



League of Women Voters
of Plano/Collin County
www.lwvcollin.org

Voters Guide

May 8, 2010, Local Elections Plano ISD

Early voting – April 26–May 4, 2010

Election day – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

This Voters Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide includes contested races in which two or more candidates are running. All candidates for the respective offices were invited to participate. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, “No response from the candidate” is printed. Responses were limited to 100 words and truncated with /// after the 100th word. The candidates appear in ballot order.

Candidates for Plano ISD Board of Trustees, Place 1

3 year term, elected at large. Responsible for final decisions regarding school district policies, personnel, textbooks, expenditures and growth management. The board adopts a budget, levies taxes and submits bond issues to finance construction projects.

Bart Ridley

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

Plano Senior High
UT-Austin, B.B.A.
Baylor Law School

My legal training, and 15 years experience in the courtroom provide me with the skills necessary to make a critical analysis of issues, ask tough questions, take a stand when necessary for an unpopular position, and ultimately work to resolve thorny problems for the benefit of all involved.

My volunteer efforts have focused on issues benefiting all students of PISD:

- Leadership Plano
- PISD Educator Internship
- 9 years on Board of Plano International Preschool
- 6 years on Board of PISD Education Foundation
- 2008 PISD Bond Task Force.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

As a taxpayer, I understand who must pay for our educational system, and what we expect as a return on our investment. As a Trustee, I will use the concept of "living within our means" as a guiding principle. While the District currently maintains a surplus budget, we will need to prepare for the eventuality of a deficit. I will approach any deficit by asking administrators to develop recommendations that have the least impact on expenditures for classroom instruction through the use of existing resources.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

While I like the idea of rewarding teachers for student performance, I believe that any bonus compensation for teachers should be based upon actual student progress as opposed to student mastery of a standardized test. I do not believe the current system actually rewards all deserving teachers. Increased compensation will motivate some teachers, but the best teachers are those that truly love their job. My belief is that our dollars could be better spent by offering meaningful employment benefits, such as the District's child care center, to attract and retain quality teachers.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

I support an Education First Philosophy, meaning that as parents and educators, we must set the expectation that our students will be prepared for the rigors of college or advanced career training. The district program AVID, which increases opportunities for higher education to students in the academic middle that might not otherwise exist, is a prime example of the types of programs I would ask educators and administrators to support and develop for all levels of learners.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

PISD's dropout rate is very low. Nevertheless, we must continue efforts to make school interesting and beneficial to students at risk of dropout. I would advocate developing programs designed to make attending school more viable for at risk students. For example, partnering with institutions such as Collin College to develop programs aimed at keeping at risk students in school by offering advanced career training that interests them and allows them to increase their income earning potential following graduation, and along the way, may enlighten them that finishing high school is the first step toward unlimited opportunities afforded by education.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

PISD has partnered with a local hospital to institute a pilot fitness program for Fifth graders at six elementary schools designed to help students establish good exercise and eating habits at an early age. Based on the early success of this program, I would anticipate that it will ultimately be expanded throughout the District's

elementary campuses. Making good food choices starts at home, but the District must encourage students to make good food choices at school. While some progress has been made in this area, there is certainly room for improvement.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

The District is in the process of forming an Academy Visioning Committee which will research and study the concept of a District Magnet School. I understand that magnet schools have worked well in other communities, but I believe before making any decision on this issue, the District administration and Board of Trustees should receive more input from students, parents, educators, community members, and taxpayers as to whether a magnet school is desired by our community, and if so, what students would be served by the school, and what is best for all children of our District.

Tammy Richards

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

Throughout my 28 year career, I have worked in support of education. I would like to use the unique combination of my business experience, from my career in Texas Instruments' Educational Technology division, and my education knowledge, from my work at Southern Methodist University, as an advocate for the children of Plano. I have an engineering degree from Texas A&M and a MBA from Harvard. I have worked with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas State Board of Education. I have lived in Plano for 22 years, and I have been a Plano ISD mom for 11 years.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

Plano ISD's operational budget is determined by a funding formula from the Texas Legislature. Within these limits, Plano ISD budgets a greater amount for instruction than similar school districts and is extremely efficient with its non-instructional costs. For next year's budget, Plano plans to reduce departmental budgets by 1%. Plano also reduced staff positions last year. These actions, coupled with a modest surplus from last year, will help the district weather the current downturn. For the future, the Legislative must either increase funding for public education or allow more local control.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

Great teachers are the foundation of our educational systems. Education research from the Gates Foundation indicates that a well-supported teacher in the classroom produces more gains in student achievement than any other investment. Plano has

implemented the state merit pay plan in a manner that does not require school district matching. Teachers at 28 campuses voted to accept the plan, which targeted the schools with the greatest needs. Teachers in core subjects, such as reading, English, math, and science would participate. Teachers in other subject areas would also participate if their campus made gains.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

We should provide an exemplary education for all students. Whether students are college-bound or not, they will need skills in reading, writing, math, and science. When I was a high school physics student, my father was studying for his aircraft repair and inspection license. We both were doing physics; mine was just a bit more theoretical. Plano should provide students with a comprehensive education so that they will have every option open to them. For some that will be matriculation at a four-year college. For others it will mean pursuing training and licensure in a skilled trade.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

Plano ISD has a very low dropout rate. Out of a district of 55,000 students, 60 students dropped out last year. Plano ISD begins its dropout prevention in the elementary grades. Teachers, counselors, and principals monitor the students and their progress to ensure that students are helped before their struggles become overwhelming. Early intervention is key to ensure that students continue to make adequate academic progress. Additionally, in 2005, Plano opened the Larry Guinn Special Programs Center to offer programs for at-risk students. The Guinn Center offers accelerated programs for seniors and dropout recovery programs and provides GED services.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

Plano ISD is currently piloting a fitness program supported by Texas Health Plano and designed by the Cooper Institute. This program, currently for the elementary grades, teaches a healthy lifestyle and encourages healthy habits. Rewards and incentives are used, and each student's progress is posted for parental review on the MyPISD portal. It is hoped that this program will encourage students to remain active as they enter their teen years.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

School finance will continue to be an issue. The state sets the district's budget every two years. Virtually no money is included for growth. A quality education is not free, and the students streaming into our school districts have increasingly challenging needs. Twenty-five percent of the new students enrolling last year in Plano ISD were socioeconomically disadvantaged students. Typically, these students will require additional support to achieve their educational goals. Long term Texas will recover its investment in public education through a well-educated

workforce that will bring economic development to our state, but the upfront cost must be met.

Robert Canright

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

Voters can consider me the best qualified candidate because I am the only candidate who has taught in Texas public schools and done research and development at high tech firms. I have worked with scientists and engineers from across America and the globe. I understand what our children will need to succeed, and I can critique the curriculum. Go to my website to read my bio or see my list of technical publications. I am a world-class problem solver. Developing a plan to educate our children to prosper in the difficult times ahead is the problem I want to solve.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

We should try to avoid teacher layoffs.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

All our teachers should be good teachers. Plano should not have to resort to the methods discussed for inner-city districts.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

All our students should be college ready whether they are college-bound or not. I asked my plumber what it takes to become a plumber. He said the process includes an 8 hour written exam that has an 89% failure rate. I'll bet a study of the people who fail the plumber's exam would show a large percentage who are not college ready. By college ready I mean a student could enroll in a college without having to take either remedial math or remedial English. Our students can be college ready without a 4th year of science.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

Flaws in the elementary school curriculum for math and English become an insurmountable barrier for some children. Connected Math in middle-school will discourage and frustrate children who are already behind in math and put them in a frame of mind where they are just waiting for the right moment to dropout. Correcting the curriculum problems in elementary school and canceling the Connected Math program will help reduce our dropout problem.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

The middle-class economy has been shrinking for years and continues to shrink. A lack of jobs will be a greater threat to our children's future than obesity. It is because I have spent many years in corporate research and development that I know America has a far greater need for good leadership in business and government than it has need of more scientists and engineers. The middle-class economy is contracting because there are not enough new businesses being established and grown into world-class companies. We must educate our children to start and grow world-class businesses.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

When I first ran for the school board I said, "We must prepare our children for a future beyond our imagination." The Wall Street melt down of 2008 and the jobless recovery of 2010 are a foretaste of that future that was unimaginable when I first ran for this position. Dangerous economic pressures continue to build. We must educate our children to understand the ways of wealth and power. Our children must study economics, finance, and history. They must study history to avoid the failures that have brought down the greatest civilizations. Let's prepare our children.

Candidates for Plano ISD Board of Trustees, Place 2

3 year term, elected at large. Responsible for final decisions regarding school district policies, personnel, textbooks, expenditures and growth management. The board adopts a budget, levies taxes and submits bond issues to finance construction projects.

Raj Menon

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

I have been preparing for this job for a very long time. Having earned 3 Master's degrees (in Engineering and Business) and a Ph.D., education has allowed me to be successful. I have actively volunteered at the school and on the PTA board at Daffron Elementary for over five years. I have served on PISD's Diversity Advisory Committee for three years. My international background, education, technology proficiency, leadership traits, and professional and volunteer work experience allows me to bring a unique perspective to the board.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

In one word, "yes!" We have to do whatever it takes to stay fiscally responsible and to ensure that every dollar we spend goes towards maximizing student achievement. That is easier said than done - because we have to sometimes make difficult trade-offs. We are fortunate that we have a healthy fund balance for now - but dipping into that can't keep going on forever. So we should keep looking for revenue sources

that make sense for this community, while at the same time tweaking costs and cutting non-core expenditures wherever it makes sense.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

Teachers are the backbone of our education system and we should continue to invest in their development and reward their performance. In education, the pay-for-performance relationship is highly nuanced. While, student testing and evaluation of test scores is important, linking teacher pay to performance, based on how performance is defined, could lead to an over-reliance on test scores, shifting the emphasis even more in favor of testing rather than learning. At PISD we have some great examples of pay-for-performance working well - linked to the MAP testing - especially when teachers are involved throughout the process.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

While in my own background, I cannot imagine a time when I wasn't focused on a college education, I do recognize that with increasing diversity of our student population, we are going to have more and more kids who don't fit the traditional education or college-bound model. Today's learning models are student-driven, rather than teacher-driven. We need to meet kids where they are, recognize their strengths, interests and abilities. In secondary education, we need to provide students with a choice of "relevant" courses that will prepare them to be lifelong learners and be successful and productive citizens of the world.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

I am passionate about the mission of providing an excellent education for ALL children. In that sense, having any "dropouts" in the system can be tragic. Dropouts can occur when a student or a family has lost hope that the education system will work for them. PISD has several successful programs that address at-risk students and I have personally heard success stories from some of these students. We must keep doing what works, and keep education relevant to 21st century student needs to keep them engaged.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

"A healthy mind in a healthy body." That's really one of the age old truths. We have to (1) improve health, nutrition and fitness awareness among kids and parents (2) encourage and improve physical activity levels among children (3) provide better food and nutrition choices in schools and (4) monitor and track student health. I am glad to see that we are starting the education process early in elementary schools. Again this is a complex problem and I am not sure there is a one-size-fits-all type solution.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

My vision for Plano ISD is:

- To prepare students to be globally competitive through 21st century learning and technology
- To address the growing diversity of needs in the student population, and
- To advocate fiscal responsibility to maximize student achievement for every dollar spent.

We should continue to focus on differentiated instruction and student-driven learning. In a world of increasing diversity, we need to meet kids where they are, recognize their strengths, their needs, and match those with curricula and pedagogical techniques to produce graduates who will be successful in our community and in the world.

Paul Kaminsky

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

I am currently a PISD Substitute teacher. Prior to this, I was a parent/volunteer for 10 years and proudly a “class mom” for several of my daughter’s classes. In addition to my teaching background, I have an MBA. I have served on an elected homeowner’s association board and politically appointed to a county board. I am a retired US Army Warrant Officer and clearly understand the necessity of being a team player. If elected to this position, I intend to be a full time trustee dedicated to making Plano ISD the best school district operating in this country.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

The district should weather the current financial downturn by establishing financial priorities around good teachers. Teachers are the cornerstone of education and must be priority one for Plano ISD. Yes, there may come times when other services, projects, and programs are put on hold. Hopefully, any such actions would be temporary.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state’s merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district’s funds?

I do not believe money makes great teachers, however if monies are available teachers deserve to benefit. The great teachers, whom I have met, simply love to teach. It shows in their attitudes and with their students. They would tell you their reward is seeing their students succeed or understand a concept. These teachers must become the benchmark and the teaching corps built around them. They must be fully supported and recognized by administrators and the school board.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

PISD should prepare all students for success by actively guiding students along their grade school path. As a student progresses through PISD, administrators/teachers should be constantly looking for signs of problems especially during elementary school years. Should a problem be detected, a corrective action should be recommended hopefully keeping the student on track. Careful observation could also be great tool for finding gifted children.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

Developing a technical trade school should reduce the dropout rate. Currently, there are many students who will not go on to college for many reasons. As these students progress through the grades, I imagine a sense of frustration sets in when they realize they cannot go to college because of poor grades or lack of money. By providing a college alternative, the dropout rate should be reduced and could increase tech/career-ready high school graduates.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

PISD should address obesity from K - 12. Every student in PISD should have one hour of physical education every school day. In addition to this physical hour, PISD should actively encourage a healthy life style program supported by posters, events, and demonstrations. Also, teachers and staff members should also be encouraged to participate in fitness programs.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

The most important issue for the next three years and beyond is providing quality education with shrinking property tax revenues compounded by higher federal taxes and fees. In reality, taxpayers are being crushed by taxes. I do not believe assessing higher property taxes when the school system comes up short is always the answer. Raising property taxes is the absolute last resort.

Carrolyn Moebius

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

I have a strong background in PTA leadership and volunteer positions, including serving the Plano PTA council legislative committee. Before starting the family business, I had years of experience in auditing school districts, cities, and financial institutions. Next year I will have a child at each education level – Elementary, Middle School, and High School. This will provide exposure to many aspects of the PISD curriculum that would benefit me as I perform my duties as Trustee.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

PISD has planned appropriately in that there is a surplus at this point, which will help us through the next biennium cycle. School budgets are based on a two year cycle due to the timing of funds received from the state. PISD already has some effective actions in place that both increase revenues and decrease costs. They actively work on reducing utility costs, implementing increases in revenue where control is retained, and save costs with the use of direct deposit this year. Through funding initiatives PISD received \$27.7 million and grants of \$13.6 million.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

The best way to reward good teachers is providing an avenue where additional funds can be received. PISD has several partnerships with companies that provide awards to outstanding teachers. Texas Instruments who has set up a foundation for innovations in STEM annually awards two teachers \$5,000 cash and \$5,000 for classroom technology and professional development.

DATE (District Award for Teacher Excellence), is a grant program that once required matching funds (has not since 2009). The funds allow monetary rewards to teachers and principals who positively impact student academic improvement, growth, and/or achievement.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

The demographics of PISD have changed rapidly over the past 10 years. Because of this, we must adequately prepare both college-bound and non college-bound students. One proposal being considered is an academy that offers course options for career paths other than college preparation.

Either way, we must incorporate technology into students' everyday learning to keep them fully engaged in school and the community. With new technological advances, doors open for chances to learn even more and to compete in today's job market. For example, PISD could consider a Netbook-based "electronic curriculum" system.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

AVID curriculum targets students who belong to underrepresented groups enrolled in college or are first in the family to go to college. eSchool is offered, allowing students to take courses that fit their time schedule better.

Teachers seek grants for programs they personally design to help their students. One grant was awarded for combining learning with something the kids like to do – increase spelling skills while jumping rope.

PISD's completion rate is 97.4%! 2.6% of students who start 9th grade do not graduate high school. I would encourage PISD to continue the path they've implemented regarding identifying at risk kids.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

PE and Health courses in Elementary and Secondary schools address themes regarding "my body, wellness, fitness decisions and nutrition". To follow state guidelines, PE classes are active; there is no sitting, no lines. The lessons include discussion, physical activity and handouts. "Fitness Gram" report, presented to parents twice a year, recaps each student's physical prowess and body composition. Results are reflected in a graph as well as messages to encourage exercising and what to "shoot for". School nurses will call and offer guidance to parents that have children considered obese. PISD actively teaches wellness and healthy decisions to all students.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

The three most important issues facing the School District will be to improve communication, to be involved in actively researching the needs of an academy, and to reduce the achievement gap. PISD has a variety of informational and social media available to keep parents and the community better advised. Regarding the academy, PISD should ask parents - if there is interest in an academy; what courses should be offered (STEM or Trade/Tech school or both); and the best location for the academy. For reducing the achievement gap, early identification and MAP testing will be the best tool.

Candidates for Plano ISD Board of Trustees, Place 3

3 year term, elected at large. Responsible for final decisions regarding school district policies, personnel, textbooks, expenditures and growth management. The board adopts a budget, levies taxes and submits bond issues to finance construction projects.

Bret Cullers

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

There is no outside experience to fully prepare you, so the key will be to continue learning. However, professional experience in several areas has prepared me to serve as a trustee.

Fiscal/financial – 8 years commercial lending, understanding corporate financial statements.

Technology – 13 years with IBM Global Services technology consulting.

Training – Led courses for IBM (instructor-led and online training); Executive Director of a training organization.

Trustee – experience in various organizations: ChristianWorks for Children Board of

Directors, Texas Special Olympics Area 10 Development Board, and Wilson MS SBIC Committee.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

There is not an absolute answer as all of these mentioned actions/reductions might be needed, in addition to other measures. A review of current operating expenses with PISD administration to examine and discuss options would be the first task. Bonds provide funding for construction, and therefore would be separate from Operations and Maintenance expenses. I do not support reducing personnel, unless the student population is decreasing. I would explore opportunities to reduce operating expenses before raising activity participation fees.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

The district should continue to reward good teachers through recognition and financial incentives. Where there are state funds and grants to reward teachers, and match local funds, PISD should take advantage of these options, like the Texas Educators Excellence Grant (TEEG) and the District Awards for Teacher Excellence (DATE). I fully support PISD's annual Teacher of the Year event and the Plano Education Foundation's awards and grants to teachers. Partnering with local businesses, like Texas Instruments' STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Awards on April 6th, is a great example of rewarding teaching excellence.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

Students should be educationally 'prepared for success' to enable them to acquire employment after high school. Many of us might differ on what is meant by 'prepared for success,' and therefore any discussion should first define the phrase. My definition would be for a student to acquire employment at a level to support him or herself. PISD should prepare a student so they are able to pursue vocational opportunities in lieu of college, and work to provide the requisite skills.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

The district has worked to reduce the dropout rate and the results are evident. Last year's dropout rate was less than 1%. While the goal is for every student to graduate, some issues impact the lives of students and their focus shifts away from education. Every year the effort should be on reducing the dropout rate through existing programs and new pilot programs.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

While obesity is not the district's responsibility, education can play a large role in educating students about the effects of obesity, corrective action students can take to improve their health, and provide PE classes in which students can exercise. As additional educational information becomes available, incorporate it into existing

curriculum. The district should also continue working with nutritionists in meals it provides.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

1. Working to balance school needs across the district. Through TAKS Snacks' involvement at Title 1 schools, I'm aware of the need for additional support for the students and teachers. The number of economically disadvantaged students is the fastest growing segment in PISD.

2. An academy school for PISD. The Academy Visioning Committee will research and study the concept.

3. Funding solutions to the district's financial constraints. This might include exploring new partnerships with local businesses, and working with our state legislators toward additional modifications to the state's 'Robin Hood' financing program.

Nancy Humphrey

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1. Please describe the training and experience that qualify you for this office.

University of North Texas, BS and MS in Accounting

I spent 7 years in public accounting; 8 years as contract accountant. I am President of Murphy MS PTA and have nine years of leadership (Treasurer, Membership, Ways & Means and others) with the PTA at both Murphy and Stinson Elementary. Received Texas PTA Lifetime Award in 2006. I'm a docent for Heritage Farmstead Museum and on its Education Committee. I serve on the Troop Committee of Boy Scout Troop 1776. My extensive experience in the schools, PTA leadership roles and ability to apply my full-time effort make me qualified.

2. How should the school district weather the current financial downturn: reduced services or personnel, increased fees, delayed construction, other measures?

Keep spending in control; do not spend more than we take in. Prioritize expenditures to retain good teachers and keep classroom instruction as the primary focus.

The district is good at managing costs. The most recent AEIS report (2008-2009) shows the district spends \$462 more than the state average for instructional costs per student, while it spends \$503 less than the state average for other costs per student.

The district could consider contracting for services such as cafeteria or bus services to cut costs and increase its revenue-generating efforts, such as leasing land for cell towers and advertising.

3. What is the best way to reward good teachers? Do you think that the state's merit pay plan for teachers with matching local fund requirements is an effective use of the school district's funds?

Teachers should receive merit increases for consistent overall performance. Evaluations could be based partially on agreed-upon measures of student improvement and partially on peer feedback and traditional methods. Some states offer funding for incentives for salary increases based upon increased student outcome measures. Linking compensation to student performance rewards and encourages teachers who are successful. I would consider stipends for teachers in high burnout situations and in areas with a significant population of economically disadvantaged students, as there are additional challenges associated with this type of instruction.

4. How should this district prepare students for success whether they are college-bound or not?

Students graduating from PISD should have the ability to be successful in the adult world. They must have fundamental reading, writing, and math skills, whether they intend to attend college, pursue a 2-year degree, or directly enter the workforce.

In addition to fundamentals, skills in teamwork/collaboration, critical thinking, problem solving and communication should be developed. Basic understanding of personal finance (balancing a checkbook and keeping a budget) is essential for a young adult.

Providing dual enrollment where high school students receive college credits can reduce the amount of beginner courses at college, which increases the likelihood of graduation.

5. What should the school district do to reduce the dropout rate?

Plano ISD does not have a significant dropout rate (1.7% calculated longitudinally for class of 2008), compared to similar districts of the same size.

The district should continue to work with the state legislature to modify the current 4x4 plan, which does not provide alternative courses for students who don't plan a career in math or science, or for those who don't plan to go to college.

Foster collaborations among local businesses, local governments, law enforcement agencies, nonprofit and faith-based organizations to work as mentors to deliver proven, research-based dropout intervention services for at-risk students.

6. What should the school district do to address the problem of obesity in children?

Continue to educate students about proper nutrition in physical education and health courses, as well as integrate the topic into regular curriculum. Consider involving staff in a wellness program to model good nutritional and exercise behavior traits. Offer nutritional breakfast and lunch options; follow or exceed the state guides for nutrition. Schools alone cannot prevent childhood obesity. Offer parent education

programs about proper nutrition and exercise habits for children. Involve the community to sponsor wellness programs in the school, because obesity has a high cost to society.

7. What are the most important issues you think will come before the school district in the next three years? What are your views on these issues?

Consideration of an academy - An academy can attract voluntary enrollment into maturing schools where growth has slowed and can ease overcrowding in other areas by offering choice. Consideration of both early college and career pathways should be included to appeal to a wide range of students. Partnerships with local employers could provide internships.

Plano ISD's changing demographics - It is paramount to increase the engagement of parents in their children's education to ensure the highest possible student achievement. We should reach out to community sponsors to help fund ESOL classes, parenting seminars, and life skills training for parents.