



## 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
Seth J. Batiste	Position 3, Klein ISD

*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?	If we believe the superintendent is performing at a high level, his pay should reflect that... just like most other professions. Superintendent retention is tied to salary. Competitive pay creates stability, and stability is good for student academic performance.
Should the school board trustees have term limits?	If taxpayers are for term limits, then why not.
Should the district propose a bond issue for expanding ISD facilities and/or services at this time?	I do not see a need for expansion currently.
Should any district resources go to parents that home school their children?	I believe homeschooled parents in certain districts already get some services the district provides, but my understanding is that is on the decline. I did not see any problem with reasonable homeschool services provided to such parents when I taught public school. In fact, I believe it serves a greater good for the community.

*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.*

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| 1. | Why have you entered this election?  |
|    | <b>Answer:</b> The same reason I was interested in running the last time. I am interested in keeping the quality of public education high. That starts with a strategic plan to keep exceptional teachers in place, something that will help sustain our communities with not only good schools, but high home values. |

2. What are the two main issues facing the district? What is your solution to these problems?  
**Answer:** I think the district, besides needing to right its budget, is potentially looking at quality teachers, those who received reductions in pay, and even federal tax relief, may begin to leave in increase numbers. This significantly impacts the quality of classroom instruction and overall student achievement. To address funding, creative, innovative solutions must be sought in a way that maintains high employee morale. By staying true to existing values that focus on student achievement, the district is in a good place to remain competitive academically.
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 passing of the TRE, ironically, was one way to improve the bond rating. If you took note, the district rating decreased when the bond did not pass. And, yes, when there is growth, the issue of funding often comes up, and how funding is allocated is most important to keep the district strong.
4. What good things are happening in the district and should be enhanced or continued?  
**Answer:** Klein’s orchestra was recently recognized as the top high school orchestra in the country. The district should keep such programs accessible to grow talent. How the district prepares students for college is a bit of a concern I have, especially when compared to neighboring districts. I think Klein prepares students well, but I believe we can be better at it...and I think we are heading in that direction.
5. What is the proper role of TASA and TASB with respect to independent school boards?  
**Answer:** I see such organizations as a tool to help keep school boards conscious of broader issues. These associations seek to inform, and I am okay with listening; however, a Klein school board member must be first and foremost attuned to the critical needs of stakeholders locally.
6. What things can your district superintendent do to improve the ISD?  
**Answer:** I believe in kaizen, The Japanese and Chinese word for “continuous improvement”. In fact, improvement is something we can all use...and I believe the Klein superintendent can take a closer look at how data is stored and protected for our children. Some schools are in dire need of the infrastructure to keep up with more technology use; however, a huge concern I have is student data falling into the wrong hands. It is a real challenge.
7. Is your superintendent’s compensation in line with job performance? Why or Why not?  
**Answer:** To evaluate the superintendent, I would need to more fully observe how he handles instructional issues, moral concerns, school improvement and the like. To be fair and integral to the office, I would certainly need more information to help me determine this.

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:** Until a more permanent funding solution is in place, I believe strongly in strategic community partnerships to help adequately fund schools. I also understand a recently published study that suggests no correlation between increased spending and student success. How money is spent is important! Partnerships are as well. For instance, for math and science programs, why not work with NASA and other entities to provide critical, hands-on experience to students to help allay some funding costs. Finally, I am also willing to look at alternative funding models by working directly with state officials on current funding formulas.
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:** I am for a temporary increase in TRE funding. Despite budget cuts, the superintendent increased police officers for Klein campuses, a critical decision for the safety of our kids. At such a critical time, it would take a careful evaluation of what cuts might do to harm the delicate balance of a school district.
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:** It depends on how “waste” is defined here. As a former bilingual teacher, I recall how folks thought such a position was quite wasteful; however, what we fail to understand in one arena often reveals itself in the form of a much larger issue. What bilingual programming did in the short term was understandably hard for policymakers to decipher, but the quantitative long-term implications are huge, spanning from less crime in neighborhoods to more state revenue as students were graduating from college in higher numbers. We can’t simply say cut this or that and not expect to have our community suffer like others have because they ignored the investment in our school kids. Districts are not perfect, and neither are people. If there is a concern for how a district spends, saves, etc., those voices should be well established before a vote is even considered.
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 want to find new ways of attracting the most talented employees at all levels. How do we do that? We do that by understanding culture, values, and the best practices that allow a school district to thrive.
12. Is student performance adequate within your district? What can be done to improve overall student performance?
- Answer:** I think student performance can always improve for any district. We start with what research says: keep good teachers! Teachers have the greatest impact for student success. A building leader is also extremely important. Further, we have work to do about students in lower SES populations. To improve performance means we must be intentional about how we go about educating each child. Currently, the district uses a personalized learning approach. Finally, I’d like to look at ways to measure growth in this area, but most pressing is finding other indicators that determine not only student performance but school performance.

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:** I think Klein ISD teachers work very hard. When I drive by my child's school in the late evenings, I see many teachers still hard at work. Pay for beginning teachers is adequate, but I do not wish to see any employee of the district undergo a reduction in pay. To improve teacher performance, I believe in open, honest evaluation systems that encourage multiple face-to-face meetings with both struggling and high performing teachers. I believe high performing teachers should collaborate with lower performing teachers. Any teacher within the first 3-5 years of the profession should receive individualized attention from building administration.
14. What type of teacher evaluation system and administrator evaluation system do you support?
- Answer:** I do not see anything wrong with the current evaluation system except that we need to possibly retrain some administrators on how to accurately gauge teacher performance using the existing tools. The current system has a model of "continuous" feedback which I support. We just need to be consistent in how we approach the instrument.
15. What role should/will the internet, virtual classrooms and technology play in the development of future curriculum for the district?
- Answer:** I think it will still play a huge role. Gifted and Talented testing is done using technology, MAP testing is done this way, and we know that as students matriculate into college, they will have the sort of testing that uses technology as an assessment tool. The real challenge is maintaining the integrity of such tests and the privacy of students. As I mentioned before, this poses a real challenge. The protection of kids' identities has even gotten the attention of the FBI.
16. Do you support reduction of school district ESL funding? Why or why not?
- Answer:** Not currently.
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:** I am not a proponent of common core in Texas schools. I work with home school children in my private business and see the angst it gives students who understand the problem, but not the wording. My highly gifted son, who is gifted began doing middle school math at the beginning of this first-grade year, was given a test with common core related standards. Though he did well, he is often very frustrated with how problems are worded. Certainly, I'd be willing to work with those at the local, state, and federal levels to come up with alternative solutions. I believe they will listen.
18. Would you support replacing the property tax system of financing public schools? What would your ideal replacement revenue source consist of?
- Answer:** Since I was in high school in the late '80s and early '90s, the state has been dealing with various ways to fund public education. I think a new formula is needed that will help districts, especially fiscally responsible ones, beat current budget deficits. Therefore, in addition to new funding models, I am for looking for ways to trim existing budgets. This needs to be an open process.

19. What is your strategy to handle the growing and changing demographics of the student population in the district?  
**Answer:** Strategic differentiated instruction, purposeful community partnerships like Bridging for Tomorrow (and others), and tailored teacher workshops that help our teachers better identify needs of students that may be more cultural than academic and foster the best ways to meet the needs of these learners.
20. What are your opinions regarding bathroom privacy policies?  
**Answer:** Boys should go into the restroom marked “boys” and girls should enter the opposite one marked “girls”. As a 21-year veteran of the classroom, I have not had a single instance where there was confusion here. Should an issue such as this become one in which the school board should entertain, I would do so at that time.
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 hope I understand the question correctly. Steps are already in place for public notice regarding board meetings. Further steps can be taken to have a special hearing from the public on potentially controversial purchases. I am all for that. I feel there is adequate access because stakeholders are allowed to address board members at meetings. Trustees, including me if elected, must read and consider the impact of instructional materials adopted by the district. The TEKS must be covered with those material, but one purchase may not cover every objective of TEKS.

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.