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In the subject line, please include "Albany School Board".

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

Albany School Board Questionnaire
c/o Green Party of Alameda County
2022A Blake Street
Berkeley, CA 94704

Please respond by Saturday, August 27, 2016

GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com

Candidate name: Clementina Duron

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Occupation: Retired Educator

Campaign Chair: Tsering Wangmo Bmuti and Billie Narver (co-chairs)

Treasurer: Not designated yet

1. Please briefly summarize your background, qualifications, and reasons for wanting to serve on the Albany Unified School District Board of Education.

I am a retired educator. I worked 15 years as a bilingual teacher and 15 years as a principal in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco Unified School Districts. I have lived in Albany for the past 9 years. I have volunteered in the classrooms and became certified in CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), working with my neighbors on earthquake preparedness. I committed my career to addressing the needs of under-served students from low income communities. Most of the schools that I worked in were low-income. At Lazear Elementary School, in a predominately Mexican working class community in Oakland, the parents and I, as the principal, worked closely together to create the first charter school in Oakland in 1993 as a response to student needs. Today I have two grandsons in Albany schools and I decided it was time to get back to my passion of providing the excellent educational opportunities for all students. Also, because I am now retired, I have time and want to give back to the community; albeit in a different role this time around.

2. What ideas do you have for addressing overcrowding in Albany schools? How can we protect class size reduction for all levels? What are your views on inter-district transfers and what priority do you feel should be given to children of teachers and other district employees who live outside of Albany?

Albany school are very popular because of the high achievement level overall. The Board of Education is currently addressing that issue inasmuch as Measure E was approved by Albany voters. As the 3 elementary schools merge into Albany Middle School, the result is overcrowding. This measure will allow for the much-needed expansion of that site. At the same time, maintaining smaller class size in the District is a priority. A process and procedures for district enrollment is already in place. Given limited money and space, these procedures will have to be strictly and fairly enforced. The Inter-Strict Permit

outlines the priorities for all students who do not live in Albany, with children of District staff getting first priority. Unfortunately, there is simply not enough space for all students who want to attend Albany schools. This is a tribute to the reputation of Albany schools but, unfortunately, Albany cannot meet the demand.

3. How can the district best serve the needs of our diverse range of students, some of whom are ready for AP or honors classes, some of whom are not college bound, and some of whom have disabilities or other difficulties that can make learning a challenge?

The District already has in place additional resources, such as specialty teachers, to address some of the diverse needs of students, especially at the elementary level where there is more of a sensibility of addressing individual needs. At the middle and high school levels, more can always be done to address the broad range of students, their needs and interests. I would propose that a task force be established at each of the schools, which would be comprised of parents, staff and administration, whose only focus would be that of providing recommendations to the Board regarding how to effectively address the diverse needs of the student populations. I also believe that this type of task force should also take place at the early childhood and T-K level. Addressing this reality at the beginning of children's formal introduction to schooling could potentially rectify challenging issues early in the game.

4. How should the district balance the need to attract and retain high quality teachers by offering competitive salary, security and health benefits with the need for enhanced programming for students?

These two areas go hand-in-hand. While I believe that quality teachers are the #1 priority, the operative word is competitive. Albany also provides its teachers with a tremendous amount of parent and community support. That is certainly worth a lot.

5. Four-part question on Measures B&E, both passed by Albany voters in June:

a. How do you intend to improve the quality of the design and sustainability features of the new school construction projects, now that voters have approved this funding?

The Board, with input from all stakeholders – representatives from the school sites: staff, parents, and students, as well as Albany community members and at-large reps, such as UC faculty from the Architect Department- needs to develop criteria for expectations of design and sustainability to guide the architect firm. It is an awesome responsibility – not only to create 21st century school facilities in Albany but to manage wisely the trust and money that Albany voters committed to the District. We should use all resources available as well as be transparent in the process.

b. What is your position regarding the school district pursuing solar power, and what other measures do you propose to cut the District's power bill (which was reported at a recent Sustainability Committee meeting to be highest in the summer when school is not in session)?

Like other large businesses, the District has an obligation to reduce its impact on the environment and conserve energy and other resources. The District, by way of the Board, needs to engage in developing an environmental plan that uses energy and resources thoughtfully, that is sustainable, that is energy saving, and that can also serve as an educational tool for students and parents. The District's summer bill is ridiculous and needs to be investigated and resolved.

c. What opportunities do you see to turn the school buildings and campuses themselves into teaching tools and

laboratories?

I believe that campuses should open their doors to the larger community, especially when the community is footing the bill to create, improve, and expand the schools. The campuses can be used to further education in the wider community.

d. Would you propose that new construction and modernization projects within AUSD participate in the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) program or seek Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), Living Building Challenge or other green building certification?

Absolutely. I am reading about them for the first time but all of them have worthwhile green goals and the experience that can provide Albany with a broader perspective and insight into how to build the best possible schools. We do not have to reinvent the wheel when there are so many first-class programs and resources out there to guide us.

6. What is your vision for Albany's 21st-century schools and how would you as a Board of Education member assist the transition of AUSD towards a 21st-century model?

Using the Common Core standards as the basis for academic learning, there are other skills that are vital to developing productive and empathetic citizens of the 21st century. These include critical thinking and creativity skills. Listening, communicating, collaborating and problem-solving skills are essential. Our students must be global citizens and lifelong learners. And, of course, school facilities must support that learning. With this in mind, the Board must build community consensus of a District vision, align its curriculum and assessment around the vision, build the professional capacity of staff, and maintain this focus.

7. Three-part question on alternative instructional approaches:

a. What alternative instructional programs do you support (e.g., "blended" curriculums, flexible and open learning environments, technology-based learning, and project-based learning)? What is your understanding of these instructional methods?

All these instructional approaches are focused on engaging and motivating the students in a hands-on way. They can complement any teacher's instruction but teachers need to be trained in these different approaches.

b. Are there other changes in the current schedule, such as a later start time, for which you would advocate, and, if so, what is your reasoning for supporting these changes?

I would be open to looking at such options as a later start time. There is research to support what many of us have already experienced when we have tried to get our teenagers out of bed and home in the mornings. This research shows positive outcomes when adolescents begin the school morning at a later time. The status quo is very difficult to change (Albany High's start time is 20 minutes earlier than a 8:30 start recommendation) and given all the challenges for the Board this coming year, it would not be the highest priority at this time.

c. Are you familiar with the Khan Academy (<http://www.khanacademy.org/>) and what is your view regarding the role of this type of resource in Albany?

Khan Academy is one more resource to engage students in learning.

8. Who has endorsed you or is supporting your candidacy? Who are you endorsing, from President all the way down ballot to local races? Is there anything else you would like us to know about you?

At this time I have been endorsed by Peggy McQuaid, Albany's Vice-Mayor.

I am registered as an Independent. I consider whom I vote for to be a private matter.

9. Do you support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights and getting money out of politics?

Our democracy has become a mess because of the power of corporations and rich individuals to play a super-outsized role in politics, lobbying, and elections. Yes, I strongly support amending the Constitution to end corporate Constitutional rights – corporations should not be treated as individuals – and get money out of politics.

10. The following are the 10 Key Values of the Green Party. In view of these values, why do you feel your candidacy merits Green Party endorsement?

Green Party 10 Key Values

- 1) Ecological wisdom
- 2) Social Justice
- 3) Non violence
- 4) Grassroots democracy
- 5) Decentralization
- 6) Community based economics
- 7) Feminism
- 8) Respect for diversity
- 9) Personal and global responsibility
- 10) Sustainability

I consider myself lucky to have attended U.C. Berkeley in the late '60s. There I witnessed and participated in political activism. My sense of social justice and non-violence came from my formative years in Catholic School in Salinas, where I was born and raised.

Without prior knowledge of the Green Party's 10 Key Values, I believe that that most of these values have been a part of my life. In particular, my years as an educator in working class schools I have modeled and taught many of these core values.