can work together to achieve the best results for our students. In addition, our local leaders can serve as a critical constituency to assist in creating a safe environment for our children and fund strong early child development initiatives.

As an elected OUSD Board Member, my responsibility is to ensure that OUSD focuses on three areas; providing a safe, academically thriving environment which challenges students to meet high academic standards, giving students the best physical infrastructure (state of the art facilities), and to enable the district to be fiscally responsible, in order to properly meet its obligations and to compensate the educators and support staff in a sustainable, competitive manner.

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?

Currently, I am a technology sales professional; I work with various businesses to try to find solutions to fit their operational needs. My mother and grand parents were educators. I hold a BA in Business and Communication from Holy Names University, and I completing a Masters degree in Leadership at St Mary's University in 2015. I may pursue a Doctorate degree in Educational Leadership as well.

I have worked on various school boards; most of my work has been involved with raising money or working with student athletes, either in schools or community organizations:

Shelton's Primary Education Center - Room Parent/Fundraiser

Luxor Academy - School Fundraiser

New Village Charter School - Advisor to the Board/Fundraiser

St Augustine Catholic School - Parent Group/Team mom (basketball) –

National Coalition of 100 Black Women - Programs Committee

o Scholarships

o Mentor, Positive Steps Program

St. Elizabeth High School - Team Manager (track) 2006 - 2010

East Oakland Youth Development Center -

o Mentor

o Fundraiser

o Chaperone

o NCAA Advisor

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

Some schools in Oakland are distinguished schools and are performing on a high level. We need to take a look at these schools and model them for others that are underperforming because there are far more school underperforming than we should allow.

Academies at Oakland Tech have been extremely successful, while our graduation and college readiness rates have been our shortcomings.

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

The first thing that should occur is full transparency; we should be able to see line by line what OUSD spends. We also should have a context which illustrates the district's values and how the budget is intended to reflect that. In addition we need to hire a CFO

Next, we need to understand why we are so off on the projections.

The current fiscal year had budgeted over \$30 million for consultants and other operations; we are expected to spend over \$41 million.

- We budgeted for only \$98 million being restricted; we have over \$138 million restricted
- We budgeted for \$319 million unrestricted; we have only \$291 million unrestricted
- Almost \$1.8 million more went to Charters than was budgeted
- Almost \$1.4 million more went to Special Education than was budgeted

We should begin the process of reallocation of funds back into supporting the students and teachers in the classroom

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?

Because LCFF funds are based on the demographic profile of the district we will be allocated additional dollars to address the specific needs of students in Oakland, which I believe is beneficial. However we have to ensure we get our fiscal house in order so that we are able to take full advantage of these additional funds. Our historic lack of accuracy record keeping will cause OUSD to lose ADA funds, and with new LCFF requirements being more stringent, OUSD could be in jeopardy of losing additional funding.

It is critical to engage and include those who will be impacted by funding to understand their needs. LCAP encourages broad participation of different groups which allows for support and accountability. This process and engagement can build trust, collaboration and buy in amongst these groups which in turn can create a more dynamic learning environment. However, we have

to be careful to ensure that all populations across the city are represented so the needs that are met are of the many and not the few and the process is inclusionary and doesn't exclude any groups.

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?

I support the belief that local schools should act as community centers where students and families can find educational resources. I also believe that these schools work best when the residents of those communities utilize them to their fullest capacity. With that criteria alone, it is clear that the OUSD made some gaffes in the closures. With the closure of the North Oakland area schools, where there were three schools that served the African American community for nearly six decades, now there are none. In the case of the East Oakland schools, the closure of schools such as Thurgood Marshall in the upper income black neighborhood in the hills, or Maxwell Park in a burgeoning middle class enclave, has only reinforced a belief among the African American community that there is an attempt to close schools in their communities. Lakeview does not fit the same model; the majority of the students did not live in the community, there was an air quality issue due to its location off the freeway, and there was a disconnect with the fact that it rested in one of the most educated populations in the country (more than 50% of the adult population earned at least a BA in the area), yet their children were not attending the school, and there seemed to be no plan to integrate the school into the community. With the progress of innovative technology, tomorrow's student may not spend 6 hours in a classroom. As cities become increasingly more expensive and more densely populated; places such as San Francisco with twice Oakland's population actually has fewer children under 18 than Oakland, and this suggests that there might be a smaller infrastructure needed to support the schools of the future. It will take an effort to plan for both contingencies

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?

The issues should be looked at as a larger mission for the schools; what do we need to be financially responsible, and how should we allocate our resources are two separate conversations.

There is some discussion about either selling or leasing the land at 1025 Second Avenue to developers; this should be a decision made in the context of understanding the loss of property (and the relationship) to Laney College.

Meanwhile, the future of Dewey High School is as much of an issue of keeping another alternative high school, and where does it make the best sense to relocate these schools? Decades ago, Oakland had 6 public and 6 alternative high schools. Now the alternative schools have grown in number, and I believe it sends the wrong message about developing high achieving programs in the OUSD. Moreover, there seems to be a glut not only in the amount, but in the location of these

schools. Dewey is currently one block away from another alternative school. We need to develop a real plan about what we believe the future of educational facilities should include.

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

We know the negative, long-term realities for students who don't complete their education; we must have options for those students to reach their potential. One of the reasons why students don't continue is that they feel that the schools aren't designed for them; we should pursue options that speak to a workplace ready education, so that they receive core fundamentals of budgeting, service sector skills and entrepreneurial management. In addition, we must strengthen our relationship with the community college system, so that we can identify and bridge the gap for those students who reach adulthood and can matriculate to Laney or Merritt. From a financial perspective, we know what the millions of dollars of lost revenue means to our district. We should create some sort of incentives based on the number of students being retained in the most challenged truancy affected schools.

Meanwhile, OUSD keeps adding the number of alternative schools, when we should be developing a culture that supports the growth of schools for high achievement. Dewey has moved more than once over the years, and again, there are no alternative schools located in North Oakland. The district property rests on a valuable site that could be used to offset the district debt burden, or it could be used to work closely with the business, government, and higher education organizations within the area.

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?

Oakland's policy around charter school should be similar to what it is with regard to charters providing an innovative alternative option for the diverse population we serve. In lieu of charter schools, OUSD need to provide a safe, excellent education for each of its students.

Charters have more flexibility in the academic environment they provide, as long as they were able to continue this practice, I would not have a problem putting them under the union contract, however, if that option was taken away then I would not encourage charters 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?

As a district, we always need to be mindful of the fact that each child learns differently. When we are thinking about policy, we need to think about the whole child and not look to one type of testing process to evaluate them. Moving to Common Core takes us away from teaching to the test in the way we have become accustomed to. All student evaluations needs to take into account different learning styles.

I am in complete support of teacher evaluation and am excited about the new Teacher Growth Development System.

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

Common Core was designed with good intentions. It takes kids from pencil and paper to application, which is needed to compete globally. We need to build teacher capacity to ensure they are able to implement the curriculum.

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

I haven't seen much from the small schools outside of the hills to suggest that they provide a better education than the schools that preceded them. I also am concerned about the spread and overall costs of administrative staff, when those limited resources might be better served in traditionally sized schools with more teachers in the classroom.

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

I believe all positions at the central office need to be evaluated and when it is possible and makes the most sense, those resources need to be reallocated to the school site to support the site, classes and teachers.

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

Children come to school at age 4 or 5, meaning they are shaped by the city prior to them coming into the district. The city needs to create a safe environment for them, the city needs to ensure that early start programs for early childhood development are funded and effective so children go to school ready to learn. A collaboration between the city and OUSD would be great so that those early start programs prepare children for the curriculum ahead. In addition, city leaders can work with businesses to provide pathways to employment through training, programs, internships and apprenticeships.

Other ways to engage is through the Parks and Recreation by extending solutions for after school at the park sites; to engage families in affordable camps over the summer.

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

The school site needs to be a safe place for children, collaborating on public safety issues with local officials it is critical in creating this environment. However, school is a safe place to nurture the relationship between children and the police. Children being greeted by an officer in the morning to get their day started, creates a very different dynamic then the first being a traumatic situation that is chaotic and scary.

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?

The relationship has been contentious at best. Teachers feel underpaid under valued and over tasked.

Because we are servicing children and impacting their future, the relationship between the adults who are responsible for providing this service needs to be aligned with each other.

There is a need to provide additional in class resources to teachers in order to allow them to be optimally effective in the classroom. We need to support them in other ways if we are unable to compensate them, we need to look at housing options and other ways to compensatory options. We also need to ensure constant dialog, input and feedback from the union.

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

It has been proven time and time again that access to college lifts people out of poverty more than most other methods. Undereducated adults and adults' continuing education position themselves for better wages.

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

Labor jobs are good wage paying jobs and jobs that our young people need to be trained to take advantage of. Because we serve a diverse population we need to provide a variety of subjects that will lead to pathways in the workforce.

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?

We always have to consider the whole child; you have those who will excel in academics, those in athletics and those in the arts. We want to provide a robust, rigorous, variation of options so that children can explore whatever gifts they have been given.

I would have to look at the budget to see if staff providing these options or organizations such as Play Works is a better option. I would look at which option is more effective and cost efficient.

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?

Studies show that children do better with a longer school day. Working families find it challenging and disruptive when there are too many minimum days and because of these factors, I believe the length of the school day should be a little longer. This is only effective if teachers have the in class support they need so I could only support it if we look at how we reallocated resources to support teachers in the classroom.

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

I would hold office hours and participate in school PTA meetings to name a few things.

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

Noel Gallo - City Council

Howard Neal - Neal and Associates

Andrea Sidney Wilson

Former Southern Alameda County Alliance of African American Educators

Executive Board Member

Former Hayward Unified School District Administrator

Dr. Chriss Foster

English Professor Merritt College

Professor Rhetoric University of San Francisco

Nicole Wilkins - Technology Executive Kaiser

Collete Luckie

Reva Tolbert

Robert Brown

Wil Ash

Gina Baker

Cleminatu Fields

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 have \$13000 on hand and another \$5000 in pledges. The money is coming from friends, family, the community, businesses and groups and organizations I have been involved with.

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

I come from a long line of educators and am an enthusiastic advocate for youth. I believe it is possible for every child to have access to a safe, stable, quality educational environment here. Oakland's potential rests in our children, and as such, we must create innovative opportunities to provide a more effective education to meet the challenges of the 21st century.