

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

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Candidate's Signature_____

Date__9/2/18_____

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

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?

I would use my vote on the board to leverage my colleagues to direct the Superintendent to establish a focus to do more than study this issue; to seek best practices from throughout the Country to find projects and programs that would be applicable to our situation.

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?

My understanding of charter schools is that the Education Code is provides clear guidelines about how petitions are submitted, reviewed and approved. I would likely oppose FUSD opening additional charters and insist that the process set forth in the Ed. Code be strictly followed, but I would always do what is in the interest of students.

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?

I would not oppose evidence-based sex education however, I would want to understand and approve the detail of the curriculum to be sure it is not offensive students, parents or teachers.

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?

I am not so familiar with Go Public Schools. I am not in favor of privatizing public schools. I would not just reject out of hand any charter school petition; I would rely on the recommendations of the professionals we employ and expect that they would provide the board with sufficient information to make an informed decision.

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?

I am a FTA member. I believe they play an active role in supporting the growth of students and schools. I am aware that the leadership worked hard to establish a role in giving the board a perspective from the teacher and employee about many matters.

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, however, I believe that hiring policies are limited by State Law. I think what we need is a philosophy about district administration and staffing that commits to work with higher education to provide incentive for obtaining administrative credentials. I think we need to provide incentive and mentoring for ethnic teachers.

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?

I would encourage the board to direct administration to replicate Gaston School programs wherever needed.

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

What does your dream public high school look like?

An institution that has co-enrollment with colleges that makes available counseling and testing that allows students to explore areas of interest and aptitude to start thinking about their career. I would want them exposed to music, art, life science and sports.

What is the purpose of public education?

To provide children with a right to be educated.

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.