



## 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](http://www.cchc-pac.org)).

Candidate Name	Position that Candidate is Running For
<b>Michael Pratt</b>	<b>Tomball ISD Board Trustee Position #2</b>

**Thank you for the previous Conservative Coalition of Harris County endorsements!**

I look forward to our visit to discuss issues in more depth. I like your organization's Core Principles. I am a Conservative with the Right Values exemplified in my conduct as a Christian, Husband, Father of Three (2 TISD Graduates and 1 current student in TISD), a United States Marine Corps Veteran and in my actions and votes as a Tomball ISD Board Member.

*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 want our students to be life ready. I want to continue to serve like I did in the U.S. Marine Corps. As a **parent of an enrolled Tomball ISD student**, I want TISD to continue to be the **top-rated school district** in Harris & Montgomery Counties. As a fellow taxpayer, I want to continue our great financial stewardship as evidenced by recent **lowering of the school tax rate** from \$1.25 to \$1.23.

Priorities also include:

- Safe and Secure Campuses – Adding more Police Officers
- Defender of Tomball Community Values - No CRT
- Committed to Small Town Feel
- Educational Options for all Students (*Traditional, College Prep, Early College High School and Career & Technology*)
- Fiscal Conservative – Lowered Overall Tax Rate from \$1.36 to \$1.23
- Track record of managing fast student growth
- Support Teachers and All Tools necessary to educate All Students
- Accountability system needs to be addressed as teachers are too focused on preparing students to take standardized tests

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:**

We have four positions up for election. **I am seeking Position 2.** I am supporting John McStravick (Position 3) and Mark Lewandowski (Position 4). Like me, Mark and John are **principled conservatives**. They are both graduates of Tomball High School. Both support other conservatives as well. Mark and I are both members of the Greater Tomball Pachyderm Club. **We have a STRONG track record as defenders of our community values.**

I have NOT received any funding from groups. I have been **endorsed by Texas State Representative Sam Harless** (District 126).

I am promoting my school board candidacy through meet & greets, neighborhood walks, sign placements and social media.

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:**

What **differentiates** me is that I am a **parent of Tomball ISD students** (Two TISD K-12 graduates; One current TISD student). My opponents do not have children in TISD.

I am a **Christian, Husband, United States Marine Corps veteran**, taxpayer, and experienced Tomball ISD Board Member.

I understand and **defend our community values** (non-negotiable core principles that the community's residents wish to maintain)

I have held **Executive positions** at Hewlett Packard and Hewlett Packard Enterprise and now Amazon Web Services.

I helped bring stability to TISD as **Board President** during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I am a member of the **American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Greater Tomball Pachyderm Club and Tomball ISD Booster Clubs. Youth Basketball Coach.**

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

**Answer:**

**Ensuring our students are life ready.** I want to keep working hard to make sure that our students are college, career, and military ready. I am a promoter of new vocational training for aviation, cybersecurity, law enforcement and legal studies as alternatives to college. We need to keep building out our Career and Technical Education offerings as the cost of a college education is very prohibitive.

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 roles are to support Texas Public Schools through training and advocacy. Tomball ISD does not employ TASB for advocacy! TASB membership includes 1,028 Texas school districts serving over 5 million students. TASB is dedicated to the preservation of **local control** of public education. **I agree we need more local control.** I was a large advocate for TISD becoming a **District of Innovation** and our innovation plans are about **local control**.

I do not believe in mask or vaccine mandates. Wearing masks or taking a vaccine is a parent choice (if a minor) or personal choice (if an adult).

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:**

**School Board members are guardians of the public trust** and, through the making of policies, are ultimately responsible for the success or failure of local public education. One of the keys to success is that trustees listen to their community (and I do because I am at events all the time!). The School Board serves as the advocate for educational excellence for the community's youth and puts those interests first. The policies our school board makes dictate the standards and philosophy by which our schools are run, and the criteria used to judge whether they are being run well.

The School Board has oversight of the District and hires and evaluates the Superintendent of Schools. I would that we follow the Texas Open Meetings Act for all our meetings. We follow the Texas law!

The Superintendent manages the School District. What has worked well in Tomball ISD is that the Board and the Superintendent set a strategic vision and measure against student outcome-oriented goals and milestones. The Tomball ISD Board was top 5 in the State of Texas last year (5 out of 1028). **We understand oversight and management balance very well.**

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

**Answer:** Yes, the Superintendent is meeting, or exceeding expectations and we have an aligned salary. I would add that when compared to our neighboring school districts to our East and West our Superintendent salary is \$35K LESS and \$184K LESS.

*Source: TEA 2021-2022 Superintendent Salaries as of October 2021*

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:** Tomball ISD needs to continue to **manage taxpayers' money as if it were coming from their own pockets** and our financial management practices.

Current funding allocation for Tomball ISD is 84.03% for instruction and student support, campus, and instruction administration, 4.06% for general administration and 11.92% non-student support of the \$192.5M budget.

Direct instruction of students is 60.44% of the total budget appropriations and is the largest single cost. Plant maintenance and operations is the second highest cost at 9.37% and includes costs of building maintenance and repairs, and lighting and conditioning of facilities. We must continue to manage our consumption and look for savings opportunities in **lowered spend on electricity for lights and air conditioning** of buildings outside the main campuses (i.e., portable classrooms). Campus leadership includes the costs for student and staff management at the campus level and is 5.86% of the total budget.

As a Board member, I keep my eye on the costs for extracurricular activities such as athletics. This cost is 2.24% of the total budget. Another area is the cost of administrators not at the campus level that includes support staff needed for payroll processing, for reporting to federal and state agencies, and for processing payments to staff and vendors. I keep an eye on this 6.74% of the Budget.

Education is people intensive, and salaries are a high percentage spend and TISD is ~5% yearly student growth, I have and will continue to scrutinize hiring plans to ensure we are **only hiring what is needed.**

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:** Plant maintenance and operations is the second highest cost at 9.37% and includes costs of building maintenance and repairs, and lighting and conditioning of facilities. We must continue to manage our consumption and look for savings opportunities in **lowered spend on electricity for lights and air conditioning** of buildings outside the main campuses (i.e., portable classrooms).

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:** As I shared previously, one of the keys to success is that trustees listen to their community (and I do because I am at events all the time!). The School Board serves as the advocate for educational excellence for the community's youth and balances the interests of parents, guardians, taxpayers, business/commerce stakeholders.

I will continue to attend our school and community events and listen to feedback from students, parents, guardians, business leaders and taxpayers.

Today, we follow the Texas law (Texas Open Meetings Act) and video stream meetings where the Board votes on matters, yet I will advocate for same for our non-voting workshop meetings and making it easier for more community input opportunities.

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:** As a principled conservative, I want to keep Tomball ISD thriving with continued focus on school security, A ratings in academics and finance as well as teachers and staff development while managing high student growth. I have a track record of listening to our community's interest and we must balance all interests.

As a fiscal conservative who recently voted to reduce the TISD school tax rate to counter to the extent possible the rising Harris County appraisals, I am also pleased to share with you that we are doing a great job in Tomball ISD managing fast pace student enrollment.

**I continue to advocate for reduction in the number of state assessments AND the constant change in how students and schools are being measured! While Tomball ISD writes a lot of its own curriculum, we need to continue to provide input to TEA and the Texas Legislature that the accountability system needs to be addressed as our teachers are too often focused on preparing students to take standardized tests.**

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:** While the quality of education in Tomball ISD is strong and is reflected in the recent TEA “A” rating (highest rated in both Harris and Montgomery County) there continues to be opportunity to reduce the number of state assessments AND the constant change in how students and schools are being measured!

SBOE should absolutely be holding public hearings on instructional materials under consideration for adoption and heavily utilize public input as part of the selection process. They should solicit feedback from School Board members.

I voted down the use of the latest Health textbook and we are writing our own Health curriculum that is reflective of our community values. While this is great, we need to continue to provide input to TEA and the Texas Legislature that TEKS and the **accountability system needs to be addressed as our teachers are too often focused on preparing students to take standardized tests.**

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: Teachers make the difference** in our students lives! I believe that we have high quality teachers in Tomball ISD and are driving our student achievement and college, career, and military readiness. We need to continue to find ways to free up dollars to compensate our teachers and staff. The Tomball ISD Board just approved a 4% pay increase but it does not offset inflation.

Teachers have been experiencing challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and attitudes toward public education. Some are leaving the profession due to the pandemic, state mandates, workload, and benefits. TISD turnover is normally between 9% 11% yet this past year it was 16%. We need to protect planning time and limit non-instructional responsibilities as well as high stakes testing. We need to listen, support retention, recruitment, and professional development that strengthens our teachers. **We need to make sure that our teachers are supported.**

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

**Answer:**

I support the current Teacher and Principal Evaluation and Support Systems (*T-TESS and T-PESS*). For teachers, T-TESS captures the holistic nature of teaching via a feedback loop between teachers and students and measures the effectiveness of teachers. The T-TESS process requires a steady focus on student's response to teacher's instructional practices. Components include goal setting and a professional development plan, evaluation, and student growth measures. For Principals, T-PESS is designed to support principals in their professional development and enable growth and improvement as their school and instructional leader. Components include capturing the effective practices of high-performing principals, progress in achieving goals and initiatives and student growth.

I would add that in TISD, we enhance T-TESS and P-TESS because we have the distinction of being a **District of Innovation**. While we use the Texas evaluation and support system, we also **leverage best practices to develop local instruments and process** that fits the needs of TISD. **The locally developed teacher and principal appraisal practices reflect the strengths, areas of concern and goals for TISD.**

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

**Answer:**

Around two-thirds of Texas residents speak solely English while balance speak other languages. I want to limit any excessive spending. However, we have a Federal obligation to educate children that legally enroll in our District. My focus with the Superintendent continues to be on accelerating use of English via the proper application of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to achieve that outcome.

My goal is to ensure college, career, and military readiness for our students. I want them to be Life Ready and in the United States English is a must.

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:**

I am a fiscal conservative having recently voted to reduce the TISD school tax rate (from \$1.25 to \$1.23 in August 2022 for next tax year) to counter to the extent possible the rising Harris County appraisals.

**Homeschool parents are taxpayers too! If there is demand, I am fine with use of publicly funded facilities and equipment.**

17. How do you define Critical Race Theory and its implementation?
- Answer:**  
Critical race theory is an academic term that studies how race and racism have impacted social and local structures in the United States. It's divisive. In the State of Texas, there is a law that bans the teaching of critical race theory in K-12 public school classrooms. **I support the Texas law. Tomball ISD adheres to the law. No CRT in Tomball ISD.**
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:**  
Natural/biological male students should not be competing with natural/biological female students.
- As I mentioned, I voted down the use of the latest Health textbook and we are writing our own Health curriculum that is reflective of our community values.
- I support a policy that requires parents and guardians to opt-in to health education, rather than opt-out. For those that opt-in, they can receive sexual health education.
- Parents should have control over what their children learn in schools.**

**Thank you again for the previous Conservative Coalition of Harris County endorsements!**

I encourage you to check my voting record.

I believe in free enterprise, limited government, individual freedom, traditional American values, and a strong national defense through conservative legislation.

Locally, I want to keep Tomball ISD thriving with continued focus on security, A ratings in academics and finance as well as teachers and staff development while managing high student growth.

I am a fiscal conservative having recently voted to reduce the TISD school tax rate (from \$1.25 to \$1.23 in August 2022 for next tax year) to counter to the extent possible the rising Harris County appraisals.

I am vehemently opposed to use of eminent domain.

Website: <https://prattforschoolboard.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/prattfortomball>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dr.michaelpratt/>

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](mailto: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.



September 14 at 7:08 PM · 🧑



Hi! I am sending this out on behalf of my friend Michael Pratt.

As you may know, he is seeking re-election to the Tomball ISD School Board.

Tomball ISD is thriving (#1 in all of Harris and Montgomery County!) and he wants to continue the momentum. I am calling on you here to ask for your support and your vote for him on November 8 Election Day (early voting is Oct 24 - Nov 4).

I am asking also if you would you help by putting a sign in your yard to support him.

And honestly folks...Michael & his family are the real deal. I would never endorse a candidate if I did not personally know them and what they stand for...if I did not think that he was the very best option for our school board. This election is important and our kids will be worse off without him in their corner. I have signs. Message me and I'll pass them out. Get out and VOTE!



and 19 others

8 Comments



Like



Comment



[Redacted Name] August 27 · 🧑🏻



For anyone who doesn't know the latest stats.... TOMBALL ISD is a leader in so many capacities & much of that is due to our amazing teachers and the strength of our school board. I have sent two students through the district and know hundreds of others who feel the same as I do - KEEP TISD GREAT with the leadership and dedication of board members like Michael Pratt and others.... Our school board is for family values, unparalleled education, and has made incredible improvements while being fiscally responsible unlike so many districts. The numbers don't lie.

- \* TOP RATED school district in Harris & Montgomery Counties
- \* #1 district in Harris county for having the BEST TEACHERS
- \* Tax rate has either remained flat or decreased for 20 YEARS!

I believe the majority of our parents and our residents in this district know this to be true and want Tomball to maintain its high standards and quality, so please share this, get out on November 8 and vote your voice to support this board and Michael Pratt, John McStravick and Mark Lewandowski! No better district to be in 💙❤

<https://www.facebook.com/prattfortomball>

**Michael Pratt - Tomball ISD School Board**

Dr. Michael Pratt Tomball ISD Board of Trustees. Husband, Father, USMC Veteran, Doctor of Ed...



[Redacted Name]

and 13 others

1 Comment

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August 28 · 🌐



Someone was reading my mind. 🤖 I was going to ask for a sign and one magically appeared on my front porch today. 😄

VOTE [Michael Pratt](#) for Tomball School Board Trustee. He is fair, honest and will ALWAYS do the right thing for TISD and our kiddos. ❤️

<https://www.facebook.com/prattfortomball>



and 6 others

2 Comments

