



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
Laura M. Mafrige	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 care about the kids, parents, public schools, and the programs connecting all of them. I come from a family who taught me service. I am passionate about supporting programs for the kids who fall through the cracks. As well, supporting programs for easy learners that challenge them. My priorities will be to support programs connect to each and every student; transparency of programs and finances for the parents, and, focus on student outcome.

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: No, not on a slate. No, I have not received any donations, I am using my own money for fliers and yard signs and I plan on meeting people face to face.

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 am the mother of three sons who have been in the district for thirteen years. I am familiar with both special education and gifted and talented programs. I am an attorney and a real estate broker. I have owned my own business. I was a t-ball, coach pitch and machine pitch coach at the Trotter YMCA for six years. I attended to beautification of Hunters Creek for several years. I am currently a reading buddy and mentor at Woodview Elementary. What sets me apart from other candidates is that I'm a team player and I have a different perspective and way of looking at issues.

4. What issues do you believe your district needs to address in its academic program and offerings? What changes would you recommend?
- Answer:** Transparency and student outcome need to be priorities, along with clear opportunities for accessibility for students and parents. Teaching to the STARR test has shown to be ineffective. More project based learning is needed. The expansion of CTE has the potential to benefit many students, which in turn may be there link to public education.
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:** No, there should not be a mask or vaccine mandate in public schools. If a student or teacher is concerned about their health then they should take needed precautions. I do not think they should originate from anywhere. At this time, I am familiar with TASA AND TASB, though, I do not know what the proper role is for them.
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:** The School Board is the fiduciary of fiscal matters. The school board should focus attention on whether the programs funded are benefiting the students in the manner intended. Understanding student outcome is imperative. Making policies that don't confuse or distract students and parents from the benefit of a good education is equally important. Making sure that decisions, programs, and expenditures are transparent and assessable for students and parents. While the school board makes the policies, the superintendent and administrators make sure that the policies are put into place in an efficient and productive manner. The board and administrators need to have mutual respect for others opinions, though, the board is responsible for ultimately making the policies for the school board.
7. Is your superintendent's and other high-level administrator's compensation in line with job performance? Why or Why not?
- Answer:** Jennifer Blaine's salary is commensurate but less than other neighboring school districts. A five year extension to her contract is being requested and most likely has salary increases built in. I believe Jennifer Blains is doing a good job and I expect that she will have the opportunity to enhance SBISD in many ways, without distraction, over the next five years.

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:** Due to losing so many teachers, bonuses efforts for signing are needed. Continued facility improvements are needed and ongoing. In an effort to balance the budget, all areas need to be examined and streamlined, though these are areas I would not cut funds. Generally, no, resources should not be used for political lobbying.
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:** Budget needs to be balanced so there is no deficits. Every aspect of the budget needs to intricately examined in an effort streamline all expenditures to accomplish a balanced budget. I would not cut teacher's salaries. I would study the effectiveness of the programs and their ultimate benefit on student outcome.
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:** I believe it is important to alleviate anxieties and concerns of parents and students by projecting confidence and enthusiasm. By having a presence at events in the community and being approachable. Informative videos texted to all parents, as well as status at schools if necessary. Parents can opt out if they don't want to receive certain texts.
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:** The CTE expansion program is a great resource for students to stay engaged in school while taking STEM core courses. Truly using innovation to make sure programs are extended to all students in an assessable manner.
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:** My concern is for the students who are falling through the cracks, as well as the students with learning differences. There are programs that are currently available to help students catch up such as APEX. I do not see these opportunities promoted. How can the board not stay focused on student achievement? It should be one of the board's main objectives. Getting rid of some the distractions and changing posture from the defensive mode to the offensive mode will be more productive.

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:** Yes. Yes. Ask teachers what they need and listen. Encouragement, bonuses and better program options. Morale is more difficult due to current circumstances. I'm not sure of the current rate, though I know it is a concern for the school district.
14. What type of teacher evaluation system and administrator evaluation system do you support?
- Answer:** Data shows that several of the current teacher evaluation systems are not beneficial. I think there should be anonymous feedback from the students in the classroom from 6-12 and parent assisted feedback of students in K-5, as well as, classroom observation by administration.
- I have found that if you base teacher's success on the success of their students, then senior teachers will make sure the kids who learn easier are in their class.
15. What issues do you believe your district needs to address in its academic program and offerings? What changes would you recommend?
- Answer:** I believe CTE is important because it gives students more interactive courses to choose. I believe students get bored faster these days. I recommend more project based learner or interactive experiences.
16. What are your thoughts on your school district's programs for special education students, English Language Learners (ELL), and gifted students?
- Answer:** SPED needs attention and improvement. With some of the SPED kids, they don't push them enough to try to stay current with their peers. In Stratford, some SPED classrooms were given to other classes. I have been told that the Sped teacher teaches some of assignments in the hall. English Language Learners is a large commitment from SBISD. Approximately 39% of students are ELL. I believe that there is more focus on ELL than SPED. Gifted students are allotted programs like spiral, Cornerstone and the Highly Gifted School. Some of the successful teachers should teach the kids who are protected under 504.
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:** The balance is giving students programs that will create productive student outcomes while being fiduciaries of the finances. The board needs to evaluate programs that may not be benefitting the students and improve them or cut them out. I agree with SBISD setting a lower tax burden than most ISDs nearby, along with the senior tax credit. I believe that homeschool students who live in the district should have access to facilities and equipment at agreed upon time. Homeschoolers should have access to involvement with sport, club, musical, theater, clubs, etc

18. How do you define Critical Race Theory and its implementation?
Answer: What I understand CRT to be is teaching parts of history that are less than half truths. If it teaches that certain races are oppressors, then it would be factually wrong and extremely destructive to civility.
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: I was first female to win Best Athlete at Lamar High School. There is no way that I could have competed with males, regardless of any hormones they may take. I would not support any program that allowed an athlete who was born a male to compete in the female division of a sport.

 I have not had access see benefit of sex ed classes taught at an appropriate time and with appropriate 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.