



**Candidate Questions for
Keller Independent School District Board of
Trustees**

Presented by Keller ISD Council of PTAs

Please submit your answers as a pdf to president@kellercpta.org by 04/24/2022

Answers will be publicized on KISD and KCPTA social media

Julie Nors, Place 2

1. What guidelines do you think should be adopted by Keller ISD with regard to bullying?

There should be a documented zero tolerance policy for bullying in KISD and the policy should be applied with integrity.

2. As a school board member, how would you respond to the efforts of special interest groups who advocate the censor of existing curriculum perceived by them to be in conflict with their personal beliefs?

As a school board member, I would need to discern with the entire board what is best for all 34,000 students in Keller ISD. I would be equally concerned for each student in Keller ISD, and would endeavor to make informed curriculum decisions in their best interest. I would listen to the professional educators as they present their recommendations following the community and teacher input process.

3. Statistics show child abuse is an increasing problem both nationally and locally. Do you believe that it is a legitimate function of public schools to inform students about their rights regarding physical and sexual abuse and the agencies to which they may turn to for help?

In developmentally and age appropriate ways, it is information that students need to have for their personal health and safety. I have attended the programming from Alliance for Children about Recognizing, Resisting, and Reporting, and found it to be an appropriate example for students.

4. Keller Independent School District has had to cut many programs, reduce staff, and has been unable to make all needed upgrades and refurbish its facilities due to inadequate funding. As a school board member, what action, if any, would you take to adequately fund our schools?

Allocation of the budget dollars must be accomplished with great care. The budget should look different every year, based on current needs. I would work with the board and the administration to be sure that we are applying the money in the places with the greatest direct student impact. Our teachers are the greatest asset and deserve to be paid as such. I will continue to advocate for fully funded public schools with our state legislature.

5. Specifically, would you support accepting federal funding (grants)?

I do not have any issue, as of today, with accepting federal funding as long as there are no conditions attached to the grants that would complicate things for KISD.

6. As parents, we will pull our children out of a class that has an incompetent teacher; however, as a school board, you are responsible for all children. How will you ensure that teachers are properly evaluated and held accountable?

Teacher evaluations are up to campus principals. If there is a teacher in need of assistance to be a more effective educator, it would begin at the campus level with administrative guidance. As a board member, I would be sure to participate in the conversations about goal setting and appropriate professional development.

7. Schools are valuable community resources. There is a growing movement to have schools become neighborhood resource centers, open to the community earlier in the morning and later in the evening for a variety of uses. Are you aware of this concept and would you support it? What activities would you like to see available during these times?

Keller ISD high schools are already centers of their communities. These buildings are rarely completely empty as they are used for student and community activities, like the Ft. Worth Symphony concert I attended this weekend. They are also used as polling places. A school is built by the community, for the community. Can I get some adult welding classes at KCAL?

8. How do you discuss topics where there is strong disagreement and remain civil? Said another way, how can the board work together with differing opinions?

I do not have any trouble remaining civil in a disagreement. I value civil discourse. I usually assume that we can come to an agreement, eventually. If we keep our focus on serving the students, we should be able to work together to reach an amicable decision.

9. If elected, once the Keller ISD School Board votes to approve an action or policy, what do you believe is your responsibility to that policy or action, especially if you did not support that policy or action?

Part of being a member of a board of directors is to contribute to the conversation and decision making. Once I've been able to give my input, and I listen to others provide theirs, a board would then vote. Even if my preference did not win the vote, I had my opportunity to make my point. After the vote, it would be my duty as a board member to accept the vote and support it.

10. The STAAR test is a requirement. All students must pass this test in order to graduate from high school. To ensure our students' success, what resources would you commit to?

I would be interested in seeing KISD utilize teachers who are willing to work some extra hours, for pay, to give the students who need some support the opportunity to pass the test the first time.

11. What is the appropriate relationship between the Keller ISD Governing Board and Site-Based Decision-Making Committees?

The CEIC and DEIC committees in Keller ISD are advisory boards to their local campus and to the district.

12. How important are fine arts and extracurricular activities such as athletics to overall education? How should they be funded?

Extracurricular activities help a child, from early childhood education through graduation, in more ways than just earning a trophy or learning an instrument. Teamwork, Self-reliance, Better academics, just to name a few benefits. There will never be enough money in the school budget to fund all of the top-notch programs in Keller ISD. Booster programs will always be necessary to supplement where needed.

13. What is your view of home school, private school, and charter school students participating in extracurricular activities in the public schools?

Students who do not attend public school full time may have access to the extracurricular activities, and that decision is up to the school board. If the student is not a full time, registered student in the school district, the district would need to be compensated for the full cost of the student's participation in the extracurricular activity.

14. How do you see Keller ISD responding to the competition of charter schools and private schools?

Keller ISD is a well known, highly rated school district. We don't have the proliferation of charter schools competition that you might see in Dallas or Ft. Worth ISDs. However, there are charter and private schools growing and moving within our boundaries. I look for KISD to continue to offer exceptional opportunities for every student. Public schools often offer programs that charters and private schools cannot.

For every student who disenrolls from Keller ISD, the district loses funding dollars from the state of Texas. Charter schools are like running dual school districts, with duplicated facility, administrative and educational staff without local board oversight. Private schools fill a need for some families who desire a different educational environment for their students. If you choose a private school for your family, I don't have any problem with it. However, I do not want a private school to receive our public school tax dollars.

15. How do you feel about the current teacher/student ratio and what options does Keller ISD have to change it if you feel that is necessary?

I would love to see smaller class sizes and therefore a lower teacher/student ratio. However, this requires more classroom space and more professional educators, and therefore more budget funds. The benefits to the students who have pandemic-induced gaps to fill, though, would be realized more quickly.

16. Do you have any specific changes you want to see made in our schools' curriculum?

As a parent of a dyslexic student, and as a trained reading specialist, I am always looking for beginning readers to learn the rules of the English language with research-based curriculum, offering intensive, structured, phonics-based instruction. I am interested in a curriculum that allows teachers to teach the TEKS to the children sitting in that classroom, at a pace that matches their needs, with time to scaffold learning for the best chance at mastery.

17. What is your view of school board/administration's relationships as they relate to management of school district operations?

The KISD Board of Trustees is charged with employing the superintendent. The rest of the school district operations fall to the superintendent and the district leaders in the chain of command. A school board should not micromanage the school district. Professional educators are the ones to manage the school district operations. The school board provides the goals, the budget and the oversight.

There is research looking into whether school boards and educational quality are closely related. I believe a healthy school board leads to a healthy administration. The administration then has a quality working relationship with the teachers and support personnel. If the adults have things in order, then the focus can be on the students and their opportunities for academic growth. A highly effective school system contributes to the growth and success of the entire community. A divisive school board is a risk to the community as it sows discord in the entire system. A school board should be composed of people with a variety of professions, skills, and backgrounds in order to be able to consider the needs of the entire district. I look forward to having the opportunity to represent all KISD children as a member of the board.

18. What is your position regarding self-esteem and self-worth educational programs?

Self-esteem and student achievement are closely related. Students with high self esteem generally have greater success in school. Parents and schools can work together to help support a student who might need some help. A student needs to feel safe and cared for in school in order to learn.

19. How can the governing board of Keller ISD improve its image in the community?

One of the board responsibilities is to communicate with their community. As an educator, I see an opportunity to teach our community how the school board is required to operate, where they can find the law, policy and procedures to read for themselves, and what the board does. We need to remember that the school board is the Board of Directors for a school district of 34,000 students and 4000 staff.

20. In the face of declining resources, what projects do you foresee for future bond elections and projects?

Keller ISD is in the final phase of the 2019 Bond program. I've participated in the entire process from the Long-Range Facility Needs committee to being a member of the Citizen's Bond Oversight Committee, seeing the projects complete almost on time, and on budget, even during a pandemic with catastrophic supply chain and skyrocketing cost issues. Congratulations to the team for pulling off what is probably a miracle. The committee identified 11 major projects for the 2019 Bond. There were 66 major projects on the list and the community prioritized them to figure out where to start. KISD buildings are aging, and they need to be managed well so they can live out their lifespan (it's about 50 years.) Future projects should include building maintenance, special education spaces, and safety upgrades, as necessary, just to name a few.

