



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
David Slattery	SBISD Trustee, Position 7

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: SBISD faces many challenges and opportunities in the effort to provide the quality education our community and our students deserve. Raising three children in SBISD schools, married to a Spring Woods HS teacher, and through more than 15 years leading or participating in district-wide committees, I have become deeply vested in the success of our school district and our students. For this reason I have chosen to run believing I have the leadership skills and experience to navigate these challenges to help strengthen our school district and ensure our students receive the quality education they deserve.

As a trustee I will remain focused on initiatives that will help us to:

- Hire, support, and retain the best teachers
- Improve underperforming schools while enhancing and preserving our top schools
- Deliver high-quality education for every Spring Branch student, regardless of their starting point or school attended

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, I am not. I am running independently of any slate or political organizations.

It is my goal to meet and talk with people throughout the Spring Branch ISD community and learn their thoughts about our school system, what they think works well, what they think needs to change, and how they think changes would best take place. These conversations are helpful to me to know what our community expects from our public schools and our school board.

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: As an architect, I have owned and managed a small business for more than 30 years. I have served on numerous SBISD district-wide committees since 2005, including:

- CTE Bond Advisory Committee - 2021
- Lead SBISD - 2020
- Bond Advisory Committee (Co-Chair) – 2017
- Long Range Facility Planning Committee – 2016/2017
- 2007 Bond Oversight Committee (Co-Chair) – 2008-2017
- Bond Advisory Committee (Co-Chair) – 2007
- Bond Planning Committee (Co-Chair) – 2006/2007
- Long Range Facility Planning Committee – 2006

Through the work of these committees, I have learned how the district administration operates, how the board governs, how State funding affects our budget, and the influence district policy has on the quality of education delivered. I also served on the Clay Road Baptist School Board for 11 years and was instrumental in getting the school accredited.

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

Answer: I believe the greatest issue that needs to be addressed is the academic performance in our underperforming schools. Keeping our focus on literacy and numeracy will help students learn at a higher level in all subject areas. I also believe we must augment the core academic subjects in our high schools with a more robust CTE program that will better prepare graduating students for college choices and/or career paths that align with the marketplace of tomorrow.

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:** These are professional associations that provide a variety of services and support to school boards and administrators, yet the district is still governed by local board. In the current school year, Spring Branch ISD left the decisions about masks and vaccines to the parents, and I agree that's where those decisions are best made for our students.
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 accountable to the community residents to govern the district in a way that honors and promotes the expectations of the community. Specifically, board members work together to set policy, establish budgets, and hire a highly qualified superintendent. The superintendent is accountable to the board and responsible for all operations of the district within the framework of established policy and budgets. Differences of opinion on the board or between the board and administration are to be expected and must first be met with active listening, an open mind, and a thorough exploration of all relevant information, then worked through with a focus on what's best for students. Differences remaining between board members are resolved by a vote on the issue. Differences remaining between the board and administration are addressed directly with the superintendent. Back-room deals and public undermining of administration/staff must never be accepted.
7. Is your superintendent's and other high-level administrator's compensation in line with job performance? Why or Why not?
- Answer:** As in all industries, compensation must be appropriate for requirements of the specific job and in line with other comparable positions in the region. Competitive compensation coupled with the support of a properly functioning school board will help us recruit and retain the best qualified administrators, as well as teachers. As an employer, I fully understand this concept.

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: The current funding allocation is heavily weighted to payroll costs at approximately two-thirds of the total budget expenditures, which I believe is appropriate. All spending categories should be evaluated annually for performance outcome relative to allocation of resources to ensure tax dollars are spent wisely and with the most benefit for our students. It is necessary for school districts to work closely with the legislature in advocating for what's in the best interests of the students and the community. I believe it is appropriate to use a limited amount of resources for this purpose.

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: I am very concerned about the substantial amount of local tax revenue that is lost to recapture. As a board member, all discretionary spending accounts would be considered first for reductions. Allocations for teachers and support personnel would be the last place I would propose cuts.

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: Being present at school events – whether as a parent, a neighbor, or a Board member - helps build relationships within the community. An engaged community is a tremendous asset to the school district in delivering a quality educational experience for our students. This is evident in parts of our district, and I will work to engage even more of our community.

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 first accurately understand the specific challenges and expectations unique to each school, then work to utilize resources to support teachers and school leadership in a way that is most effective in achieving student success.

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: SBISD collects a great deal of data on student performance in our district. The data reveals that we have too many underperforming schools. We need to address the needs at our underperforming schools, while we continue striving to improve the highest performing schools. All SBISD students deserve a quality education, regardless of their starting point or school they attend. Student achievement should be the lens through which all Board decisions are made.

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: The past couple years have been very difficult for teachers. This is not unique to teachers in SBISD. On the whole, I think teacher performance is exceptional and salaries are adequate. However, if we want to move the needle toward improvement across the entire district and be the place where the best teachers want to work, we must commit the resources necessary to equip and support in doing the job we ask of them.

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

Answer: Measured student performance (i.e. test scores) can only be part of the evaluation process. Evaluations must include observations, communication, and useful feedback if our goal is to see teachers and administrators perform at the highest level.

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

Answer: Focus on the basics. Mastery in reading and mathematics is critical.

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

Answer: All students deserve the unique attention needed for their success. The Unified Sports program is a perfect example of an SBISD program that elevates all students.

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 school district is obligated to provide quality public education for all students, and the community supports that with tax dollars. At issue is finding the balance between a fair means of taxation and the needs of the community's children. Transparency and communication will help bridge the gap between the belief that taxes are too high and schools are underfunded. Homeschool students, as members of the community, should be welcome to use publicly funded facilities and equipment when it is available.
18. How do you define Critical Race Theory and its implementation?
- Answer:** CRT is the acronym for Critical Race Theory. It is not a part of SBISD curriculum, and the State of Texas passed a law in September of 2021 banning the use of CRT in public school social studies classrooms. The basis of the new law seeks to prevent personal bias from being taught in public school classrooms, specifically as pertains to social studies classrooms and the teaching of American history. I support the State's decision and will not support any effort to include CRT in SBISD curriculum.
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 believe that non-traditional athletic competition is inherently unfair and can be full of unintended harmful outcomes. I believe sex education is best taught at home rather than in the public school system.

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.