

SCHOOLS

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KRIS WILHELM

What qualifies you to serve as a board member?

I'm concerned/ passionate about our kids and teachers. With a long history here, I'm committed to this valley. I have a background in PR as well as training in science. I intend to study data, making informed decisions based on facts, not ideology. I want to represent the people.

What are your top goals?

My top goal initially will be to listen and learn, as I know I'm coming from the outside looking in. Once I'm settled, I hope to work on ways we can better inform the public about decisions made by the board. Second, the district needs to address the validity and purpose of the new "Smarter Balanced"

Tests. Already, numbers of parents have "Opted Out" their children this spring. The district should not disregard this message. Third, for parents & teachers, we should aim for budget stability, regardless of erratic ebbs & flows of funding.

What are your thoughts on the District budget situation, current and future?

There seems to be a constant budget roller coaster. Weeks ago, local headlines warned we were projected \$900,000 in the whole next year, which threatened teacher layoffs. This week revealed a surplus! This kind of message isn't fair to teachers, parents and taxpayers. We have the highest education spending in the world (\$11,000 per capita student), and yet we're still struggling? With unfunded state and federal mandates, it's unconscionable that local taxpayers take up the burden, or kids will suffer. It's

common sense that we put strong pressure on the state/ federal government to fully fund K-12 education.

What are your thoughts on Common Core and Standardized Testing?

Sold as an effort to raise standards, the federal government bought into the plan benefiting curriculum/testing corporations. Emphasizing testing, instead of learning, has effectively robbed valuable teaching time. Teachers are scrambling, kids confused. I don't disagree with standards. However, we must question this unreasonable new test's validity and purpose.

How can the District best meet the needs of the Hispanic community?

HRCSd does an amazing job serving our Hispanic community. Parents receive communications in Spanish and English. Many grants have been generated supporting ESL. Every school

has a Migrant Liaison to reach families. State funding supports ESL. We should seek input to further incorporate the Hispanic community into our vision.

What is the main challenge to the District in the next 3-5 years and how would the board prepare for it and address it?

Unfortunately, budget instability will probably remain the biggest issue. It shouldn't be when you see the money that's wasted elsewhere. Children should come first; they are our future. Our board should put pressure on representatives to fully fund K-12 education. Unfunded mandates should not be accepted. We should trust the teachers who instruct our children. Ultimately, the Board should represent the people of this community, not the state/federal government or administrators. Otherwise, what's the point in a local board?



Photo by Kirby Neumann-Rea

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