



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
Steve Kent	Tomball ISD Board of Trustees Position 4

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?	Yes
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?	SF

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. | <p>Why have you entered this election?</p> <p>Answer:
 I made the decision to run for the school board because I believe strongly in our district. With two of our children still in the district for four more years, I have a vested interest in our district.</p> <p>In my 16 years here in the district I have been involved with the local Tomball/Magnolia YMCA, Watch D.O.G.S., and the Senior Parent Organization. I am also a current member of the Tomball High School Band Booster Club, Tomball High School Athletic Booster Club, and the Tomball High School FFA Booster Club.</p> <p>I am confident that my involvement with our school board can positively impact the future of our growing district.</p> |
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2. What are the two main issues facing the district? What is your solution to these problems?
- Answer:** Our projected growth of around 5.9% over the next two years cannot be ignored. On the other hand, the district as a whole will not see runaway growth like some of the surrounding areas since we only have a finite amount of dirt (land) for new developments. Reasonable expansion plans that will not outspend our projected growth are essential.
- In a recent board meeting I learned that our district offers an education to nearly 1,000 “outside” students. I want to ensure taxpayers that their precious tax dollars are being used to educate kids that live in our district. Years ago, our children’s bus route stop was adjacent to our home. Every day, parents would drive in, drop the student(s) off and drive off. Being curious, I kindly asked where they live. I thought it was odd that someone would be schooled in TISD while living in Spring. Whether the reason is the desire to have their kids in a better district, or merely convenience, we need to do a better job of verifying residence requirements. It is my opinion that this district should tighten up our verification process.
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:** Issue fewer of them! It’s not that I’m complaining about not spending money, but we still have money that is unspent from the previous two bonds.
4. What good things are happening in the district and should be enhanced or continued?
- Answer:** We have engaged parents, bright students and talented teachers that are working hard every day to make their respective experiences in TISD rich in value, confirmed by our overall score of an “A.” While this is something to be proud of, there is always room for improvement.
5. What is the proper role of TASA and TASB with respect to independent school boards?
- Answer:** As I read the TASB web site, I quickly became entrapped in a never-ending circle of “training” and “resources” offered to board members. After doing some more digging outside of the TASB sphere, it was becoming apparent to me that the mission of the TASB is to mold each and every Board member similarly. For this reason, I believe keeping the TASB at arm’s length or farther is best for our district. Let’s keep the independent in Tomball ISD.
6. What things can your district superintendent do to improve the ISD?
- Answer:** Listening to parents when staffing issues arise and take appropriate action. While the overwhelming majority of our educators are top-notch, there are some that may not be fulfilling their “highest and best” use.
7. Is your superintendent’s compensation in line with job performance? Why or Why not?
- Answer:** The superintendent’s compensation seems to be in line with others in the same position in the area. If we accept this salary as the going rate and are willing to compensate the work at that level, then that is what the position is worth.

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:** In the 2018/2019 adopted budget, the “other support staff” category (63 positions!) caught my attention. Shrinking overhead and shifting some of those savings to instructional services, particularly career education would benefit students. Partnering with local businesses in the area of nutrition services should also be explored.
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 would propose no major changes to the operating budget for the district. Additional funding from a TRE should be an absolute last resort, not our go to option. An item of concern is last year we went from three assistant superintendents to eight assistant superintendents, in one year.
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 have heard from teachers that Chromebooks are essentially given away to second grade classroom students and other high school classrooms are devoid of loaner Chromebooks. While this isn’t a large amount of money comparatively speaking, it is an example.
- Whether it be cafeteria, IT, legal services, transportation or maintenance and staffing, all of these should be constantly evaluated as candidates to be served by the private sector.
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 refocus our attention from buildings and new stadiums back to classroom instruction. Currently our district has a functioning stadium with a state of the art playing surface that is only a few years old and fully serviceable. It is an enormous waste of resources to decommission it and build another one somewhere else.
12. Is student performance adequate within your district? What can be done to improve overall student performance?
- Answer:** In Tomball ISD, adequate isn’t good enough. College admission standards are tightening, increasing competition for our students to enter top schools and secure their places in the most desirable careers. Tailoring education to each and every student is key in that each student learns in their own way.
- A recent observation that I have made is allowing students to ‘correct’ tests that have been graded for significant additional credit points and slipping deadlines on projects and routine homework. This policy may be popular with the students, but I believe that it does not reflect conditions found in the real world.

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:** Teachers in the district are performing, "Highly Qualified" according to the 2013-2014 TEA Report Card and beginning this year, starting salaries have risen by roughly three percent, according to the 2017-2018 staff salary report. What is missing in the current rating system is feedback from students and parents. A portion of a yearly performance evaluation should be based on feedback scores to be completed by students and parents at the end of a course. This data would not only be valuable to the district, but to each individual teacher.
14. What type of teacher evaluation system and administrator evaluation system do you support?
- Answer:** Peer review systems are often no more than rubber-stamp exercises that accomplish very little. As in the answer given above, data solicited from students and parents can help to pinpoint strengths and weaknesses of our teachers and administrators.
15. What role should/will the internet, visual classrooms and technology play in the development of future curriculum for the district?
- Answer:** Technology is important, but it should not be the only focus at the classroom level. The content is of greater importance than the delivery mechanism.
16. Do you support reduction of school district ESL funding? Why or why not?
- Answer:** Yes. I fully support immersion. In my time spent in elementary school ESL classrooms, I was assigned to volunteer in the ESL rooms, helping with projects. What I found is that the students had no problem communicating. ESL as a dedicated classroom is not necessary. When I was in 4th grade, a family moved to our district from Sao Paulo Brazil and none of the children spoke a word of English. It didn't take very long for the children to interact in the classroom and playground.
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:** The federal government should not be involved in the business of local school districts. Acquiring federal funding should never become the focus of our district. I don't want to drop the 'I' from TISD.
18. Would you support replacing the property tax system of financing public schools? What would your ideal replacement revenue source consist of?
- Answer:** My ideal tax system would be a consumption-based tax. In the current tax environment property owners never really own their property as long as they must continue to pay property tax in perpetuity to keep their property. This is a serious issue facing our citizens of retirement age. Everyone should be able to file their taxes on the back of a single postcard.
19. What is your strategy to handle the growing and changing demographics of the student population in the district?
- Answer:** We need to work to keep the most engaging teachers and let the others go. A student and parent-based feedback path could provide the necessary data in order to make these decisions.

20. What are your opinions regarding bathroom privacy policies?
Answer: The gender documented on the birth certificate determines bathroom assignment.
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: When approvals of instructional materials are considered, I would suggest we promote the proposed changes on social media and other forms of communication. Let our parents and have the opportunity to review the materials and give feedback. I think that one of the present difficulties is that the meeting agendas are prepared with little public notice. This topic is of great importance and could be taken up on a quarterly basis to encourage participation.

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.

Steve Kent Bio

Position Sought: Tomball ISD Board of Trustees Position 4

Hometown: La Mirada, CA (Please don't hold this against me I left as soon as I could!)

Years in Tomball ISD: 16

Years in Texas: 22

Current Occupation: Automotive industry consulting engineer, electronics and control systems.
(2002-Present)

Previous Work Experience:

- Hardware Application Engineer for Hewlett Packard Inc. (2001)
- Regional Service Manager for Toshiba America Information Systems Inc. (1998)
- Test Engineer at Epson America, Inc. (1994)

My name is Steve Kent and I am running for the Tomball ISD Board of Trustees Position 4 this November. My wife Cari and I have been married 25 years and we have been residents here in Tomball ISD since 2002. Cari is an emergency room registered nurse. Our oldest daughter Amy graduated from Tomball High School in June 2018 and is currently attending Lone Star College to finish her prerequisites for nursing school at Sam Houston State University. Our twin daughters are freshman at Tomball High School this year. Maddie is beginning her experience in FFA while Meagan is a proud member of our Tomball Cougar Pride Marching Band as an alto saxophone player.

I made the decision to run for the school board because I believe strongly in our district. Our district is one that consistently and competently prepares our students for success in college as well as in many sought after careers including the military, but still maintains a hometown feel. In my 16 years here in the district I have been involved with the local Tomball/Magnolia YMCA, Watch D.O.G.S., and the Senior Parent Organization. I am also a current member of the Tomball High School Band Booster Club, Tomball High School Athletic Booster Club, and the Tomball High School FFA Booster Club. Our family enjoys camping, hiking, and biking in the winter months while all things boating and water sports occupy our summer months. Our family also enjoys attending church services and volunteering at Woodlands Church.

I received my Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems from the University of Redlands in 1995. I work as an engineer for an engineering consulting firm in Jersey Village. My hobbies include classic muscle cars, amateur radio, and home machining.

With two children still in the district for four more years, I have a vested interest in our district. I hope that my involvement with our school board can positively impact the future of our growing district.