

DPSC Endorsement Panel Report – October 10, 2019

**SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 4**

NAME	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEWED BY PANEL	RECOMMENDED	DPSC MEMBER?
James Brashear				
Steve Hansen (i)	(ineligible)	(ineligible)	(ineligible)	
Katie Valenzuela	X	X	X	X

**Interview Panel Recommendation:**

Endorse Katie Valenzuela (Ayes: 4; Noes: 0).

**Panel Members:** Anna Molander (chair), Orlando Fuentes, Phillip Kim, Jillynn Molina.

**Panel Report:**

Impressive! Katie Valenzuela was interviewed on September 29, 2019 by a panel consisting of Anna Molander, Phillip Kim, Jillynn Molina-Williams, and Orlando Fuentes. She was accompanied by her manager Beau. We each had a copy of her DPSC questionnaire.

Katie’s education and training are in community development, she has lived in midtown and oak park, and has extensive experience in community-based organizations that address housing, community development, partnerships, and urban planning. For such a young candidate, it’s hard to imagine anyone squeezing any more relevant education and experience into such a short career especially given the responsibilities of a councilmember in a very urban environment.

She is very well-versed in the issues-of-the-day now facing the City of Sacramento and has already been in statewide and local leadership positions addressing those concerns such as the California Environmental Justice Alliance, the Sacramento Housing Alliance, the AB32 Environmental Justice Advisory Committee, the Sacramento Community Land Trust, and so much more. She has an open-door policy for constituents and favors a city council that will be proactive in its outreach to communities before measures are brought up for decision-making.

“I am a strong progressive that is not afraid to stand up for what’s right.”

Should she win her seat for city council, she will have a higher profile, a bright future, and will be a credit to our party and our members. With her combined questionnaire and interview, Katie Valenzuela is enthusiastically recommended for endorsement by the DPSC Executive Board for the position of Sacramento City Council District 4 representative.

**Executive Board Recommendation:**

Uphold the interview panel’s recommendation to endorse Katie Valenzuela (Ayes: 5; Noes: 1; Abstentions: 1).

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**SACRAMENTO CITY COUNCIL, DISTRICT 8**

NAME	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEWED BY PANEL	RECOMMENDED	DPSC MEMBER?
Les Simmons	X	X		
Mai Vang	X	X		
Betty Williams				

**Interview Panel Recommendation:**

Adopt a “neutral” position (Ayes: 5; Noes: 0).

**Panel Members:** Maureen Craft (chair), Belinda Beeks-Malone, Jillynn Molina, Tamika L’Ecluse, Phillip Kim.

**Panel Report:**

On Sunday, September 29, 2019, the panel interviewed the candidates for District 8 - Mai Vang and Les Simmons. Both candidates showed strengths and weaknesses in different areas. The panel felt that based on the interview and the work that both candidates have respectively contributed to District 8, it would be in our best interest to stay neutral.

After deliberation, a motion was made by Phil Kim to take a 'neutral position' in the Sacramento City Council race for District 8. The motion was second by Tamika L'Ecluse. Maureen Craft called for the vote. The panel unanimously recommended a "neutral" position for the Sacramento city Council, District 8 race.

**Executive Board Recommendation:**

No recommendation – open ballot (Ayes: 5; Noes: 1; Abstentions: 1).

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**SACRAMENTO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION, AREA 7**

NAME	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEWED BY PANEL	RECOMMENDED	DPSC MEMBER?
Harold Fong (i)	X	X	X	X

**Interview Panel Recommendation:**

Endorse Harold Fong (Ayes: 3; Noes: 0).

**Panel Members:** Andres Ramos (chair), Maureen Craft, Anna Molander.

**Panel Report:**

Mr. Fong is running for reelection to the SCOE board. In his next term he would like to continue his work on adult education and improving oversight of school districts by there is data and research backing up school district LCAPs. He indicated that during his next term there would likely be a search for the next superintendent. Mr. Fong talked about how the expulsion rate is low but the real challenge is students voluntarily dropping out of SCOE schools and the need to combat that. He emphasized the struggle he faces on the board since charter schools exercise a lot of control. He would like to see more disaggregated data from charter schools and believes that SCOE or local school districts should not bear the financial burden when charter schools fail that were approved by the state.

The panel appreciates that Mr. Fong thinks about all children, especially children of color and those with disabilities, in his decision-making. We recognize the important role that SCOE plays and the need to have board members who will ask tough questions, seek necessary data, and demand accountability. Accordingly, we recommend endorsement of Harold Fong.

**Executive Board Recommendation:**

Uphold the interview panel’s recommendation to endorse Harold Fong (Ayes: 7; Noes: 0).

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**TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, AREA 1**

NAME	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEWED BY PANEL	RECOMMENDED	DPSC MEMBER?
Michael Baker (i)	X	X	X	

**Interview Panel Recommendation:**

Endorse Michael Baker (Ayes: 3; Noes: 0).

**Panel Members:** Andres Ramos (chair), Maureen Craft, Orlando Fuentes.

**Panel Report:**

Mr. Baker talked about how he grew up in the Twin Rivers community and was recruited to run for school board years ago by teachers. He's proud of the changes that have come since he's been in office but believes there's more to be done. He works to have a good relationship with the superintendent, but doesn't always agree with him. He wants to work to ensure that undocumented students feel safe and show up to school and is committed to fighting proposed school closures.

The panel appreciates Mr. Baker's strong desire to prevent harmful school closures and his concern of the lack of African American representation in the executive staff. We see his passion for kids and the community, and accordingly recommend endorsement of Mr. Baker.

**Executive Board Recommendation:**

Uphold the interview panel's recommendation to endorse Michael Baker (Ayes: 7; Noes: 0).

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**TWIN RIVERS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, AREA 5**

NAME	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRE	INTERVIEWED BY PANEL	RECOMMENDED	DPSC MEMBER?
Basim Elkarra (i)	X	X	X	X

**Interview Panel Recommendation:**

Endorse Basim Elkarra (Ayes: 3; Noes: 0).

**Panel Members:** Andres Ramos (chair), Maureen Craft, Anna Molander.

**Panel Report:**

Mr. Elkarra told the panel that he had never thought about running for school board until he was approached by community leaders to run at a time when Twin Rivers desperately needed bold leadership. He is glad to see a lot of good change in the district and the reduction in the expulsion rate for students of color, but knows that there's still more work to do. He emphasized the need to elect more school board members who are committed to fighting for kids. He discussed his relationship with the superintendent as being one of respect where he will readily express disagreement privately.

The panel appreciates Mr. Elkarra's desire to elect other like-minded board members to support his work. We like that he reads over every expulsion report to ensure that student expulsions are taken only when appropriate. We recommend endorsement of Mr. Elkarra.

**Executive Board Recommendation:**

Uphold the interview panel's recommendation to endorse Basim Elkarra (Ayes: 7; Noes: 0).