

On Tuesday, August 26, 2014 4:26 PM, AC Green Party <tinakimmel@covad.net> wrote:

Dear KARL G. DEBRO,

We have not yet received your completed questionnaire (which you acknowledged receiving, and which was due this past Saturday, August 23rd.

Please complete your questionnaire right away! Please return it to <GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com> no later than tomorrow evening, Wednesday, August 27. After that it will become difficult for our committee to evaluate your questionnaire responses before our publication deadline for the Voter Guide.

We look forward very much to hearing from you very soon.

A note on formats: Please either attach a .pdf or a .doc file, or just put your responses into the body of the email. DO NOT send a .docx file. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Greg Jan
Tina Kimmel
Green Party of Alameda County

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please email your responses to: GPAC-VoterGuide@yahoogroups.com.
In the subject line, please include "Oakland School Board"

Name: Karl Debro, Ed. D.

Phone: 510-325-3128

Email: kdebrosbcglobal.net

Website: www.karldebrosbcglobal.net

1. Motivation -- Why did you choose to run for School Board? I can make a significant difference for OUSD. I am a lifelong educator, Oakland homeowner, and parent.

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? The key weaknesses of OUSD are core weaknesses---teaching and learning. Between kindergarten and senior year the class of 2014 declined by 35%. Drop outs and opt outs play a significant roll in such a decline. Even gentrification is a function of the capacity of our secondary schools to fully prepare our youth for college and career. I have thirty years experience in middle school, high school, and community college as a teacher and as an administrator. I have led nationally recognized programs that succeeded in the two key areas for Oakland schools. The first program, Advancement Via Individual Determination, designed for marginalized students (first generation to college, low income, Black, Brown, immigrant) was nationally recognized for its 95% college admission rate. The second, Gateway to College, has received national attention for our work with dropouts. We recruit them to the Contra Costa College campus, where they earn college units and their high school diplomas. I intend to lead policy that will open these same pathways of opportunities in Oakland. More students will graduate, more families will opt in, revenues will rise as will salaries.

3. Qualifications -- Please give a brief summary of your background and qualifications for the office of School Board member. I am far and above the best qualified, best prepared candidate. No other candidate has a teaching credential. No other candidate has an administrative services credential. No other candidate has a doctorate in education. No other candidate has one third my experience working in schools. No other candidate has worked at middle school, high school, and community college. No other candidate has my knowledge of how schools operate, what colleges expect, and how to prepare our students to meet those expectations. No other candidate has any history of proven success with drop outs or with helping hundreds of marginalized kids get into college. No other candidate has a history of working with superintendents, college presidents, chancellors, researchers, professors. No other candidate is prepared to supervise the superintendent and District policy as an equal.

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?

4. School Ratings and Evaluations -- How do you rate the Oakland schools? Name the success and shortcomings? 1. Underpaid staff. 2. Oakland schools prepare very few Black and Brown boys for college. 3. People that have the resources to go elsewhere, do. That in itself is a rating of Oakland schools. In places like Danville, where resources are high, very few families choose to leave the public schools. 4. A below average secondary program. 5. a disconnected

CDC program, 6. elementary schools that are better in the hills than in the flats, though there are some very good schools in the flats.

5. Budget -- What changes to the OUSD budget would you suggest? (include changes to revenue). Too often people look to cuts. We can look forward to more revenues from both LCFF and the parcel tax. But I look to improving what we do as a source of revenue as well. Between kindergarten and senior year the class of 2014 declined by 35%. Drop outs and opt outs play a significant roll in such a decline. Even gentrification is a function of the capacity of our secondary schools to fully prepare our youth for college and career. I have thirty years experience in middle school, high school, and community college as a teacher and as an administrator. I have led nationally recognized programs that succeeded in the two key areas for Oakland schools. The first program, Advancement Via Individual Determination, designed for marginalized students (first generation to college, low income, Black, Brown, immigrant) was nationally recognized for its 95% college admission rate. The second, Gateway to College, has received national attention for our work with dropouts. We recruit them to the Contra Costa College campus, where they earn college units and their high school diplomas. I intend to lead policy that will open these same pathways of opportunities in Oakland. More students will graduate, more families will opt in, revenues will rise as will salaries.

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? Not sure. LCFF should bring more dollars in, but how will they be distributed? We need to push more money to the schools themselves to pay school personnel better, reduce class sizes, upgrade facilities and so on. It's easy to criticize the District's handling of the LCAP and call for more community and family engagement. While the District could have done far better at including a broader, larger group in its LCAP work, the truth is that it is incredibly difficult to engage families and communities, particularly those most marginalized, in an ongoing focused way. It's the privileged parents and communities that tend to get involved and stay involved. That's part of what it means to be privileged. For me, as someone that has worked inside schools for 30 years and seen the difficulty of engaging marginalized folks, it's unrealistic to expect such engagement over the long haul. That's what it means to be marginalized. What happens in a system like ours is that the privileged take the lion's share. We need to think about how we serve marginalized communities even when they do not take part as much as we would like. We need to engage privileged communities in dialog about sharing/collaborating with less privileged schools/communities.

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 don't have enough information on this particular issue. I don't think public schools should be functioning like a market economy. I am in favor of orderly closures of charter schools that are not successful. For District schools I would like to see some creativity instead of simply calling them failures and shutting them down. For example, suppose we worked collaboratively with the District and OEA to incentivize our best teachers and school leaders to take over a "failed" school and remake it?

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? Don't sell. Too often public entities are pushed into financial hardship because they are forced to rely on tax revenue

from a corrupt economy. Then, down on resources, they are raided just to keep their heads above water.

9. Truants and Drop-outs -- What do you suggest we do about the truants and those who have dropped out? I direct the Gateway to College program at Contra Costa College. The community in West County is very similar to the communities with the highest drop out and truant rates in Oakland. I can tell you a lot about these kids. First thing: they want to succeed. They often need, however, a smaller environment in which to succeed. I have designed a model that has drawn national attention. You have to put out more money for more staff and a structured environment, but it's not that difficult. Beyond the immediate picture, I would also say that our accounting/economics are all off. If we don't keep a kid in school, the cost to society is enormous. If we do, the school sees none of the money it has saved society. We need to find another way of viewing this work. What is the average cost to cities, counties, prisons, etc. for dropouts? If a program like Gateway to College save a kid from dropping out, it saves society that cost. Yet the program never realizes a cent of that savings.

10. Charter Schools -- What should Oakland's policy be around charter schools? In the short term Oakland needs to identify those charters that are good schools and do everything it can to support them. It also needs to identify those charters that are poor schools and phase them out in an orderly way. Further, charters that are somewhere in the middle need to be viewed through a lens of whether or not they are attempting to meet a need that the District schools cannot/are not meeting. Those that are should probably be supported to fulfill their missions; those that are not should be phased out. In the long term, Oakland needs a vision of what it wants from charters. How should charters serve the needs of the District, its students, families and communities? How many charters can the District tolerate fiscally speaking? **What would you propose, if anything, in lieu of Charter schools?** I would look at why so many students are moving to charters instead of District schools and I would address those problems as a means to slowing the exodus. For me, this is all about teaching and learning. If our District schools do that well, there is much less interest in charter schools. Largely, this means improving the secondary program throughout the District. Stem the tide of dropouts, build broad and accessible pathways to college and career. **Do you distinguish between the different types?** I am very uncomfortable with private charters. While some may do good work, the private sector is motivated by its bottom line. Should any corporation suddenly shift its focus from charter schools to building hybrid trucks or sewing machines, they simply pull the plug and leave everyone stranded. **Would you support putting charter schools under the union contract?** I see no reason why not. Unions should seek to organize all workers at charter schools.

11. Testing and Teacher Evaluations -- What should our policy be around Student Testing and Teacher Evaluation? Standardized tests have overwhelmed common sense in education over the last several decades. The tests are handy for high level policy/government folks to base judgments upon. I myself have used them in deciding admissions to programs I have run. But they are superficial generally. Yes, we need some form of standardized tests. They should have little to do with teacher evaluations. The teacher is not taking the test. Plus, we already know that test scores are largely a function of family and community income. **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?**

12. Common Core -- What are your views on the use of the proposed Common Core curriculum? I do not see any controversy in the Common Core. From what I know of it, it makes sense to me. The roll out is another matter.

13. Small Schools -- What do you think of the current Small Schools? Small schools are a great idea, if you have a ton of money. Otherwise, you must choose between small schools, better salaries, and better facilities. I would like to see small schools reserved for special needs students. I run a program for dropouts, for example. These students need a smaller, higher touch environment. Most students do not. Increasing the size of schools would allow us to pay our teachers, principals, and other school personnel more competitive wages, which in turn would lead to higher quality education in Oakland.

14. Central Resources -- How do you think the allocations of central resources should work and how should that relate to local school funding? I don't have a clear enough understanding of the question to respond adequately.

15. City/Government Relations -- How should the City of Oakland support the OUSD, and education in general? Generally, the City could partner with OUSD to provide a broader array of services at local schools. School facilities could be used beyond the school day so that services such as the full array of recreation services, health and wellness services, and so on could be brought to neighborhoods in a way that keeps kids active after school. Further, the City could coordinate jobs and internships in partnership with private industry, and higher education for older kids.

16. Police -- What is your position on Campus police? How would you create an environment where police are not needed? Police are needed. Police are legally required in some circumstances. Police need a lot of training to be effective in school settings. But the spirit of the question is important. You can create environments where police are not really needed. First, you have to acknowledge that the traditional school setting does not work for every student. Those students that cannot function in such a setting will need smaller, more intimate settings where they are treated with respect, care, and held to high standards. In the traditional setting, students still need the same things: to be seen and heard, to be respected, to be held to high standards. It's the caring environment, the presence of authority figures (including police) that students trust, believe in, and can rely on that renders the police unnecessary.

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? As the OEA endorsed candidate, I have a sense that the relationship could be

better. OUSD and the unions should be in partnership to create the best urban school district in the country.

18. Adult Education -- What is your position on Adult Education? OUSD should not have cut it so drastically.

19. Vocational Education -- What is your position Vocational Education? Very important. There are some good things going on right now with the 880 consortium grant, career pathways, and so on. We have to get out of the mindset that you're a failure if you don't go to college; to get out of the mindset that that the only kind of smart is book smart.

20. 'Academics vs. Electives' -- What is the proper balance between academics and sports, arts and other electives? I don't know that there is a proper balance. I had a student once that spent every moment writing poetry. I found myself interrupting her one day because we were working on essays. I realized later that she was doing what poets do: writing poetry. There wasn't really a balance to how she used her time/energy. But what's wrong with that? We put academic disciplines in a hierarchy, as Ken Robinson points out, that does not fit how people learn, what their intelligences are, and so on. I see kids completely bored with the same old subject in middle school and high school who would love to take the kind of diverse subjects you can in college: astronomy, sociology, game theory, film, etc... And there are a number of respectable universities, Brown chief among them, that require no balance at all. Take whatever courses that interest you. 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 don't know Play Works. See my response in 15 above. I like the idea of blending school services with other sorts of services so that the school becomes a neighborhood center of sorts. If there are no conflicts around outsourcing, dodging unions and the like, it sounds like a good idea.

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 have spoken to this a little in 15 and 20 above. It seems like a good idea to make the school a community hub for all sorts of things. If we have kids with no parents at home before or after school, and parents wanting their kids to be engaged constructively when they are away at work, then why not create ways for the school, in combination with the City and other entities, to offer more than academics. At the same time, some kids have things to do already. And they are free to do them. In terms of the length of the day, it's too long. Or rather, the day doesn't have enough active breaks from academics. The day needs more hands on activities and fresh air. Having taught for a long time, I believe that the day

22. Accountability -- How do you propose making yourself accountable and accessible to the citizens of Oakland? The election is really the system of accountability. I think it's important to be present in the schools, talk to teachers, students, custodians, office staff, cafeteria staff, campus security, parents, neighbors. I will do that regularly. I will be transparent about my beliefs. I will communicate via regular email/newsletter, and respond to emails and phone calls. I will also set up periodic community meetings so that folks have regular access.

23. Endorsements -- Who has endorsed you so far? Who do you expect to endorse you? OEA, Rob Bonta, Sheila Jordan, Gary Yee, as well as dozens of educators from across the region and the nation.

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 raised about \$8,500. I plan to raise about \$20,000. Realistically, it's going to be tough to reach my goal.

25. Anything Else? -- Is there anything else you would like us to know about you? I fought for safety and respect for LGBTQ students at San Leandro High and nearly lost my job, but ended up winning the battle. I received letters of recognition from the State Assembly and from the US House of Representatives, and was given GLSEN's Pathfinder award. My mom taught in Oakland as a kindergarten teacher for 25 years. My brother is a special ed teacher at Tech. He was recently honored at the Major League Baseball All-Star game as one of thirty All-Star teachers. My father fought for equal access to federal, state, and local contracting and union jobs for African Americans and other marginalized communities. My wife and I have been married for 32 years, have lived in the same house since 1985 and have two beautiful kids, Kyle and Kira.

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Greg Jan
Green Party of Alameda County