



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
Kristin Cobb	Klein ISD Trustee 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 School Board Trustee? Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the school board? If elected, what will be your priorities?

Answer: I am running for School Board trustee for several reasons. This board votes unanimously on every issue. There is a lack of diversity of thought on the board. I have been speaking up at school board meetings and have been listening to other parents doing the same. Our asks for things like, removing sexually explicit library books, removal of asking for preferred pronouns, and disengaging with training groups that focus on equity, diversity, inclusion, safe spaces and etc have gone unanswered.

I believe parental rights are being ignored and would like to serve on the board to, give priority to parental rights, limit spending, and improve teacher morale, while speaking truthfully with the community. We were told that our taxes would not be increased this year by the passage of the first two bond packages, however, the board increased our taxes last week by 6.38%, public information requests are skirted, and the board has been dishonestly communicating with the public. The incumbent board members have a history of supporting and spreading critical race theory tenets through district training. I disagree with this practice. We need integrity on this board and if elected I intend to speak truthfully to the community.

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 running with an organized slate of candidates. I have not received donations or endorsements from any groups yet, submitted information to ivoter guide who will evaluate at a later date. I am promoting my school board candidacy through letter writing, block walking, emails, phone calls and passing out information within the community.

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 a business owner I am well versed in finance and human resources, including employment dispute resolutions, hiring, and drafting workplace policies. I have served my community as a first responder as a paramedic and today with Texas Search and Rescue. I have served in my church in many areas with youth including, mentorship, mission work, bible class, leadership coaching and serve meals at Impact Church of Christ. My BS is in Organizational Leadership with a focus on Emergency Management (Summa Cum Laude) and my Juris Master is from Liberty University's School Law, where I graduated with Highest Honors. I am involved with Houston Northwest Chamber of Commerce, the local Better Business Bureau Educational Foundation, and several other local community organizations.

Most importantly, I am a mom of two daughters in the district and a stepson who graduated from Klein High School. I have interacted in great depth with the school board and Superintendents over the years.

The experiences that have prepared me for this role include my stepsons time in Klein. Throughout his time at Klein Forest High School, we dealt with severe bullying and the struggle for him to catch up. We moved so that he could go to a different school after being told he could not transfer to a different High School within the district. He did not pass the STAAR test, he either failed or barely passed his classes. While preparing for my stepson to repeat his senior year, my husband and I were told that the board had a closed session and voted to let him graduate, not taking responsibility for his education. Our children should not fall through the cracks in this way.

My daughters brought specific CRT assignments to my attention in Klein, our Klein taxes are raised every year and bond debt continues to climb. The board supported an equity resolution and continues to spend our tax dollars on training from people, groups and organizations that inject social justice principles and DEI topics into the district, against the wishes of parents. In December of last year, I brought to the attention of the board over 20 explicitly sexual books available in Klein libraries as well as the list of 477 books in Klein libraries that appeared on Representative Matt Krause's book list along with an open letter asking for something to be done. I finally received an update about what has been done in this area in August of this year. I was told Klein adopted a new policy (that didn't have an effect on what I shared), that a few books were removed, however, they don't know which ones, but that it was less than could be counted on one hand. This is not good enough. Because parents' rights are continuing to be infringed upon and the board has not addressed the concerns of the community, we need new leadership on this board.

I am uniquely equipped to understand the impact of educational loss, emergency guidelines, disaster mitigation and organizational leadership, HR, finance and policy making that are currently impacting our district. I will advocate for solutions in these areas as a board member.

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

Answer:

We should remove CRT language for Klein ISD policy like equity, diversity, and inclusion. These terms may have once meant something worthwhile, but they have been hijacked to mean something nefarious. We need to stop focusing on these goals and really focus on supporting programs that are data and evidence backed to catch these kids up on the basics, reading, writing, math, civic literacy and an accurate account of history.

We need to advocate for a committee to address sexually explicit material available in Klein school libraries, understanding that these are schools for minor children and that parents have the right to direct the moral and religious upbringing of their children. This right is infringed upon when students are asked for the pronoun of their choice, are exposed to extreme sexual content, and are led to believe that race is a determining factor in any area.

I believe Klein does a pretty good job at offering technical programs and training. These should be maintained and expanded upon.

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: The proper role of TASA is to provide support for school administrators to foster positive educational outcomes and increase community involvement. The proper role for TASB is to inform prospective candidates about the school board role and responsibilities and help them decide to run. They should provide information policies, legal issues and human resources so that board members can make informed decisions.

If mandates are to be issued at all, this should be done at the local school board level. However, I do not believe that elected officials or state bodies should impose blanket mandates that could be potentially damaging to certain populations or infringe on personal or constitutional freedoms. I am opposed to any vaccine or mask mandate originating from a school board.

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 advocate for a shared vision and goals to be adopted by the district, and that systems and processes are in place to accomplish them. They should advocate to establish feedback measures to monitor progress for accountability. They should advocate for students and the district. They should work collaboratively with the members. They should be aware of policies, laws and regulations that impact the district. They also have the role of hiring and evaluating the district's superintendent. They adopt and maintain an annual budget in line with the vision and goals of the district. They serve as representatives of the community.

This differs from the role of the superintendent and administration. The ideal superintendent is the board's chief adviser on educational matters and is the districts educational leader. They are responsible for informing the board about district operations and activities and district needs. They also develop administration procedures necessary to manage the daily affairs of the district in conformity with board policy and in compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations. They should ensure sufficient information is provided to the board to enable them to make informed decisions and to evaluate the results of those decisions. The board and superintendent should work together to set priorities for the district such as goals for the budget, determine new educational programs, and ensure adequate services are available to students.

An ideal administration is responsible for overseeing administrative tasks in the district by making sure that the organization runs according to the expected rules and regulations. They manage personnel in the school like teachers, heads of departments, and other non-academic staff. They are responsible for leading the teaching staff and students to work better and succeed. They encourage and enhance student achievement and academic progress. They also may recruit teachers and heads of departments, with consistent monitoring of the staff's workload, and make the necessary changes when things do not go as planned.

The best way to address differences of opinion is through having open discussion while respecting others to find a way to create a win-win situation with our board, our superintendent, and administration. Most importantly we must respect differences of opinion while assuring that educational goals are being met and finding common ground.

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

Answer:

The role of the superintendent and other high-level administrators is invaluable in Klein ISD. High levels of compensation are fair. However, superintendents are government employees. I do not agree that superintendents or other high-level administrator's compensation should be greater than that of the President of the United States (\$400,000) or a congressman (\$174,00 base on average), as is the case in Klein and surrounding ISDs. I believe that if there is a cap on compensation, superintendents would feel less pressure to focus on bringing money into the district with common core ties, DEI components and woke teacher trainings such as those from the Holdsworth Center. There would also be a different pool of superintendent candidates whose focus would be more likely on the education of our children.

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:

Spending categories and funding allocation models need to be clearer, more transparent, and understandable. I believe Klein administration is top heavy, and the district runs over budget. We held a billion dollars of bond debt before the recent passing of another \$900,000 bond. This is unsustainable.

Yes, I believe many areas of spending can be changed, specifically reduced. I propose a committee of community members dedicated to looking into district spending as mentioned above. I believe this will be quite a large undertaking.

I do not generally believe resources should be devoted to political lobbying. That said, there may be certain instances in which the children, residents or employees in the district could be severely negatively impacted by certain legislation. In such situations, a decision regarding the involvement of district resources should be considered even if not specifically financially advantageous to the district.

We should also all pay close attention to district spending for programs and other items to evaluate whether district spend in these areas would go toward lobbying efforts through those expenses. One example of a program that does just that is the Anti-Defamation Leagues "No Place for Hate" program the district supported in the past for its anti-bullying effort. This group lobbies for some very politically divisive legislation such as abortion and critical race theory. There are other programs not part of a lobbyist group that can be utilized in the district instead, I would advocate for this kind of expenditure evaluation.

I believe that the board, superintendent, and administrators should pay attention to the political landscape and actively comment on legislation that impacts the residents and employees in the district. This would be more effective when enhancing community involvement to that effect as well through educating the district members on legislation that could affect those in 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: I believe the proposed budget is in line with past spending allocations. I believe that this budget can be significantly reduced. To do this a Budget Committee can be created and charged with identifying programs that have the most effect on student learning and those that have the least effect on student achievement. They should also identify general areas where they believe personnel and resources can be cut, decreased, or shared with minimal effect on student learning. The goal of the committee should be to provide a public education for all students and to keep the students' best interests in mind throughout the process.

I would not consider budget cutting on many employment salaries and believe well paid staff is important for effective district management. Budget priorities should be set that are in line with district goals and policies. Those that are not productive to those ends should be eliminated. These goals and priorities should be focused on educational outcomes and creating a safe and productive learning environment while supporting students, teachers, administrators, and the superintendent to meet those goals and priorities.

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 the public relations role of the board involves a process that assures honesty and transparency in communication that supports meaningful, long-term working relationships. Successful communication is key here and involves both listening and talking which is essential to successful communication.

The board can be accessible to the community through attending community events, sharing information and simply communicating with community stakeholders that include, parents, certain elected officials, and community members. Showing up and being accessible are essential for successful communication with community groups. Most importantly, meaningful school communication is the essential medium to getting the kind of parental and community engagement students need to succeed.

I believe that maintaining updated online information is powerful for communicating with constituents as well as making time to discuss individual needs when appropriate. This is also done through email communication such as inviting parents to school board meetings (which is not currently done in this district).

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 long-term strategy involves much of what I have discussed herein. This includes reallocating funds to programs and initiatives that focus on educational improvement in the areas of reading, writing, STEM programs, history, civic literacy and student support programs such as anti-bullying initiatives and increased communication with stakeholders while adjusting the budget as needed to keep pace with student growth.

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 in all areas of student achievement due to the lockdowns and zoom year that most students experienced. According to txschools.gov, the resource the TEA uses for accountability ratings, "...Given the impact of COVID-19, all districts and schools received a label of Not Rated: Declared State of Disaster for their 2020 and 2021 accountability ratings." Klein area schools that did not meet standards for A rating still received Not Rated status in 2022. According to the TEA data release the percentages of students who meet grade level were, Reading 58%, Math 48%, Science 54%, and Social Studies 58%. We must reallocate funds to programs and support systems that will increase these percentages across all levels. Student achievement is the goal of the district and should be the focus of all school decisions, including budgetary.

I believe that the teachers are overburdened with requirements, including those that come from the state. The district can polls the teachers and address those concerns through policy or advocating for legislative change.

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: I believe teachers are doing their best, however teacher morale is low in Klein. There is too much pressure on teachers for students to perform well, rather than student accountability. According to teachers who have quit their jobs or left the profession, many sought alternative employment opportunities due to extreme pressure, high stress in the classrooms, lack of administrative support, lack of student accountability, and lowered campus morale. We must address the issues that caused these teachers to leave or consider leaving. I will advocate for the district to reach out to working teachers and those teachers who have left to discover our specific needs. Boosting morale would assist in increasing teacher performance.

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

Answer:

There are many different teacher and administration evaluation systems, some through the TEA, T-TESS, NCTQ. This system will should be evaluated and perhaps changed to address the academic struggles of the district's students and burden placed on the teachers or administrators. The teacher evaluation systems should not be overburdensome to the teachers and allow them as much freedom as possible. If such a change is made it would need to be managed well as organizations generally experience push back to these changes. Moreover, teacher-evaluation reform has been controversial as there may not be a direct link to teacher evaluation systems and student success.

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

Answer: I have a student with an IEP, and I can tell you she did not have any measurable academic achievement until Intermediate school. Support was given and amended throughout her school career. I saw these programs as consistent across the district. However, my daughter struggles with reading, her accommodation for that is to have everything read to her in class, this accommodation supports ongoing reading struggles. Therefore, improvements can be made in this area.

I believe that the ELL programs are successful and seem to be a priority of the district. I have not evaluated the special education students. This is hard to adequately monitor in that the level of disability has a very wide range. Klein offers many gifted and talented program for students who achieve at high levels or who have the potential to do so. These programs include Gifted/Talented, Klein Prep, Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and a variety out-of-school options among others. I appreciate the many program choices in this area.

16. 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 board should be careful about the expenditures of the district, assuring that what is spent is to meet the goal of providing a quality education.

Families of homeschooled students pay taxes for these facilities and equipment and should have the ability to use these in the same manner as attending students where possible to do so.

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

Answer: The simplest way to describe CRT is a singular focus on race and racial labeling which creates divided groups and that behind every motivation lies some form of discrimination causing conflict between these divided groups. In its extreme form, this alleges that all white people are oppressors, and all black people are oppressed and that nothing can change that. This is exactly the ideology described in the administrations recommended reading list in *White Fragility*.

The other Books included on the recommended reading list for Klein’s Instructional leadership team are *Race Talk* and *The Conspiracy of Silence*, and *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in The Cafeteria?* The administrators are encouraged to read *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us* and *What We Can Do About It*, *White Fragility*, *Courageous Conversations About Race*, and *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good People*. The teaching and learning leadership team at Klein are encouraged to read books recommended to both groups plus *Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education*. The focus should instead be placed on books that deal with educating our children.

This ideology spreads in Klein ISD without directly placing CRT within the curriculum. This comes in through many of the training programs Klein selects for its staff.

18. 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 oppose such programs, publicly funded or otherwise, because this steals the ability for women to compete on a fair playing field. Moreover, this infringes upon the parental right to direct the moral and religious upbringing of their children.

The sex education question is a great one. I know that for my family, having two girls and knowing that girls can go through puberty a very young age, these conversations were had in my family before the time came for the schools to teach this topic. I understand that some families do not do this, and I appreciate the ability to “opt in” to these programs. I do believe that sex education should deal with puberty and remain focused on teaching how pregnancy occurs as well as STDs and focus on abstinence-based approach to birth control.

I answered these questions honestly and to the best of my knowledge. I would like to apologize in advance for any typos or spelling mistakes and would like to thank those of you who took the time to read the answers to these questions. Thank you!

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.

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