



<sup>1</sup>School Board questionnaire Fall 2008

1. Why do you want to be on the School Board?

I have a strong commitment to public education and the San Leandro community, having served on the school board for eight years and active as a resident for over 38 years.

Our District is at a critical juncture in these economically challenging and fiscally uncertain times that we are facing and I bring a solid background that can help us work through these rough times.

During my time on the board, we have accomplished much, and there is more work to be done.

I am running for re-election to continue the work that we have started. Working together, we must continue to:

- Reduce & control expenses, while enhancing revenues, so we can hire and retain quality teachers & staff
- Ensure that any potential cuts or reductions are kept away from the classroom
- Improve the communications with parents, teachers, staff & community
- Modernize, improve and add new school facilities to reduce our overcrowding issues
- Narrow the achievement gap
- Maintain a safe, clean and positive learning and working environment
- Enrich the learning experiences of our students with more college and career pathway opportunities

2. What relevant achievements in the last five years qualify you for this position?

Over the last five (5) years, I have:

- Worked to successfully pass Measure B \$109 million bond;
- Created a foundation that has raised and donated almost \$60,000 to our school district music programs thus freeing up general fund monies to be used for other district priorities
- Worked toward better equity in our schools
- Worked to reduce the achievement gap
- Worked to bring back the metal shop program at SLHS

These are just a few of the achievements that I have accomplished or helped to accomplish over the last five (5) years.

3. In your opinion what are the three most pressing issues facing our District?

1. Fiscal Accountability & Stability
2. Academic Achievement
3. Improving working relationships and salaries

4 For each issue identified in your response to Question 3, what strategies would you take to address the issues?

1. Fiscal Accountability & Stability

San Leandro Unified School District is at a critical financial juncture given the current uncertainty of our states economy.

We need to prepare for a loss of revenue from the state. With limited funding sources (i.e., Commercial & Residential Fees, Parcel Taxes & General Obligation Bonds) for schools that is outside of the current local, state & federal funding streams, we need to think 'outside the box' to find ways to help generate additional revenues and ways to reduce the districts expenditures.

During my tenure on the board, I have been able to bring my banking and auditing background to benefit our students and district. I have chaired the boards Finance Committee for the last seven (7) years. By doing so, I have seen first hand and have worked closely with staff in developing & reviewing our budget. I have been able help to identify and recommended ways for the district to reduce their expenditures. I am working hard to make sure that your taxes dollars are being spent wisely and for the overall benefit of students.

I will continue:

- Identifying ways to reduce the district expenditures.
- Identifying additional revenue sources through partnerships with businesses, community based organizations, grants, etc. I founded a foundation that has been able to raise and donate almost \$60,000 to our schools to help keep music in our eleven (11) elementary, middle & high schools.
- Working with the City and developers, as new commercial and residential projects are being pursued by the city, to identify creative ways and solutions for the district in their usage of the development fees associated with the project for our schools.
- Educating the community of the districts and student successes, our needs and goals to help bring the community together in support of our schools and the passage of a parcel tax.

## 2. Academic Achievement

Ensuring the academic success and achievement of ALL of our students is the most important duty that a school board member is entrusted with.

I am proud to serve in a district that is being recognized for its work in educating all children. Our changing demographics reflect the changing demographics across the state, and in many areas of the nation. Our lives are enriched through diversity and culture, and herein lies the greatest opportunity for our students. Of course, there are challenges of language and culture, but in addressing these challenges I look at them as opportunities for appreciating our differences and our similarities, our students will learn to succeed in the ever-changing global society.

The work that has been done so far is paying off as our test scores are on the rise and the achievement gap is narrowing. We must continue:

- Reassessing our programs to ensure they are addressing the needs of the whole child and make corrections as needed.
- Expand the opportunities for our students in college preparatory classes or career pathways
- Work in reducing the dropout rate through innovative ways and ideas, such collaborating with EAROP (Eden Area Regional Occupational Program), which I have serviced on its council for our board for the last seven (7) years, to keep students engaged in school and want to finish their education.

## 3. Improving working relationships and salaries

The district has just finished one of the most difficult and contentious, on both sides of the table, negotiations sessions that I have experienced in the eight (8) years I have been on the board.

The salaries of our teachers, as well as our other bargaining units, are ranked as among the lowest within Alameda County. We all need to come back together and develop an action plan, short term and long term, that will not only improve working relationships but will help to increase the salaries for all bargaining unit members, that is outside of the normal contract negotiations process and keep them their.

We all need to work together for what we are all here for and that is the students and providing them the best education possible.

5. Describe your recent involvement with San Leandro school campuses?

As a board member, I have attended Open Houses, Back-to-School Nights, numerous individual school site activities and fundraisers, etc.

I regularly participate in classroom activities for all twelve (12) of our schools such as field trips, classroom presentations, worked in the classrooms with students, brought guest speakers to the schools, periodic school site and classroom visits, etc.

6. How would you work with families to increase parental involvement in our schools?

Over the last four (4) years parental involvement has increased but more involvement is still needed. I would work with the various parent organizations at the different schools to increase their involvement on only at the school site but at district level as well. We need to look at the various committees that are in place today that allows parental involvement to see if they are effective and make whatever changes would be necessary to improve them.

7. List specific ways you would work to improve teacher morale.

In order to change the current feelings and low morale we, SLTA and the board, need to come together to get down to the issues, develop the appropriate steps to their resolution, mend bridges and improve our ongoing communications.

- We should start the 'healing' process with a 'retreat' where we, SLTA Executive board members & school board members only, come together to have an open and frank conversation.
- Then establish an on-going schedule of meetings where we can discuss any issue or concern we might have and ways we can improve our district. I would suggest this process for the other bargaining units as well.
- We need to establish an annual 'retreat' where we all come together to discuss common issues and concerns.

8. Do you believe that a change in the District administrative leadership is necessary? Please state the facts/reasons that support your response.

I believe that personnel adjustments and re-organization of district office is necessary. Changes are needed not only to reduce our expenditures given the state of the economy but also to help improve working relationships with all of our bargaining units and create more efficiencies within the district.

9. If you are not currently on the Board, how many school board meetings have you attended in the past two years? If you are currently on the Board, how many school board meetings have you missed in the last two years?

Over the last two (2) years, I have not missed any regular or special board meetings.