



School Board Candidate Questionnaire

1. Do you have children? Yes

If so, what schools (private or public) have they attended and when?

School name: Mar Vista Elementary School (Public) When: 2008- Present

2. Please indicate your three (3) priorities once in office and explain why:

- A. Supporting teachers.** I want to build a system that helps ensure the most effective teachers are in front of our children's classrooms, especially the classrooms of our neediest kids. This means making sure that we are meaningfully evaluating teachers with a multiple measure evaluation system and then giving them professional development tailored to who they are so that they can grow and develop.
- B. Investing in education and our children.** I also want to make sure that we are sending every dollar possible to the classroom and seeking ways to bring more revenue into the system. We are 47th in per pupil spending and that is short-changing our children.
- C. Ensuring parents have choice.** Every parent should feel good about their public school choices. I want to create schools that parents and communities can be proud of- both traditional public schools with more local control and charter public schools that give parents much needed choice.

3. Quality instruction, reducing class size, adequate funding, school choice and access to quality data have all been cited as policies that impact student achievement. Please rank your opinion of these conditions with 1 being the most impactful and 5 being the least.

Quality Instruction: Rank 1
Adequate Funding: Rank 2
School Choice Rank 3
Reducing Class Size Rank 5
Access to Quality Data Rank 4

Comments: Every study shows the most important thing we can do to improve education is to make sure we have a terrific teacher in front of every student, that is why supporting teachers and quality instruction is my number one goal.

4. How would you as a school board member increase parent and community engagement in schools? What have you done thus far to support your vision?

The best way to increase parent and community engagement is to genuinely involve them in the decision making at their school site. The truth is the bureaucracy at LAUSD does not know our communities as well as the communities know themselves. Communities and parents want to be included in their schools but they get frustrated by the interference of a bureaucracy that does not understand their needs and the value they can bring to the schools.

One of my goals as a School Board member would be to deeply engage the communities around each school and to include the parents. Only through meaningful involvement will we truly bring back a world class education to our kids.

5. What, in your opinion, is the pathway toward adequately funding the district? Do you believe the funding structure needs to be overhauled?

The path to adequately funding the district starts with making sure we are spending the money we have wisely. Too many people believe that the district is wasting our money. Job number one for me is to take the skills I learned working for the best oversight investigator in the country – Henry Waxman – and dig into our finances to make sure that every dollar possible is going to the school sites.

Then we need to turn to options that will increase revenue. We are 47th in the nation in per pupil spending. We spend an average of \$5,200 for our students when New York spends \$18,000. That is not okay. We are short changing our kids, I support lowering the threshold to pass parcel taxes. I also support simplifying California's complicated and cumbersome financial system. I have not studied the Governor's proposed weighted student formula proposal the devil could be in the details, so I reserve judgment until I have, but I support the concept.

6. Recently there has been a number of child abuse allegations brought against LAUSD. How would you help protect students from LAUSD employees who may seek to harm students?

As a parent I was horrified to hear about the allegations of abuse at Miramonte. We need to have a much better system of accountability for teachers and staff, without punishing those teachers who are innocent. I support Senator Padilla's bill, SB10, which would streamline the costly, inconsistent, and lengthy process that is currently in place.

7. Should LAUSD have a goal of bringing more students back into public education from private and home schools? If so, how would you suggest going about this?

We should absolutely have a goal of bringing more students back into the public school system. Every parent should feel good about sending their kid to their local public school, and too many do not. The good thing is that many parents believe in public education and would send their kids to public school if they had confidence in it. I want to bring back that confidence by making sure that we have an effective teacher in front of every class and more local control and investment so parents can feel good about their school.

I also plan to engage in barn storming to encourage parents to take another look at their local public school. This is especially important for middle schools – far too many of the parents I seek to represent are distraught by their lack of middle school choices.

8. What steps need to be taken to continue to challenge high achieving students? Are we doing enough to support these students?

We need to do a better job of identifying them early. I support the recent measures to test all second graders but I think the measures need to be reformed to insure that there is continuity in the system.

9. What role will you have in addressing the resource and opportunity gaps for low-income students?

I am committed to closing the achievement gap. Education should be the great equalizer and right now it is not. One key to closing the gap is making sure that every kid starts Kindergarten ready to learn. We need to invest in early education and better link the early education system to our K-12 system.

10. What do you think of the teacher evaluation agreement reached between the District and LAUSD labor partners? Explain it and share your thoughts on it.

The agreement is a step in the right direction but does not go far enough. Our current teacher evaluation system is undeniably broken. I support a multiple measure evaluation system that incorporates observation as a main component, contributions to school community, parent and teacher surveys, and student outcomes.

The recent agreement incorporates many of these components but its measure of student outcomes is too amorphous to be meaningful. I would seek to strengthen and better define this component of the system.

12. What is your position on school choice for parents and families?

Public school choice means insuring that parents have the ability to select a public school that would serve the needs of their child. For some that is traditional schools, for some it's a performing arts magnet, for others it's an innovative charter school. Parents know their children better than anyone. Together with teachers and administrators they can create a learning environment that works for each child. As a district, LAUSD needs to move away from a one size fits all mentality and focus on creating school choices that empower students and parents to make the best decision for their family.

13. What is your opinion on charter school growth within the district? Should we limit or promote charter school growth?

Charter schools play two roles for the children of LAUSD. First, they provide a tremendous education for many of the children in the district I seek to represent and throughout LAUSD as a whole. Second, they show us what is possible and help to bring innovative practices to our traditional public school. Charter schools are public schools, we need to hold them accountable and make sure they are playing by the rules and providing a great education for their kids. And where they are, they should be given equal resources as traditional public schools including facilities. I support continuing to grow great charter schools in LAUSD.

14. How will you engage the community to inform your policy positions and understand the implications of board decisions on the educational experiences of the families and students you serve?

I am a big geek about democracy and truly believe that as a representative, my most important job is to listen to my consistency. It is a skill I have honed as an elected member of the Mar Vista Community Council and one that I would employ as a board member. I would visit the schools and community councils in my district regularly to keep in touch and hear from those I serve.

15. How will you work with other members of the board, the administration and members of the community to ensure EL students are reclassifying and gaining access to A-G courses?

Members of the board must prioritize policies that ensure all students are college and career ready, but must develop policies that focus on the specific needs of EL students.

The board must also ensure ELs are addressed in different district initiatives, such as the Common Core and A-G implementation plans, to maximize student learning in high school courses and beyond. School Board members can support raising awareness of the needs of ELs at the local, district and state level to ensure the necessary resources are allocated to this group of students. The administration needs to support and hold accountable district and local administration in the timely development and implementation of plans. Members of the community should be involved in conversations regarding equity and access to college and career ready courses. Resources must include parents, as well as a broad base partnership at the school site level between parents, students, educators, and leadership. Parents are a critical stakeholder in the education of their children. We must also ensure parents are aware of the opportunities available to them to support and advocate on behalf of their children.

16. Do you support Superintendent John Deasy and would you fight to keep him in office?*

Absolutely. I think the Superintendent is the best superintendent that this district has had in decades. I think that he has brought incredibly reforms to this system. I think he is bringing an amazing energy to this system. I often say that, I believe we at LAUSD are on the precipice of change. I think John Deasy is a big part of that. I think he is part of bringing the civic community together. When you have the Urban League and the Community Coalition and the Chamber of Commerce all coming together and reinvesting in LAUSD, saying, you know what, we'd kind of given up on this system, but we're taking another look at it. We think that this is a system that is workin'. You can go back to John Deasy and the work he has done to bring this civic community together. And I frankly don't think he is getting the support from this board that he needs. And, I have heard personally from members of the leadership of UTLA that they don't support John Deasy. I held a phone bank in my house to support Proposition 30, and it was a phone bank sponsored by UTLA. I was running around like a chicken with my head cut off, as a hostess, you know, getting ready for the phone banking people coming in. And, leaders of UTLA were standing there. I wasn't participating in the conversation, but I was overhearing it. Talking about how they, and this was before I decided to run for board, talking about how they wanted to win three seats in this election so that they could get rid of this man. I think, if that happens, we lose a generation of kids to a status quo that is not acceptable.

***Please note: This question was added from the Candidate Forum video.**



School Board Candidate Questionnaire

1. Do you have children? Yes / No X_____

If so, what schools (private or public) have they attended and when?

School name:

When:

2. Please indicate your three (3) priorities once in office and explain why:

A. Improving student achievement and guaranteeing an excellent teacher in every classroom and outstanding administrator at every school.

B. Increasing parent involvement and investing in proven, instructional programs that provide quality public education choice for all families.

C. Eradicating the opportunity gap by increasing funding to public education and ensuring that there is accountability at every level of our system. We must be relentless as we campaign to fund our classrooms.

3. Quality instruction, reducing class size, adequate funding, school choice and access to quality data have all been cited as policies that impact student achievement. Please rank your opinion of these conditions with 1 being the most impactful and 5 being the least.

Quality Instruction: Rank 5_____

Adequate Funding: Rank 5_____

School Choice Rank 5_____

Reducing Class Size Rank 5_____

Access to Quality Data Rank 5_____

Comments: Every one of these policies is absolutely essential to transforming LAUSD and ensuring a world-class education for every child

4. How would you as a school board member increase parent and community engagement in schools? What have you done thus far to support your vision?

We must increase parent involvement in our schools if we want to improve student achievement and chances of success after graduation.

That is why I co-authored the Parents as Equal Partners resolution, which put in place a plan for improving parent engagement through increased outreach; created – with parent input - a

“Parent’s Bill of Rights” to promote shared responsibility with schools for results; established a new position of Chief of School, Family, Parent, and Community Services to direct parent engagement as a top priority for the district; and strengthens support to schools so that schoolfamily activities are linked to learning and achievement, and welcomes all parents and guardians as partners.

I have led the effort to fully fund parent centers and parent education services at every district school with a focus on increasing avenues for engagement for middle school and high school parents. Further, as a long-time advocate of School Based Management and other local decision making models, I insist that leadership and budget decisions at my schools are made with the full participation of parents and the school stakeholder community.

Finally, my Board Office established, in partnership with the Youth Policy Institute, the first Family Resource Center in Hollywood, which is regarded as a national model for how a school district can work with community based agencies to increase family involvement.

5. What, in your opinion, is the pathway toward adequately funding the district? Do you believe the funding structure needs to be overhauled?

Unfortunately, we are subject to the whim of state funding and the subsequent state cuts to our budgets. In my first Board term, I have been relentless in identifying and then campaigning for increased funding to the District from both state and federal sources. I was LAUSD’s leading champion of the Education Jobs Bill that brought over \$125 million in new federal funding to the district. I have been the central advocate for increased IDEA funding so that the federal government will pay its mandated share of special education services. I believe we must find more consistent and dedicated streams of funding for our schools, so that our students are not the victims of Sacramento’s budgeting problems. I support Governor Brown’s initiative to move towards a transformed system of school funding and eagerly await our team’s analysis of how we use new formulas to get the most funds to children who need it most.

6. Recently there has been a number of child abuse allocations brought against LAUSD. How would you help protect students from LAUSD employees who may seek to harm students?

It is never acceptable for our students to be in danger, and that is why I responded quickly and forcefully to those allegations, and will continue to fight to ensure our students are safe, and their safety is never a subject for compromise.

I supported Senator Padilla’s bill to deal with this issue, recently voted to support its new version, SB 10, led efforts to ensure that all files of all certificated employees in the district were reviewed immediately in order to identify problems, and will continue to work with our partners in Sacramento to overhaul the current imbalanced system to ensure that criminals never endanger students.

We must continue to pro-actively work to guarantee student safety and remain constantly vigilant on behalf of students.

7. Should LAUSD have a goal of bringing more students back into public education from private and home schools? If so, how would you suggest going about this?

Yes, and that’s why I authored the Expanding Enrollment Initiative, which creates a plan for

investing in and expanding access to programs like dual immersion schools, schools for advanced studies, and the International Baccalaureate Curricular design. I've also worked to create more SPAN K-8 schools and expand choices for magnet schools, all programs designed to provide more choice, parent involvement, and expand enrollment in LAUSD schools. Local, stakeholder engaged decision making and a system that is finally responsive to families will also go a long way towards bringing families back to the district.

Through Laurel SPAN School, The Mandarin Dual Immersion program, expansion of Magnets and SAS programs, we have brought families back to the district even in the midst of this economic crisis.

8. What steps need to be taken to continue to challenge high achieving students? Are we doing enough to support these students?

I've championed real programs to help high achieving students excel in LAUSD schools, such as expanding choices for magnet schools, creating more dual immersion schools, and creating more challenging curriculums like the International Baccalaureate Curriculum. As we begin to identify additional funding and resources, fully supporting increased enrichment and specially designed curricular and extra-curricular programs will be important supplements to rigorous instruction in every classroom.

9. What role will you have in addressing the resource and opportunity gaps for low-income students?

My background and history is deeply rooted in increasing opportunities for low-income and at-risk students.

As a counselor and teacher for seventeen years, I worked hard to increase rigor and support services:

- Established first on-site health and mental health clinics, and led efforts to expand these across the district.
- Expanded and championed community-based option programs throughout the district, helping keep more kids in school and helping them graduate.
- Leader in advocating for the Dream Act.
- Co-founder of the Elysian Valley Service Center, providing after school resources, job training, and tutoring for local students. This helped raise graduation rates for students in a very low-income community from just over 50% to more than 75% now.

10. What do you think of the teacher evaluation agreement reached between the District and LAUSD labor partners? Explain it and share your thoughts on it.

Any evaluation model must make students and their needs the top priority. This teacher evaluation agreement does just that, and has been held up across the political spectrum as a national model for management and labor to collaborate on a system that puts students first. I believe it puts student achievement at the forefront of the way LAUSD evaluates and supports its certificated employees.

12. What is your position on school choice for parents and families?

I support school choice for parents and families. This has been a central focus of my first board term and will continue to be a key priority throughout the district.

13. What is your opinion on charter school growth within the district? Should we limit or promote charter school growth?

I support allowing more charters in the district, but we must ensure they are reaching the students and communities that need them the most, and are serving the interests of students. We must also ensure that choice is accessible to every family and that charter schools serve all children. It is appropriate for the Superintendent to have a strategic plan as choice continues to expand in the district to make sure district programs are able to compete and have the necessary resources as enrollment numbers continue to decline.

14. How will you engage the community to inform your policy positions and understand the implications of board decisions on the educational experiences of the families and students you serve?

Since being first elected, I've worked tirelessly to be in the community I represent, meeting with parents, teachers, administrators, and others in the community to ensure that they are fully informed of district policies, but more importantly I am hearing and seeing first-hand the needs of the students, parents, and schools.

15. How will you work with other members of the board, the administration and members of the community to ensure EL students are reclassifying and gaining access to A-G courses?

I began my career as an EL teacher, and I understand and prioritize the needs of English language learners. I've fought, and will continue to fight, to ensure EL students have access to A-G requirements and we are efficiently targeting resources, providing early intervention, outstanding teaching, and access to support systems immigrant students and families need to fulfill the American dream through public education.

16. Do you support Superintendent John Deasy and would you fight to keep him in office? *

And again, democracy lives. I often say this, sometimes in my car, sometimes to my dog, it's great fiction, but it's a lousy life. There's a great fiction out there that somehow I don't support Dr. John Deasy, when time and time again, I have been the deciding vote on many of the initiatives that he has championed. Let me be very, very clear, I support John Deasy. I think he is the best person to lead LA Unified School District in this moment. But, let me also be clear, there are policy issues and community issues in which I disagree with the Superintendent. I will not be shy about that, because this is about democracy. It is about checks and balances. It is about an honest dialogue and an honest balancing between the Board and the Superintendent. I have supported over, and over, and over again the central tenants of John Deasy's vision. And, I have supported over, and over, and over again when there have been tipping point votes that have gotten to that central vision, I have been with the Superintendent. But, there have been other issues, where I simply disagree. It is an honest give and take the way the relationship between the board and a superintendent should be. That is good government. That is the right type of separation of powers that will lead us forward collectively. We have solved more in this district by building divine coalitions than having holy wars. That is my personal philosophy, and when the

Superintendent align we're a really powerful force. When we disagree, good things also happen, because we get to a place that puts kids first and creates the right compromises.

***Please note: This question was added from the Candidate Forum video.**