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1. There are many ways to make a difference in education. Why have you chosen to run for school board?

I'm running for the LAUSD Board of Education because I know there is so much more that we as a community can and must do to ensure that every child in LAUSD has access to a great public education. I care about this so much because I grew up in the Northeast Valley in a working immigrant family. My mom is an immigrant from Perú, and I saw her, throughout my childhood, face many barriers to education and employment. But she never gave up and was eventually able to enroll in an LAUSD adult school, the Pacoima Skills Center. This helped her get a good job at a local hospital and lifted my family up from working paycheck to paycheck, to having more stability. I saw from that experience the transformative impact that education can have, not just on one individual, but on an entire family and eventually an entire community. And that's what drove me to teaching in the first place.

As a teacher, I've loved teaching and the experience of working with students individually, but I felt that people on the ground in the classroom every day don't have enough of a role in the policy making process. My ability to help support kids and families felt constrained by the four walls of my classroom, and I wanted to be voice helping to find solutions to the systemic challenges we face in public education.

And that's why I was so happy in 2014 to be appointed to join the Obama administration to work on these issues, to have a voice in the policy process, as a former teacher and as someone who grew up in circumstances similar to many of our students. But I also learned from that experience just how local most education policy is. The most important decisions when it comes to education are made by local school districts. As a classroom teacher now and the only teacher running, I feel an obligation to be an advocate not just for my students but for all the students in Board District 6 and LAUSD.

I believe that our district has benefited tremendously from having a representative with classroom experience. So when it became clear that the Board seat was open, I hoped to see an educator become our next Board member. As candidates entered the race, I realized that if I wanted someone to run with classroom experience, I would have to take a leap of faith by running myself. I believe that my experiences as both a teacher and a policymaker would benefit the students of Board District 6 and of all of Los Angeles.

I've been an advocate for kids and families all my life, and it's just that kind of advocacy that I want to continue as a member of the LAUSD Board of Education.

2. What are three things that you would like to do immediately, if elected?

One key priority for me as a candidate is ensuring that, not only are we reaching 100% graduation, but that every child who walks across the high school graduation stage is truly college and career-ready. The immediate steps I would take to implement this plan would include (1) reviewing the District's existing early warning data to make a real plan to support students who are not on-track to graduate, including addressing the needs not

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just of high school seniors but planning farther in advance for younger students, (2) meeting with staff to understand our current efforts more thoroughly and evaluate their effectiveness, and (3) working with nonprofit partners and other governmental agencies to create a more intensive focus on students not on-track to graduate so that they're able to graduate in time, but also so that they're getting a high-quality education that is rigorous.

Another immediate focus will be the strategic plan. While I certainly agree with the overall goals set out in the document, such as attaining a 100% high school graduation rate, I believe we must reconsider the measures we are using to assess student success. We cannot focus solely on high school graduation, but instead need to do a better job of integrating more meaningful measures that will tell us whether our high school diploma (and, thus, the P-12 education we're providing) is helping our kids be successful beyond high school in college and careers. I would explore the feasibility of collecting more data on student's longitudinal outcomes, including postsecondary enrollment, retention, and completion and workforce readiness.

If elected, I will also prioritize getting to know and developing positive relationships with my fellow board members, staff, and external partners, especially those who may not have supported my campaign, but with whom I want to work positively and productively as a board member.

3. The monthly board book is frequently over 700 pages long. The closed session book, including dismissals, frequently runs another 500 pages plus. How do you plan to tackle the monthly board book and understand the issues presented?

The issues and challenges the Board faces are significant. If I am elected, I plan to serve as a full-time board member to give myself the necessary time to devote my full attention to these issues. I have deep expertise in education policy and, while there will most certainly be a learning curve, I believe that because of my experience I am well-positioned to understand the issues presented before the Board.

I will always do the necessary research and outreach before all board meetings. I consider myself to be very detail-oriented, analytical, and thorough which can be seen in my prior work.

I also have a track record of being able to juggle difficult, time-consuming work. This began when I started working as a teenager, when I worked three jobs in college all the while earning my degree, when I taught full-time while earning my Master's degree, and continues today as I again teach full-time while running for school board.

4. Each of you have received significant endorsements and hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of support via independent expenditure campaigns. Supporters will expect access and the ability to share with you their perspective on policy, budget decisions, hiring decisions, etc..

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a. Please describe how you plan to handle the pressure your supporters will exert on you to respect and put forth their perspective once you're in office?

I'm grateful for all the support I've received in this race so far, especially the residents of District 6. An important part of my campaign platform is ensuring that every school board decision is made with meaningful community input. If elected, I will work to increase opportunities for parents and families to weigh in on critical decisions. Our community will be the most important voices if I am elected.

I consider myself an independent voice and that is how I have campaigned. I believe this, in part, has led to me earning the endorsements by the two major newspapers in Los Angeles -- because, in addition to my extensive education experience, I would be an independent voice on the school board who makes decisions based on reason and evidence and who brings people together.

Regardless of who supports me, my priorities reflect my vision for LAUSD for what I think will be best for the students based on my work as a resident of this community, classroom teacher, and policymaker. I am not about doing what is popular, I am about doing what is best for every student. And as a teacher, I have hundreds of students and families who I will think about every day as a board member. I believe this will help me maintain my integrity, sense of purpose, and keep me focused on what's best for kids, regardless of external pressures.

b. Please describe a time in your life when substantial pressure was put on you to conform and how you dealt with that pressure?

During my time in the Obama Administration, I believed we were not doing enough to support the success of undocumented students as well as children of undocumented parents and wanted to create more resources to support these youth. I met significant resistance with some in the Administration as well as Congressional Republicans who were letting politics get in the way of the needs of our kids and families. I fought through the political discord because I am relentless in fighting for our students, especially those who have historically been forgotten and underserved.

Despite facing this opposition, I led a successful partnership with immigrant's rights organizations, the two national teachers unions, and civil rights organizations to develop these resources, release them publicly as soon as possible, and provide outreach and technical assistance to states and districts who were trying to do more for undocumented students but needed help getting there. Though I received blowback after the release of the resources, especially from Congressional Republicans, it was all worth it when I heard from educators who really appreciated the guide and from undocumented youth themselves who called it a "life-changing tool."

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- *Resource Guide: Supporting Undocumented Youth*
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/supporting-undocumented-youth.pdf>
- *Newcomer Toolkit* <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/newcomers-toolkit/ncomertoolkit.pdf>
- *Resource Guide: Building a Bright Future for All*
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/early-learning-teacher-and-parent-resource-guide.pdf>

5. Ms. Gonez, labor – UTLA and SEIU – have spent significant money and people power to ensure that you are not elected. Yet, the majority of UTLA and SEIU members have NOT been involved in preventing your election.

a. How will you deal with your feelings about labor, if elected?

All school staff have a right to organize, and I am a strong supporter of organized labor. All schools, including charter schools, must abide by fair labor laws and I would be a proponent of ensuring that all charter management organizations with petitions before the Board of Education have strong track records when it comes to allowing workers to organize.

I have always been passionate about the right to organize. I am a teacher whose family has directly benefited from good union jobs, and I understand the power of labor. I firmly believe that, in order to tackle the important issues we face as a district, we need to all come together, rise above the simplistic labels that the political process attaches to us, and work together for the betterment of kids. That is an idea at the heart of my campaign. Today I maintain the belief that we are doing a disservice to our kids if we do not get past what ideologically divides us. It is up to us to come together and find the best solutions that will help the kids and families of our community.

I look forward to working with UTLA and the district's other labor partners because I know we share a common goal: to help all of our students be successful, guarantee an excellent public education for every child, and ensure our schools are giving the 650,000 plus LAUSD students a real opportunity to succeed in school and in life.

b. Prior to running for school board, have you ever been in a situation in your life where someone or a group worked against you? Please describe the situation and how you handled it?

I am a science teacher, and therefore sometimes deal with issues that are the subject of public debate. There was a time when one of my fellow teachers aired her personal views on climate change with my students and argued (to our

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students) that climate change was fake. In addition to undermining that what I had been teaching my students, I do not feel it is appropriate to let personal commentary into the classroom without characterizing it as opinion.

I responded by having a conversation with the teacher directly, with the principal, and with my students. To my students, I said that they were learning to be scientists -- and being a scientist meant hearing both sides of an issue, but letting the evidence guide their final determination. I wanted my students to have an accurate understanding of the debate, and to learn about the importance of scientific fact in these discussions. Though this is just one example, I believe it attests to my calm and understanding responses to those on opposing sides of issues, while still sticking to my beliefs, principles, and what's best for kids.

c. What assurance do workers have that you will not hold leadership's decisions against the individual workers?

I would never hold decisions of leadership against individual workers, nor do I harbor any ill will towards anyone for the rhetoric of the campaign. Throughout my campaign, though I knew from the start that UTLA had already decided to support another candidate, I have always said that the leadership does not necessarily reflect individual members and have worked hard to keep working for the individual support of those union members. I have had a number of positive and productive conversations with many labor groups about their priorities and concerns for LA schools, on which I believe we have a lot of overlap and agreement. Further, I have a broad and diverse coalition of support for my campaign that includes individual members of UTLA and SEIU, and I have earned the endorsement of a labor union and a democratic club. If elected, I intend to work with all partners, regardless of their position during the campaign.

6. Please describe your position on charter proliferation and saturation and why that is your position?

I believe that every child and every family deserves a good public school in their neighborhood, and that good schools can come in many different forms. Magnet schools, traditional district schools, pilot schools, career academies, dual-language programs, and high-quality charter schools are all models with evidence and strong student data behind them. I've had the privilege of teaching in both a traditional district school and charter schools, and have seen the best of both worlds. I've seen firsthand the real, deep impact effective charter schools can have on the lives of children, their families, and the community as a whole.

When charter schools are serving their students, families, and workers well, then I believe they are a positive addition to our education landscape. If parents and families do not have a good public education option in their community, a high-quality charter school could fill a critical need. At the same time, we must continue to invest in our district schools to ensure that all of our students are being served well. And when it comes to the

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opening of new charter schools, we must ensure that schools are only being opened when there is a real, significant need in the community and that we are being conscientious of potential saturation of charters. I would review each new charter application thoroughly and consider them on a case-by-case basis.

Every school should be held to high standards, and we should evaluate how they are doing based on multiple measures of student learning and growth (academic, social, and emotional). We need to do more to ensure that every charter is a high-performing charter school. Not all charters are providing the level of education we expect, and they should be held accountable. Further, all employees at charter schools have a right to unionize and I believe that charter schools that necessitate new facilities construction should be union built. These are rights we must protect.

There is still more we can do to ensure all charters and other schools of choice are serving all students and providing a high-quality education for all. When I worked for President Obama, I focused on vulnerable populations such as immigrant students, English language learners, students in foster care and homeless students. We need to make sure that those students are not pushed out and, when they attend charters and other schools of choice, that there is meaningful accountability and transparency to ensure that vulnerable students are receiving the services to which they are entitled and that there are no significant within-school learning gaps.

7. There are schools that have been failing for years – students leaving the school unprepared for the next step in their education.

a. A) What is your experience with such schools?

I have dedicated my life to improving educational opportunities for the most vulnerable children and families in our society. Every school I have taught or served at has had a very high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced priced lunch and has been a Title I school. Yet, these schools, which by the numbers might be expected to underperform, have been excellent and have helped students be successful academically and otherwise. I'm lucky to have had this experience. I know that sadly there are a small number of schools that have left students behind for decades, without much action being taken to intervene. This is an injustice that I would seek to correct as Board member.

In the Obama Administration, we did a lot of work to try to lift up and support underperforming schools, providing extra resources, intensive services, and other efforts to turn things around. Turning around a struggling school remains challenging and progress can be slow, but I learned a great deal about what changes can make an impact at such persistently failing schools, which levers matter the most, and how policymakers can help such schools without being punitive.

b. B) What should be done about such schools?

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We need to do more to ensure that every school is high-performing. Not all schools are providing the level of education we expect, and they should be held accountable and receive additional support so that they can improve. We need to first ensure that we are evaluating school success based on high standards and expectations for our students, as well as looking taking a holistic view of school success that takes into account multiple measures of student learning and growth (academic, social, and emotional; school climate; parent engagement; resource equity, etc.).

When it comes to accountability at persistently failing schools, we should examine the resources of each school to ensure it has been adequately funded and staffed. Then we should require a meaningful, feasible plan for improvement as soon as possible. The school's staff and leadership should be intimately involved in this process, and we should empower them to come up with potential solutions to the challenges faced by their schools, given that they are likely in the best position to know their unique needs and context. We should partner them with other schools that have faced similar challenges but have overcome them, and help provide the resources necessary to implement interventions that have been shown to work (either in our own data/experience or through research). We should also encourage them to think about whole-school approaches, rather than piecemeal changes, as research has shown whole-school efforts to be more successful.

I think that, many times, academically failing schools lack access to great, experienced educators and have negative school climates. We know that access to a great teacher is the single most important in-school factor in ensuring student success and, sadly, students in low-income schools are less likely to have access to the best teachers. While I think the LAUSD should explore the idea of financial incentives (salary, benefits, bonuses, etc.) to bring great, experienced teachers into the lowest-performing schools, I know based on my experience as a teacher that often the most important determining factor for teacher satisfaction is the school leadership, support, and the environment at the school.

Therefore, we need to do more to ensure every school leader is effective and receives the necessary support to do his or her job successfully. In order to make the school more attractive to the best teachers, we should work to ensure these schools have positive, welcoming school climates, supportive services for kids and families, and strong school leaders. If principals at struggling schools are consistently not providing the support that their schools need, then we should invest in coaching, mentoring, and other supports that will help that school leader achieve his or her full potential; if the school leader continues to be ineffective despite opportunities for improvement, then I believe we should consider replacing him or her with a more effective leader. I further believe that all of the leadership responsibilities should not be concentrated in a single person, but instead could likely be better accomplished if we provide teachers and other

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school staff more leadership opportunities at their schools. Teacher leadership can be a tool both to recruit and retain great teachers at low performing schools (and all schools), but also to better manage schools such that there is not so much work on principals' plates. There's been some progress on this issue nation-wide, and I think LAUSD could do a better job in this area, and it may be an innovative tool to help support schools that have been failing.

8. Employee wages and benefits make up the majority of the school district's budget. Enrollment is declining in some areas such that some schools are shrinking and becoming difficult to maintain financially. What are your thoughts on these issues?

In order to solve the financial crisis our district faces, we need to look at both increasing revenue and decreasing costs. On the revenue side, we need to look at how to boost enrollment. That doesn't mean demonizing charter schools, it means investing fully in and improving our traditional schools and replicating instructional models that work, like small career academies, dual-language immersion schools, magnet schools, and pilot schools, among others. We can also find ways to advocate for more funding from the state and federal level. While getting additional resources from the federal level will be challenging given the political realities, there ought to be opportunities for more resources at the state level.

California is ranked just 34th in the nation when it comes to education spending. I believe we should push our legislators to ensure adequate funding for our kids, including reforming the way special education funding is allocated at the state level so that the LAUSD receives the requisite resources to meet our obligations to our students with disabilities. While working for President Obama, I worked to secure \$50 million additional dollars for vulnerable student populations. That's the kind of advocacy I want to bring to the District.

From a cost side, we also need to budget to our realities. That means working with our labor partners to find real ways to reduce our healthcare and pension liability, while ensuring that we are meeting our obligations to workers and honoring our commitments to the hard-working men and women who dedicate their entire lives to our schools and our kids. We need to transition to making budgeting decisions based on evidence of what works and based on the feedback of those implementing policies. The Independent Financial Review Panel laid out several examples that can help balance our budget, including boosting student attendance, tackling chronic absenteeism, and managing our lunch program better. If we could get these operations on par or surpassing state averages, we could begin to make a dent in our financial challenges.

There is no easy answer or singular solution as to how to address the financial issues LAUSD faces. It will take a lot of little changes and some big ones, but my experience as a teacher and as an education policy advisor help prepare me to meet that challenge.

9. Please describe in detail your experience with schools, classrooms, and children

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and youth?

I am currently a full-time 7th grade science teacher at a public middle school, where I teach 120 wonderful 12 and 13-year-olds. My earliest experiences as an educator were when I served as a teacher's aide in a first grade classroom while completing my college studies and as a mentor to underserved Bay Area students through a well-known non-profit organization. I worked three jobs to pay my way through UC Berkeley and struggled tremendously keeping up with my more well-prepared peers, which helped me come to the decision that I wanted to teach and help students from families and communities like mine be more prepared than I was to succeed in P-16 education. Right after graduating, I returned home to serve my community as a teacher in LAUSD.

After serving as a high school geometry teacher in South LA, I had the opportunity to teach 6th grade science in Lake View Terrace, just a few miles from where I grew up. As a teacher, I helped my students demonstrate significant academic growth, pioneered an anti-bullying initiative, developed my school's inaugural science fair, and led Common Core implementation for my school. I maintain strong relationships with the hundreds of students I have taught in the Northeast Valley, many of whom are helping on my campaign and learning how much power they have to affect change locally.

While teaching, I served as a Commissioner on the LAUSD Human Relations Commission and advised members of the LAUSD Board of Education on education policy issues, including teacher leadership, equity, and school discipline. I also earned my Master's Degree in Education from Loyola Marymount University on STEM opportunities for special populations of students. Before returning to the classroom last year, I spent nearly 3 years working as an education policy advisor to President Obama. In this role, I secured over \$50 million in additional education funding while leading the Obama Administration's advocacy to increase education funding and support for special populations, including English language learners, immigrant students, homeless students, students in foster care, justice-involved youth, and others. While serving in the Obama Administration, I served as a volunteer teacher with a non-profit education providing job training and ESL courses for youth and young adults as well as a tutor for disadvantaged students in local public schools

I have dedicated my life to improving educational opportunities for the most vulnerable children and families in our society. My deep educational experience as a teacher, policy-maker, and lifelong advocate for families make me well poised to be a strong and effective advocate for the San Fernando Valley, where I grew up.

10. Please describe in detail your experience creating policy?

I have previously worked as a fellow in the office of one of members of the LAUSD Board of Education, while I was teaching and earning my Master's Degree in Education policy. In this role, I advised that Board member on policy issues, such as supportive school discipline, positive school climates, and better supporting English language learners and their families. In 2013, I served as a commissioner on the LAUSD

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Commission on Human Relations, where we worked to help inform the Board's policy-making decisions as well.

In 2014, I was appointed by President Obama to serve as an education policy advisor in his Administration. I worked on a number of federal initiatives and programs, including work on Title I (parts A, C, and D), Title III, and the McKinney-Vento program for homeless children and youths. I was closely involved in the reauthorization of the Every Student Succeeds Act and helped draft and track the education parts of the annual federal budget. During ESEA reauthorization, I successfully secured over \$50 million in additional education funding while leading the Obama Administration's advocacy to increase education funding and support for special populations, including English language learners, immigrant students, homeless students, students in foster care, justice-involved youth, and others.

My tireless advocacy for underserved kids and families led me to being recognized by President Obama, which was an incredibly humbling experience for me as the daughter of an immigrant and the granddaughter of a janitor. My work helped drive the Nation's education policy and has impacted millions of vulnerable kids across the country, including within LAUSD, and I view this as one of the most important strengths I bring to this position.

11. Please describe in detail your experience dealing with angry, unsatisfied constituents or stakeholders? If you have no such experience, please describe an experience dealing with a stranger or acquaintance who was angry with you.

I have held many jobs in my career (since I started working as a teenager) and have dealt with angry customers before. In such instances, I maintain composure, have a strong sense of empathy, and always try to understand where others are coming from. I always want to make sure all viewpoints are heard and have reasonable discussion.

I was the opinion editor of my newspaper in college. I dealt with many people who disagreed with stances the newspaper had taken, at times heatedly. I worked to provide a platform for constructive criticism and foster reasonable discussion when disagreements occurred, even while defending our positions. I intend to take a similar approach on the School Board.

While working in the Obama Administration, I regularly met with stakeholders from states and districts and organizations like NCLR and the AFT. These stakeholders were at times supportive, but often wanted to push the administration to go farther or take different positions on issues. I was able to work constructively with these groups throughout my time in the administration even when we would disagree or when circumstances prevented us from going as far as they hoped we would go.

12. What is your assessment of Superintendent King? What changes, if any, would you like to see her make?

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Superintendent King has made a strong start in her leadership of the district. I support her efforts to engage with our diverse stakeholders, collaborate and share best practices across different schools, and would work to help move these efforts forward if elected. I appreciate her deep experience working within the District, which I believe has helped her work well with schools and the District as a whole. I am eager to partner with the Superintendent and believe we align well on her major priorities for LAUSD, as well as her collaborative approach.

We also need her to be a driver of change, and I would like to see her set out more of a vision for our schools. One example is LAUSD's strategic plan. We need meaningful goals, and even more important, we need concrete plans for how to achieve those goals. Many of the District's bold plans have suffered in execution, so we need to lay out in detail an ambitious and achievable plan that will put all of our kids on a pathway to success and set meaningful, transparent benchmarks along the way to measure our progress; so far the strategic plan misses the mark.

13. What is your assessment of Local District Superintendent Ekchian? What changes, if any, would you like to see her make?

I have not yet had the opportunity to work directly with Local District Superintendent Ekchian, but am looking forward to working closely and constructively as partners, if I am elected to represent Board District 6. Given that we have not yet worked together, I would prefer not to make specific recommendations for changes but instead approach our collective work with an open mind.

I know, from conversations with educators and other community members, that Local District Superintendent Ekchian is very well-respected, responsive, and very knowledgeable about the needs of our schools given her deep experience within LAUSD. I hear similarly positive feedback about her staff.

14. What is your assessment of Local District Superintendent DelCueto? What changes, if any, would you like to see her make?

I have not yet had the opportunity to work directly with Local District Superintendent DelCueto, but am looking forward to working closely and constructively as partners, if I am elected to represent Board District 6. Given that we have not yet worked together, I would prefer not to make specific recommendations for changes but instead approach our collective work with an open mind.

From my conversations with residents and community members, I know that Local District Superintendent DelCueto is engaged closely with the community, is perceived as open, transparent, knowledgeable and well-respected. I appreciate her thorough and fair approach, use of research, and focus on kids when tackling any issue (such as her efforts to resolve the traffic/safety issues at Vista Del Valle in San Fernando).

15. The District budget is over \$8 billion and over \$13 billion if you include

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facilities. Each of you will receive discretionary office budgets of several hundreds of thousands of dollars. Please describe any experience you have reading, examining and/or tracking large budgets?

I have extensive experience in examining and tracking the education budget on a federal level, including helping to oversee multimillion dollar formulas and competitive grant programs at the U.S. Department of Education. The budget for two programs for special populations under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which I worked on, totaled approximately \$400 million in fiscal year 2016, in addition to the \$14 billion Title I Part A program which I helped support. I also directly oversaw the budget for competitive grant programs within my policy portfolio, setting priorities for spending based on what was going to yield the greatest impact for kids.

I also helped to develop the education section of President Obama's annual budget proposal and then successfully advocated for our budget priorities with Congress. As a part of the congressional appropriations process, I tracked the education budget during each stage of the process to analyze how the changes would affect our priorities and to strategically respond to advance educational opportunities for vulnerable kids.

16. Have you ever watched a board meeting? Why or why not? If so, what were your observations about the board, Superintendent, staff, and/or the meeting?

I have attended and watched a number of Board meetings. I have attended Board meetings to show support for my previous schools, and I watch Board meetings to stay informed (and because I enjoy diving into the details of education policy). I am also familiar with the ways LAUSD works from my time as a fellow for one of the members of the Board of Education and in serving as a commissioner on the LAUSD Commission on Human Relations, where we worked to help inform the Board's policy-making decisions.

In my observations, the conversations at Board meetings are not always constructive. Perhaps because of its public setting, some Board members doesn't always seem to feel comfortable tackling the toughest (but often, most important) issues in open session, when that's exactly what we need as LAUSD faces serious challenges and important policy decisions. I would also like to see the work of the committees better integrated into the meetings of the whole Board to ensure that that work informs and moves the Board discussions forward.

Furthermore, I support the recent change to address charter issues in the evening to increase accessibility, but having meaningful community input at Board meetings remains a challenge, particularly for Valley residents who would have to travel to Downtown Los Angeles. I would like to find other ways to ensure community input, including using technology to solicit feedback from parents and other stakeholders.

17. A) If you are faced with a situation in which a child accuses an adult of an unacceptable behavior and the only evidence is the word of the child, what do

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you do and why?

I take any accusations of unacceptable behavior very seriously. I believe that if a child is saying something we have to have faith in what he or she is telling us. We must be cautious, investigate thoroughly, and never jump to conclusions about guilt or innocence. I would support a leave of absence while an investigation is conducted and believe it's critical that any investigation proceed expeditiously.

Further, I believe we need to implement appropriate policies and take preventative measure wherever possible to avoid these kinds of situations. For instance, doors to our classrooms should always be open to ensure the safety of our students. We need thorough vetting and reviews of all school staff to ensure they will keep our kids safe. I support having more supportive staff like aides and co-teachers in the classroom, which not only help students learn, but also provides additional security against misconduct.

B) Does your answer change if there is some documentation that the employee has been counseled or disciplined for a similar accusation previously? If so, why?

If the employee has a pattern of similar unacceptable behavior, I would take more aggressive actions because we have further reason to believe these accusations are credible. In such a situation, I would support immediately removing the teacher from the classroom to conduct an investigation and taking appropriate disciplinary action in line with the due process procedures in place. Again, it's important that any investigation not be delayed and proceed expeditiously.

18. There are a few dismissals that come before the Board in which the teacher is simply a lousy teacher. They may have been a good teacher once but now they may be frequently absent, do not effectively address the standards, do not implement suggestions for improvement, and do not help their students succeed. Frequently, they and/or their advocate claims that they should be able to keep their job – especially if they are close to retirement. What is your position and why?

Dismissals should always be a last resort. We need to start by determining whether a teacher is having performance issues because he or she is struggling, in which case we need to provide support, or whether the issue is more significant. I believe that the vast majority of teachers want to be great, but that some need additional support to get there. In the rare cases in which teachers are consistently not serving their students well, that is unacceptable. Data show that even one year of an ineffective teacher can significantly impact whether students are performing at grade level and affect their long-term academic outcomes. I want to give teachers opportunities to improve, but if they are not making a full-faith effort to improve and give their best efforts to students, then they should be dismissed.

19. Is there anything that this questionnaire did not cover that you would like to include?

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I understand the day-to-day struggles of many working families, both personally and professionally. My mom is an immigrant from Perú and my dad, who was raised in a family of 10 by a single mom, is from Detroit. My grandpa, who recently immigrated to the U.S., is a unionized janitor. And my dad comes from a long line of unionized auto workers (UAW members), including his father and brothers. I paid my own way through college by working three jobs and over 50 hours a week, including as a cafeteria server and dishwasher. This perspective has stayed with me, and it's the reason that I've dedicated my professional career to advancing educational opportunities for vulnerable students. I believe that I can continue to have a positive impact on education in my community as a member of the School Board.