

Central Valley Progressive Political Action Committee
Endorsement Questionnaire for FUSD School Board Candidates

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Date 9/1/18

Please limit your responses to no more than 300 words per question.

1. Educational outcomes in the Fresno Unified School District are significantly impacted by poverty, segregation, and school funding inequities. As a school board member, how will you combat these issues to improve public education in Fresno Unified?

My strongest belief in providing an equitable educational experience for students in our most impoverished regions of the district remains a top priority. It's imperative that we continue to provide supports and resources to those schools and facilities that are in need of redress to correct continuing inequities. We are in the process of addressing many of these issues through our modernization efforts throughout our district and will continue to do so. We have hired more support staff, social workers, psychologists, inc after school supports and partnerships with community members to address these needs.

2. Recent studies conducted by the non-profit organization In the Public Interest have shown that the unrestricted growth of charter schools takes away resources from public schools. As a school board member, what are your solutions to curb charter expansion within Fresno Unified?

As a product of public education and a public education teacher I support and believe in the strength and value of the public education system. As a public system we are mandated to accept charters, but it is our duty to ensure that those charters are well established and effective in our oversight authority. I have denied renewal for charters and denied the creation of charters during my tenure on the Board and will continue to apply due diligence in the oversight of any future charters that may come forward.

3. Evidence-based, comprehensive sex education has been shown to decrease teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infection rates. As a school board member, will you support the use of evidence-based sex education in Fresno Unified?

As sitting Board member, I supported this issue and have met with community members and district staff to review and address issues with our adopted curriculum. Furthermore, I have taught health education and human sexuality within my career and support this issue.

4. Go Public Schools Fresno is predominately funded by corporate billionaires who have significant ties to the charter school industry, and a strong history of promoting the privatization of public schools. As a school board member, what will you do to evaluate and limit the influence of such an organization on Fresno Unified?

Just as I am mandated to oversee charter schools within our school District, I would do the same in evaluating Go Public Schools. I would not allow Go an expansive influence in our district as to supplant district control or authority of our schools.

5. Despite the many positive effects they have had on funding and program development, public sector unions have come under attack. What role do you think FTA and other FUSD labor partners has in supporting the growth of students and schools in Fresno Unified?

Our schools are not able to function properly unless we all work in tandem with one another for the sake of our children. All members have a role to play that greatly influences our schools and has a positive impact on our children both directly and indirectly every school day.

6. FUSD serves an ethnic student population that is nearly 90%; however, ethnic site principals comprise less than 50% of that workforce. Studies have shown academic achievement improves when students of color see people reflecting their background in leadership positions, like school principals. Will you commit to hiring policies that encourage the appointment of principals who are more representative of FUSD's student population?

Yes! I have supported the programs within the district that supports the development of administrators from within our district staff/teachers to assist in addressing this issue.

7. Community based schools that offer wrap-around services, such as health clinics and social workers, have been shown to decrease the achievement gap, especially in socioeconomically disadvantaged communities like Fresno. What will you do to increase the availability of services to students and their families on campuses in Fresno?

As a sitting Board member, I have supported the development of health clinics on our campuses in some of the most needy areas of our community. Our partnerships with Clinica Sierra Vista and Valley Children's Hospital will increase accessibility to healthcare for students and families who are in great need of support. I will continue to support this work.

8. FTA and FUSD have recently agreed to create a work team to explore a special tax with the aim of decreasing class sizes in Fresno. Would you support such a tax?
Yes.

9. What does your dream public high school look like?

Schools such as Phillip J. Patino School of Entrepreneurship, Duncan Polytechnical and Design Science Early College are examples of dream schools that have already come to fruition within our district. I have had the honor of representing them and working with them so that they can have a greater impact for the students throughout our district. These schools reflect the diversity our community, have the highest graduation rates, and the highest college acceptance rates. They are preparing our children for the 21st century. These schools can also provide the templates on which to influence the direction of all our comprehensive high schools. This is not a dream, but a reality on which we will continue to build upon for all our schools throughout Fresno Unified.

10. What is the purpose of public education?

Public education is meant to provide a strong, foundational and equitable educational experience for ALL children in our community. It is meant to be both the foundation and the catalyst on which our children will build their future lives upon. It should provide the opportunity of choices whether they choose to attend college or enter into the job market upon graduation. Education plays a role in our society as being the great equalizer to overcoming issues of poverty and many other social inequities as well as being a cornerstone in the development of our communities.

Thank you so much for your time and energy in completing this questionnaire. Your answers will be distributed to our members prior to the September 8 endorsement meeting through the CVPPAC Website.

Please return this questionnaire by email to Mike Rhodes < mikerhodes@comcast.net >. The deadline is Sunday, September 2 at 11:59 p.m. If you have any questions, call CVPPAC president Pam Whalen at (559) 994-9390.