

Democratic Party of Sacramento County
Questionnaire: School Board Candidates

NOTE: The answers you provide on this questionnaire will be made available to DPSC members and will become public. Questions that are underlined are yes/no questions and do not require an explanation unless your response is “no.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Candidate Name	Basim Elkarra
Office Sought	Twin Rivers USD Trustee, Area 5
FPPC ID	1375015
Occupation	Executive Director
Employer	CAIR-Sacramento Valley
Campaign Email	info@elkarra4kids.com
Campaign Phone	916-538-3308
Campaign Website & Social Media	Elkarra4kids.com
Campaign Manager or Contact Person	Basim Elkarra
Campaign Consultants (list all)	Natalie Bruton-Yenovkian / Chris Chafee
Anticipated Budget & Funds Raised	\$50k+ / \$20k+
Are you a dues-paying DPSC member?	Yes

Optional demographic questions:

Racial/Ethnic Identity	Arab American
Gender Identity/Pronouns	He His
LGBTQ+?	
Veteran?	
Young Democrat (35 or under)?	
Union Member?	

Please list all offices you have held or organizations to which you belong or in which you have held a leadership position, and what position you held:

Office/Organization	Position Held	Duration
Twin Rivers USD	Trustee / Clerk	2016-Current
CA Democratic Party	E-Board / Chair, Affirmative Action Chair	2009 – Current / 2011- Current
CA Complete Count Commission	Commissioner	2018-Current

You may attach your biography, a list of current endorsements, and any campaign literature as a single file. Please name your file: lastname/office sought.

ISSUE QUESTIONS

Section 1 – Viability & Campaign

1. Do you plan to purchase a ballot statement?

Yes

2. Will all your campaign materials be printed by a union printer?

Yes

3. Have you always been a registered Democrat? If no, please state what else you were registered as, when, for how long, and why.

Yes

4. What will your ballot designation be? Incumbent

5. What are your primary sources for fundraising? Please list your top three campaign contributors. Since 2015: Los Rios College Federation of Teachers P.A.F.C. / Sacramento County Democratic Central Committee / Political Action for Classified Employees of California School Employees Small Contributor Committee

6. Do you voluntarily decline contributions from any particular contributor or class of contributors? If so, list who and why. **Developers that have any projects or future projects with the school district.**

7. Have you ever endorsed, contributed to, campaigned for, or otherwise supported a candidate for election or appointment to a partisan or nonpartisan office that was not a member of the Democratic Party? If so, list who, for which office, and why? Please be specific. **No**

8. Have you ever been investigated (by a governmental agency or private entity) for allegations that you engaged in discrimination, harassment, abuse, or retaliation? If so, what was the result of the investigation? **No**

9. Is there anything in your history on the subject of discrimination, harassment, abuse, or retaliation, which, if revealed, would bring you, your proposed office, or the Democratic Party into disrepute? **No**

10. How long have you lived in the district and community you seek to represent?
Since 2005

11. Out of the last five elections, how many have you voted in? **All**

12. Why did you decide to run for this office and what do you plan to accomplish during your tenure?

I want to improve the quality of education that our children receive in Twin Rivers School District, provide them with more avenues for success, and improve transparency in the district's financial decisions and contracting.

13. What sets you apart from the other candidates for this office?

As a father of five young children, this race is personal for me. I want my children, and those of all the parents of the Twin Rivers Unified School District, to receive the world-class education that they are entitled to. Every child deserves to have the opportunity to succeed and thrive in Sacramento, and I want to make the dreams of the next generation a reality.

14. If you are an incumbent, what have you accomplished during your tenure? If you are a non-incumbent, what have you accomplished in the community prior to running?

- Successfully advocated for adding 7th (2019) and 8th (2020) grade to the Regency Park Elementary Campus.
- Voted down job cuts to classified employees.
- Advocating for building a new school in Greenbriar and completing ENEC as part of any bond approval.

Section 2 - District & Governance

15. Are you familiar with your school district's budget? **Yes** If so, how large is it, what are its principal revenue sources, and what are its largest expenditure categories? **348,671,898 / LCFF / Certified Salaries**

16. Does your district conduct its elections by-district (rather than at-large)? **Yes** If not, would you support moving its elections to by-district?

17. How will you work with educators, parents, and community advocates? What will you do to be accessible to community members and other stakeholders? **I meet regularly and make myself accessible to all stakeholders through in person meetings, email and cell phone.**

18. What will you do to promote transparency and ethics at the school district? By reading board materials in advance of all meetings and not being afraid to ask difficult questions to promote transparency.
19. What whistle-blower protections should there be for public employees and others who expose corruption, sexual harassment, or other illegal/unethical activity? Full protection.
20. What is the most disadvantaged area or constituency in your district? What is your plan for ensuring that that area or constituency receives the representation and services it needs? Del Paso Heights. Supported all efforts to modernize facilities and expediate the fixing of lead in the water at Grant high school.

Section 3 – Civil Rights

21. Do you support a woman’s right to comprehensive healthcare, including the right to choose and access contraception, and the right to obtain a medically safe, legal abortion?

Yes
22. Do you support giving undocumented immigrants living in the United States a path towards citizenship?

Yes
23. Do you believe that LGBTQ people should have equal rights (including, but not limited to, in employment, housing, education, and marriage)?

Yes
24. Do you support background checks for all firearm and ammunition sales?

Yes
25. Do you believe that capital punishment should be abolished?

Yes
26. What will you do to prevent bullying or harassment of LGBTQ students because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity? **Ensure board policies are proactively updated to protect LGBTQ students.**
27. What will you do to end discrimination in access to, and the provision of, high quality education?

28. What will you do to close the pay gap? Supported and lobbied for the equal pay act.
29. What will you do to protect immigrant communities? Do you support the adoption of a safe haven school district policy? **As a civil rights advocate I have lobbied at a federal and state level and launched an Immigrants Rights Center to serve and protect our immigrant communities. Yes.**
30. Do you support placing limits on free speech or assembly by educators or students at school? **No** If so, how would you decide what those limits should be?
31. Is there a school-to-prison pipeline in your school district? If so, what will you do to close that pipeline? By supporting restorative justice.
32. What are the issues affecting students of color in your district and will you do to address those issues? Continue supporting the funding of after school and summer programs and partnerships with organizations that help our Latino, Black and Hmong students succeed.
33. Do you support the hiring of student resource officers (SROs) in your school district? If so, what oversight will you put in place to hold SROs accountable, and what role would the community play in that? N/A

TRUSD has a Police Department. We work to ensure that the PD's primary focus is create a safe environment for students, teachers and staff and not for enforcement.

34. What will you do to ensure that special needs students receive the services they need to succeed? Ensuring that they are no cuts to special education and to increase resources for teachers and families.
35. What will you do to ensure that English Learner (EL) students receive the support they need to succeed? By supporting the increase of dual immersion programs and the hiring of more para-educators.

How will you ensure that non-English speaking parents are able to fully participate in their child's education (including participation at public meetings)? Insured that this is addressed in board policies that translated materials as well as robo-calls to parents are regularly used.

Section 4 – Healthcare

36. Do you support Medicare-for-All?

Yes

37. What is your position on parental notification prior to a minor terminating a pregnancy? It infringes on a women's right to choose and the right to privacy.
38. What measures would you support to ensure adequate mental health services for all? By increasing the number of counselors at impacted sites.
39. What will you do to help address high child mortality rates in the Black community in Sacramento County? By strengthening our partnerships with local nonprofits that serve the Black community.
40. What will you do to ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals at school and at home? All students in the district currently have access to a healthy breakfast and lunch at all sites regardless of income level.

Section 5 – Good Jobs for All

41. Do you support the right of workers to unionize by card check?

Yes

42. Have you attended the Sacramento Central Labor Council Candidate Academy?

No

43. Describe your relationship with organized labor. **I work closely and advocate for worker rights as a civil rights advocate.**
44. Which labor unions will you be interacting with in your role? Many members of the CLC and SSBCTC. What is your plan for building collaborative relationships with both union and nonunion employees? To be accessible to hear their concerns and be their advocate as a board member.
45. Will you support the adoption of project labor agreements or community workforce training agreements for your school district? **Yes**
46. What is the role of the office that you seek in promoting good jobs and economic development for our region? Building new schools will promote new jobs and increase housing.
47. What solutions would you propose to solve budget shortfalls and how would you prioritize the needs of your constituents in deciding what to cut first? By cutting positions at the management level first and avoiding cuts that directly impact teachers, classified employees and students.

48. Is income inequality an issue in your community? If so, what steps will you take to address it? Yes, by giving more students access to take courses at Los Rios Community College to save students and families money in the future and by providing more CTE programs.

Section 6 - Local Economy & Public Resources

49. Under what circumstances would you support raising revenues to support your school district by means of a bond or parcel tax measure? **If it will build the new schools and facilities that were promised to the community as well modernize some of the older schools.**
50. Under what conditions would you support the privatization of public or natural resources (e.g., publicly-owned buildings, schools)? **I do not support the privatization of public or natural resources.**
51. What is your position on "public/private partnerships"? **Used when there is no in house capability in the district by contracting out in a transparent and open process and by giving priority to local and minority owned entities.**
52. When is it appropriate to use public money or tax incentives to subsidize private business? Seldom and if at all and only when it can be guaranteed that it will not affect or diminish any public services.
53. What is your plan to support and encourage local small business development? By contracting with local and minority owned businesses.

Section 7 – Environment

54. Do you support the construction of the Delta tunnels?
- No, the focus needs to be on investments to protect and preserve the Delta and its wildlife.**
55. What will you do to address climate change and reduce our carbon footprint in your role? **Supported the increase of electric school buses in the district.**

Section 8 – Education

56. Do you believe that public adult education, colleges, and universities should be tuition free?
- Yes**
57. Please explain LCFF and LCAP in three sentences or fewer. The Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) is the method of how schools are funded in which

parental involvement in planning and decision making is required. The Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) is a critical component of the LCFF intended to be a comprehensive planning tool to help all students succeed.

Have you read your district's LCAP? **Yes**

58. Do you support Restorative Justice and funding such programs? **Yes**

59. What will you do to minimize bullying and promote tolerance in school?

We need to vigorously promote equality, tolerance, and diversity in our public schools by making sure board policies are proactively updated. America is a diverse nation of individuals, whose various strengths make our nation stronger as a whole. We also need to stay ahead of changes in technology that have enabled the spread of cyber-bullying.

60. What role do you believe charter schools should play in public education?
Dependent Charters serve as hubs of innovation where new techniques and methods of teaching are tested.

61. Do you support reforming teacher tenure, due process protections, or teacher salary and benefits? Please explain.

62. Is there an achievement gap in your district? **Yes** If so, what will you do to close it? By continuing to fund local nonprofits that run after school and summer programs.

63. Is your school district de facto segregated? **No** If so, what will you do to end that?

64. Do you support ethnic studies? How would you implement ethnic studies in your school district? Yes, by making it a requirement in order to graduate.

65. What will you do to ensure that school district staff (administrative, certificated, and classified staff) are culturally competent and reflect the diversity of your district? By encouraging the hiring of diverse staff at all levels especially in management.

66. How will you ensure that students have equal access to any school that offers a unique academic program (e.g., magnet school, academy, etc.) in your district? By increasing resources of those schools to grow and attract more students.

Section 9 – Housing

67. Do you support the adoption of rent control and just cause eviction protection?

Yes

68. What is your plan to address student homelessness in your community? **To make sure they receive extra resources, support and additional counseling services.**

Section 10 – Transportation and Public Transit

69. Would you support a local tax measure to fund transportation and public transit?
Yes If so, which specific form of local taxation would you support? **Additional Gas Tax**

70. Do you support providing universal free transit passes to students in partnership with Regional Transit (or other local transit agencies)? **Yes**

Signature: 

Date: 9/26/2019