



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

This questionnaire has two parts; a short answer section to go onto the Voter's guide and long answer section that will be posted onto the conservative coalition of Harris County website for public viewing.

Candidate Name	Position that Candidate is Running For
Chris "CT" Todd	Klein ISD Trustee Position #3

Short Answer Question Form: Please indicate your position with the following abbreviations. (SF-Strongly favor, F-Favor, U-Undecided, O-Oppose, SO-Strongly oppose, NR-No Response, or Yes/No)

Question	Answer
Are the district superintendent's salary and benefits in line with their performance?	U
Should the school board trustees have term limits?	U
Should the district propose a bond issue for expanding ISD facilities and/or services at this time?	No
Should any district resources go to parents that home school their children?	O

Long Answer Question Form. Please give your answer to each of the following questions and please include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise & clear.

1. Why have you entered this election?

Answer: I've entered this race for several reasons. Serving the community and students, ensuring every student enters with a promise and exits with a purpose is a moral imperative for me. Further, my skills and experiences are a great complement to our existing board.

We have an incredible existing board. A group of men and women I look forward to working with as Trustee. I understand that no one person can act independently on the board of trustees and we must work together. As a pastor, I know the value that comes from building relationships and helping people understand you genuinely care about them and their future. This relationship-based leadership style provides for open and honest communication that fosters better outcomes for the students of Klein.

In recent years, my church, Champion Forest has deliberately and harmoniously transitioned from a monocultural church to one that truly reflects our community. This work has at times been hard, but it has always been rewarding and inspiring. My experience in transitioning our church to reflect our community will certainly bring a valuable perspective to the board and an essential voice to our community.

Finally, I'm a technologist. My path to my current position as COO is that through technology and IT. Before becoming a pastor, I've held positions from VP of service to Senior Project manager and at firms from very small to enterprise level. Though our current board has many types of expertise, the area of technology is lacking. Technology is a growing focal point in education. It also has an ever-increasing financial impact. We must evaluate not only actual hardware of technology but more important the application of technology in school. There is growing concern for the hazards of too much technology or digital exposure. In light of this and other research, how we implement technology in schools is vital. Though I'm a technologist and early adopter by nature I also understand first hand that sometimes the best tech, is not to use tech. Our technology use in school must be innovative and productive, not just merely that of electronic textbooks. This perspective and experience will be a great compliment to our existing board.

2. What are the two main issues facing the district? What is your solution to these problems?

Answer:

1) Following the failure of the TRE, we must thoroughly evaluate the status of Klein's finances. We must determine what effects the recent cuts are having on instruction, the students, educators, and employees of the district. I believe by assessing the state of the district in this budget year we will be able to create a better plan for operating in an environment that is \$30+ Million less than it was a year ago. We must evaluate all programs and expenditures from top to bottom with one consideration in mind: Does this directly advance the mission of ensuring every student enters with a promise and exists with a purpose? In cases where there is not a direct yes, we must stop the program, expense or initiative. The review must include and seriously consider the cost and more importantly the effect of technology use in education. Finally, we must be realistic about outside influences in the midst of rapid growth and decreasing state funding while working to defend efforts to dismantle public education through political influences.

2) We must embrace change, and more importantly, communicate the why/how/what about changes to the community, staff, and students. At times this will require the district to slow down to properly inform, gain feedback, and get buy-in. Two particular areas of attention are related to teaching methodologies and our growing diversity.

We must adopt new teaching methodologies. Students of growing younger ages are carrying cell phones and electronic devices that provide not just some, but "ALL" of the information they seek. Though it has always been necessary, its' now vital that teachers and educators teach:

- a) students the "cost of knowing"
- b) how to use the information they have at the fingertips for good,
- c) how to discern if the info they are gathering is reliable,
- d) how to deep think and apply the knowledge they have.

Finally, we must embrace a growing diversity in Klein ISD. It's imperative that we welcome and embrace our diversity without losing the heritage that makes Klein special.

3. What can be done to improve the ISD bond ratings? Does the ISD need more funding due to growth or change in demographics?

Answer:

The bond rating is a function of the perceived financial outlook of the district. To improve the bond rating, the Klein may need to shore up the budget so that reserves are not in question or at risk. The presence of a stable budget that has proper reserves is a crucial indicator for Bond Ratings. Further, the district needs the tax base to grow, and though there is not much industry in Klein, finding and expanding the corporate tax base would help diversify the tax base and improve our bond rating. Finally reducing residual debt is always a healthy way to increase a bod rating.

4. What good things are happening in the district and should be enhanced or continued?
- Answer:** The implementation of the newly adopted strategic plan has brought some excellent academically enhancements. The focus on Pathways, Challenge, Equity, Leadership, and Continuous improvement has given the district a focus and path towards continued excellence. Additionally, academic programs such as career pathways, personalized learning, and guiding coalitions are excelling and have produced significant improvement. Furthermore, the family engagement program is making incredible differences in communities that desperately need help. Finally, with the arrival of Dr.Champion, the southernmost end of the district has become more of a focus. This focus has resulted in considerable improvement in this area of Klein.
5. What is the proper role of TASA and TASB with respect to independent school boards?
- Answer:** The TASA and TASB should support local officials. It's vital that rules and governance happen at the local level whenever possible. The role of these two organizations should be to empower local districts and administrators so they can adequately educate students in their local context without outside interference.
6. What things can your district superintendent do to improve the ISD?
- Answer:** Dr. Champion is new to the district and is not yet well known. It's vital that he actively build relationships and communication pipelines with 1) Teachers, 2) Administrators, and 3) the Community. Further, he needs to allow more time for communication to flow and feedback to come back from his communication pipelines when significant changes are in the works. The district is like an Aircraft carrier, and it doesn't turn fast...he needs to embrace that reality.
7. Is your superintendent's compensation in line with job performance? Why or Why not?
- Answer:** POST TRE, Dr. Champion has taken a pay cut. His compensation now reflects a salary that is lower than many surrounding (including smaller) districts. As he is new to the district, it's still a little early to tell if his salary is commensurate with performance. We need to allow new programs some time to be implemented entirely and evaluated before judging performance. That said, there are incredibly good changes and programs going into effect that are increasing the favorable academic profile of the district (see above).
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?
- Answer:** With the recent budget cuts after the TRE failure, it seems that spending categories are further in line. Also, with this budget year, many administrative positions at central office were not filled, and the "Cabinet" level positions took pay reductions. The M&O portion of the budget represents over 90% of the overall budget, so there is minimal movement capability without affecting instruction. As mentioned above, we must determine what effects the recent cuts are having on instruction, the students, educators, and employees of the district. I believe by assessing the state of the district in this budget year we will be able to create a better plan for operating in an environment that is \$30+ Million less than it was a year ago.

9. What is your overall view of the operating budget of the district? Does TRE funding need to be increased or decreased? What items need to be expanded or cut from the operating budget?
- Answer:** As mentioned above we need to evaluate this year's budget to understand the effect on instruction and personnel. Assessing this year's budget will give much better insight as to what needs to be adjusted moving forward.
10. What can be done to save money and/or eliminate waste within the school district? Can any services / positions / etc. are you committed to transfer from the district to the private sector to save ISD funds?
- Answer:** I don't have a position on this point. That said, I'm willing to study and evaluate any ways we can operate more efficiently without lowering our education standards or creating adverse environments in our schools.
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:** I worked on the team that developed the district's Strategic Plan...we must continue to work to fully implement the five pillars of the strategic plan across every level of the strategic plan.
12. Is student performance adequate within your district? What can be done to improve overall student performance?
- Answer:** In some areas of the district's student performance is fantastic, in other areas, there is still considerable work to be done. This disparity correlates to, among other things, the amount of family and community involvement in the community surrounding the schools. Klein is in the process of implementing the Strategic Plan methodologies and programs. As these programs come, online students will be afforded better ways to learn in their context. Additionally, programs such as family engagement make it easier for community and family members to engage in helping students become successful.
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?
- Answer:** Indeed, there are many incredible educators in Klein. We must continue to recognize and empower the excellent educators. Further, we must give open and honest feedback to teachers that are lacking proper skills to build relationships and to educate our students. As with any industry, there are some that are fast to adopt, and some that are slow...we should give the slow adopters time to get on board with the strategic plan, but when they refuse, we must seek educators that have an innovative mindset...teachers that are willing to change methodologies so that we can ensure every student enters with a promise and exits with a purpose.
- In the post TRE environment teachers are making less money than last year. It is not acceptable for our teachers to make less money than they have previously, and certainly not adequate for them to make less than surrounding districts. As we evaluate the budget cuts that resulted from the TRE failure, we must also evaluate how to bring back teacher salaries, so they are not incentivized to leave Klein despite their loyalty.

14. What type of teacher evaluation system and administrator evaluation system do you support?
- Answer:** The research I've conducted points toward formative teacher assessments like T-TESS (<https://teachfortexas.org/Default>). This type of system provides feedback and allows both the teacher and appraiser to communicate. For administrators T-PESS (<https://tpess.org>) is focused on standards and provides feedback and tools to allow all levels of administrator to be a better leader in a constructive rather than punitive manor.
15. What role should/will the internet, visual classrooms and technology play in the development of future curriculum for the district?
- Answer:** I'm a technologist. My path to my current position as COO is that through technology and IT. Before becoming a pastor, I held positions from VP of service to Senior Project manager and at firms from very small to enterprise level. Though our current board has many types of expertise, the area of technology is lacking. Technology is (and needs to be) a growing focal point in education. It also has an ever-increasing financial impact. We must evaluate not only actual hardware of technology but more important the application of technology in school.
- There is growing concern for the hazards of too much technology or digital exposure. In light of this and other research, how we implement technology in schools is vital. Though I'm a technologist and early adopter by nature I also understand that sometimes the best tech, is not to use tech. Our technology use in school must be innovative and productive, not just merely that of electronic textbooks. A vital piece of any technology implementation is training. I've often seen that training lacks and because teachers are not comfortable with the technology they avoid it. Any program we implement must have both a complete top to the bottom training program as well as metrics to understand the level of implementation and utilization as well as effectiveness.
16. Do you support reduction of school district ESL funding? Why or why not?
- Answer:** Klein is more than 65% minority with 40% being Hispanic, for this reason, we must pay very close attention to our ESL programming. It's essential that we do everything possible to ensure each student has adequate opportunity to succeed even if they do not speak English. That said, there must also be clear programs and methods in place to move students to a mainstream education track as possible.
17. What role should the federal government play in local schools? Should the district move toward common core standards to gain more federal monies?
- Answer:** Simply the federal government should have a limited role in local schools. Though additional funding is always tempting, we should be very judicious when considering federal involvement. Locally we have the ultimate responsibility to educate our students. We must be careful that we never forsake our local predicament or our local standards for the sake of federal money...we must be responsible enough to protect our local community.

18. Would you support replacing the property tax system of financing public schools? What would your ideal replacement revenue source consist of?
- Answer:** I support the re-evaluation of the current school funding system. The current system is creating growing disparity across the state and we must come up with a better system. We must evaluate funding based on demographics, growing diversity, and we must determine the proper levels of M&O and sinking funding that is required to implement current state laws...in many cases the current system does not support the state requirements.
19. What is your strategy to handle the growing and changing demographics of the student population in the district?
- Answer:** We must embrace our diversity. We must have open and honest conversations about growing diversity, and we must embrace the heritage that has made Klein great. Without communications, the district will continue to, but a disharmony and lack of unity will also be fostered. By having an open and honest conversation about cultural and social-economic differences, we can find common ground and create an environment of unity and harmony.
20. What are your opinions regarding bathroom privacy policies?
- Answer:** It is vital that we have Locker-room and restroom policies that keep privacy concerns as a paramount consideration. Sharing a restroom/locker room with Same-sex and biological anatomy reduces the likelihood of embarrassment or vulnerability from viewing the opposite sex in a less than a fully-clothed state. Allowing only the same biological sex in a locker-room or bathroom provides the highest possible standard for safety and security for the majority of students. It's important also that we offer private solutions to students that do not associate with the majority without causing them to feel isolated or called apart.
21. What steps would you take to ensure public notice, access and input on the trustees' approval of instructional materials to cover 100% of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills?
- Answer:** I support complete transparency and open communication as allowed by state law. I understand there are significant limitations as to what can be communicated by a board member. When permitted by law, I support entirely open communication to all citizens of Klein.

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.