



Questions for Candidates for School Board Trustee from the Conservative Coalition of Harris County

This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public viewing (www.cchc-pac.org).

Candidate Name	Position that Candidate is Running For
John Perez	SBISD Board of Trustees Position 6

Candidates please give your answer to each of the following questions and include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise and clear.

1. Why are you running for the Board of Education? Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the board of education? If elected, what will be your priorities?

Answer: I am running to ensure conservative values are protected in our schools. I oppose the current lawsuit threatening to change our district from an at-large district to a single-member district. If elected, I will fight to maintain our district at-large. I will also work to keep progressive programs and ideology such as CRT, DEI, and SEL out of our classrooms. I am also committed to fiscal responsibility and will ensure the SBISD operating and bond monies are spent prudently.

2. Are you running with any organized slate of candidates? Have you received any donations or endorsements from any group(s)? If so, which groups? How will you promote your school board candidacy?

Answer: While we may not be a formal slate of candidates, I am aligned with Lisa Alpe (running for Position 5) and Caroline Bennett (running for Position 7). These are the only conservatives running aligned with my conservative views. I have met with both Carter Breed and David Slattery who claim they are conservative, but they will not hold the line the way Lisa and Caroline will when it comes to fighting SMD and keeping three-letter acronym programs out of our classrooms.

I have received donations and endorsements. I have raised approximately \$17,000. I have received endorsements from the Freedom Foundation of Texas (Chris Zook), the 1776 Project (Ryan Girdusky), Senator Paul Bettencourt, and Harris County Commissioners Tom Ramsey and Jack Cagle, and numerous friends and neighbors (currently over 100).

I have already held a campaign launch fundraiser and have attended multiple meet-and greets. I will be conducting phone trees and block-walking to get the word out. The goal is to get out as much as possible and win all three seats on the Board for conservatives.

3. What experience or skills have prepared you to serve as a board member? In what school district or community activities/organizations have you been involved? What differentiates you from the other candidates and/or board members?

Answer:

I was born in Southwest Texas, grew up overseas as my father served as a US diplomat, went to college at Rice University (twice) where I received a BS in Chemical Engineering and a MBA.

I have started and sold one company and am now 11 years into my second entrepreneurial effort.

I have served on large non-profit organizations in a leadership capacity – Captain on the Livestock Committee for HLS&R, President of Rice Engineering Alumni, Scoutmaster for Troop 598 (out of Saint John Vianney).

I teach a class at Rice every Spring on process safety to afford their ABET accreditation.

I have coached several SBMSA teams in soccer and baseball.

I have supported my four children through their SBISD school experiences at Wilchester , Memorial Middle, and Stratford with active engagement in volleyball, football, basketball, track, SBFFA, Spartanaires, Boy Scouts, and the Clay Crushers shooting team.

I am a different candidate because I am a legitimate and electable Hispanic conservative who is not part of the educational establishment that seems to have become very Blue across the last decade or so. So-called conservative Board members are not trusted to hold the conservative line. I am running to stand up, push back, and hold the line.

4. What issues do you believe your district needs to address in its academic program and offerings? What changes would you recommend?

Answer: We need to focus on fundamentals in reading, math, and writing. If we focus on the fundamentals and achieve elevated levels of proficiency, then we should be able to return to programs of instruction of advanced educational topics and critical-thinking development as opposed to politically-fueled indoctrination.

We need to cleanse our classrooms and curriculums of CRT, DEI, and SEL. We also need to reduce the number of standardized testing days.

5. What is the proper role of TASA and TASB with respect to independent school boards? Do you believe there should be mask or vaccine mandates in public school? Where should these mandates originate, if at all?

Answer: TASA and TASB can advocate and provide guidance, but local governance by district school boards should rule the day on school policy. I do not believe in or support mask and vaccine mandates. These mandates should not originate anywhere, at all. What people choose to do in their homes is up to them.

My business never shut down and we have never implemented a mask or vaccine policy. We have been open through Covid, we have worked through pop-up cases, we have kept everyone employed.

6. What is a school board member's role and responsibility? How does that role differ from the role of the superintendent or administration? What is the best way to address differences of opinion on the board or between the board and the administration?

Answer: A school board member's role is to collaborate with the other members to ensure effective governance and fiscal management of district policy and monies. The school board is also responsible for the district's culture through its interaction with district constituents and through its Superintendent hiring and management.

The Superintendent should be accountable to day-to-day management and strategic implementation with Board input on strategy development.

When differences arise, a vote should be held with majority rules.

7. Is your superintendent's and other high-level administrator's compensation in line with job performance? Why or why not?

Answer: Based on my limited knowledge, our superintendent and administration staff are compensated in line with their job performance. Recent inflationary pressures may be changing that equation daily.

8. Is the current funding allocation within district spending categories (between administration, facilities, teachers, etc.) adequate? Why or why not? If not, what areas of spending can be changed and how do you propose to correct it? Should resources be devoted to political lobbying?

Answer: Too many of our tax dollars are being funneled to recapture funds. We have an inordinately high percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students when weighed against the volume of recapture dollars donated by our district to the overall Texas state educational fund. We need recapture reform implemented in the short-term to change the equation used to calculate recapture dollars. The equation should account for when an urban school district is serving a significant percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged students and the ratio of federal to state programs / grants serving students across the district.

9. What are your thoughts on the current and the proposed budget for your school district? As a board member, where would you look to make budget cuts? Are there any areas you would not consider cutting? How would you determine your budget priorities?

Answer: There is not a lot of transparency for public scrutiny of the SBISD budget. I will look to change this once elected. I would like to see more dollars for teacher retention and less dollars for standardized State testing (e.g. STAAR). Budget priorities should be based on student safety / stability, number of impacted students, and potential gain from implementation of budget element.

10. What is the public relations role of the board? How can the board be accessible to the community? To specific community groups? How can a board of education best communicate with its constituent groups?

Answer: The Board should communicate frequently and transparently about governance and oversight of educational policy, curriculums, programs, and finances. The Board should be extremely accessible to the community. Phone numbers, emails, social media accounts should all be readily available and accessible for access to Board members. Communication needs to be diverse as constituents have different preferences of communication based on age and personal habits; hence, the need for diversity in how communication should occur (i.e. phone, e-mail, social media, website, meetings, town halls). There is no reason the board cannot have more meetings to provide more time for public comments for critical issues. The Board can also engage specific groups directly with in-person appearances to ensure transparent and effective communications to constituents.

11. What is your long-term strategy or strategies for improving the quality of education and keeping pace with student growth within the district?

Answer: We need to focus on fundamentals, and we need to focus on surgical engagement. We do not need anything in our classrooms that distracts from learning fundamentals. We do not need programs and testing and reporting tasks that detract from teaching and learning. We also need to ensure every student sees a path to success beyond high school, and the answer is not always college. We must surgically identify each student's path to success and then work with them to realize it. This also means understanding what support system each student has outside the classroom. If students do not have the nuclear family support system or reside in a socioeconomically disadvantaged demographic, then schools need to evaluate how best to provide the support necessary to close this gap.

My long-term strategy is to ensure we evaluate and scrutinize what our teachers and learners are spending time on against our fundamental educational goals of reading, writing, math, science, and critical-thinking. If something is keeping our teachers from serving up the fundamentals, we need to off-load the task. We also need to evaluate existing support programs for all students regarding their specific success path beyond high school. This can come in the form of additional vocational programs, college application support and counseling, English learning programs that reach out to parents as well.

Much of the above should be in existence today; however, we are struggling on implementation, which is a leadership and training issue. The third element to my long-term strategy is to evaluate and bolster the leadership competencies of our faculty and administration. Nothing is achieved without strong and effective leadership.

12. What are your areas of concern regarding student achievement in your district? Do you have specific suggestions for improvement? Given all the issues that arise, how can the board stay focused on student achievement?

Answer: I am concerned we are not challenging our students enough. I am concerned we are tolerating too much cheating in schools today. I am concerned we are “dumbing-down” curriculums in science and math and removing options for our gifted and talented students to excel and push themselves. I am concerned we are throwing a lot of vocational programs out for students to participate in without effective implementation and results-oriented delivery. I am concerned our rubric approach to classroom instruction is too formulaic and removing the critical-thinking component from our students’ educational experience.

Specific suggestions include:

- Change our benchmarking approach. Oftentimes benchmarking simply assures mediocrity. If we are trying to be the best in the nation or world, then let us benchmark against the best in the nation and world, regardless of whether they are public or private schools.
- Let us reduce the amount of time spent on ineffective State testing and spend more time on teaching students how to write and formulate arguments from evidence-based research and critical-thinking exercises.
- Let us push our top learners by ensuring challenging options remain in our public schools.
- Let us ensure our vocational programs truly deliver on the promise of opportunity after high school. Let us ensure students who commit to these programs are engaged and supported no matter their origin story.

The Board stays focused by ensuring community engagement and collaboration. They need to listen to all parents and remain centered on what the parents are passionate about.

13. Is teacher performance adequate within your district? Are teacher’s salaries adequate given current state budget condition? What can be done to improve overall teacher performance? What is your opinion of teacher morale in the district? Do you know the current teacher turnover rate?

Answer: Teacher performance varies across the district. From my research, our teachers are paid above state averages by about 10%. I do not believe teacher salaries are adequate given what we ask of them. We need to pay teachers more or off-load reporting and testing tasks that do not support our fundamental goals. Getting more time to live is like getting a raise. It also does wonders for one’s mental state of mind and overall district morale. Morale is low in the district when it comes to teachers and counselors. I have had direct conversations with strong performers, and they are burnt out and overworked with no change in sight. We need to ensure our teachers are supported both physically and mentally.

14. What type of teacher evaluation system and administrator evaluation system do you support?

Answer: I am a business owner, and we rely on real-time and focused performance evaluations as opposed to elaborate / formal systems. I have worked at several companies who all had formal, rigorous performance evaluation systems. Formal evaluation systems fail because humans learn how to game them. Strong performers oftentimes are not driven by whether their supervisor thinks they are doing a good job; hence, they do not play the game very well. Average to poor performers seem to be keenly aware of the performance evaluation system and spend more time managing the perception of the supervisor. The very nature of how these systems can be manipulated by various players makes most of them ineffective.

For teachers, the metric is simple from my perspective. Students need to go from Point A to Point B from the beginning of each school year to the end. The students demonstrate their proficiency through homework, quizzes, and tests throughout the year. Based on each student's performance, they can be sorted into buckets of proficiency. The teacher then must adjust certain approaches based on the buckets of proficiency. The high-proficiency students do not need as much instruction and focus and can afford more time on self-instruction or discovery. Lower-proficiency students need more instruction and focus. As buckets shift across a classroom, then aides or classroom adjustments need to be made to account for the varied approaches to the different buckets.

Teachers and faculty and administration should be evaluated on how well we do all the above with respect to reading, writing, math, science, and critical-thinking. The students should be able to enjoy learning in a safe and secure environment. We have the Point A and Point B measures of success defined so monitoring along the way to assess how a teacher is performing seems straightforward.

15. What issues do you believe your district needs to address in its academic program and offerings? What changes would you recommend?

Answer: I have mentioned several already, but I want to reiterate that we need watchdogs in the district to check the curriculum for politically-fueled content. We need hotlines for parents to call to report politically-fueled content. We need parental access re-established to pre-Covid levels to help ensure teacher and administrator accountability.

16. What are your thoughts on your school district's programs for special education students, English Language Learners (ELL), and gifted students?

Answer: We should always strive for excellence, and we should always take care of those who supplemental care. Our schools need to afford special education opportunities; however, this must be balanced against the cost for each special education program and the number of students requiring each program. It is imprudent to implement an expensive program for a single child. In these cases, I would welcome subsidized state or federal programs to be made available casting a wider net to make the expensive program more feasible.

When students need ELL instruction, then we should try to provide quality instruction, but we must also tie this instruction to home support. If the student only gets exposed to English at school and not at home because his/her parents do not speak English, then we need to adopt a different approach because money is simply being wasted at this point. There is no clean answer to this question, but it would serve our culture better if ELL students understood and spoke fluent English. Therefore, my parents only spoke English to me at home growing up. I did not start learning Spanish until 8th grade.

Gifted students should be afforded the opportunity to excel. I have seen our programs in SBISD change over the past decade where opportunities to take more advanced instruction and tougher classes have been removed. We are dumbing-down our curriculum. This must stop.

17. How does a school board balance the need to provide a quality education with the need to respond to the local taxpayer burden? Should Homeschool students be allowed to use publicly funded facilities and equipment?

Answer: Tax dollars should follow the student. If a family pays taxes, then that family should have the opportunity to benefit from their tax dollars – regardless of whether the student attends a public or private school. Homeschool students should be allowed to use publicly funded facilities and equipment – after all their family helps fund them.

18. How do you define Critical Race Theory and its implementation?

Answer: CRT is a progressive ideology that systemic racism against anyone who is not Anglo-American pervades the very fabric of American culture and can only resolved by reverse discrimination against Anglo-Americans and indoctrination of our students (no matter their age) in our classrooms.

19. What do you believe about natural/biological male students competing with natural/biological female students in publicly funded athletic programs? Would you support or oppose such programs? What role does public education have in sex education and when, if ever, should it be taught?

Answer: Natural boys should compete with natural boys and natural girls should compete with natural girls. Competition should track with biological nature. It is simply unfair to have natural/biological boys competing with natural/biological girls regardless of puberty and sex reassignment hormonal supplement restrictions.

This is a tough question because I am pro-nuclear family and believe this education is best overseen by parents within the moral constructs of their faith and other beliefs. However, there are many children who do not enjoy the stability afforded by a nuclear family. These children need surrogates to help nurture their inherent moral compass on critical issues and at critical times. I prefer this instruction be managed outside of school. If any instruction needs to be handled at school for students without parental engagement, then instruction during 8th or 9th grade may be appropriate with basic human biology function descriptions and anatomy depictions. Nothing pornographic or of sexual content beyond natural biology instruction is warranted. Parental permission should be obtained, and parents should have the opportunity to preview the content.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to: alex@cchc-pac.org.

Please note: You ***must*** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will ***not*** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.