

FUSD School Board Candidate Town Hall Forum

Hosted by the CHS Conservative Club

Monday, October 3rd, 2022

5:00pm-7:00pm CHS Mini Theater

Timeline, Format and Questions

4:00pm- setup- Candidate/Facilitator tables/chairs. Event setup

4:15pm- Candidate arrival

4:45pm- Doors open

5:00pm-Event starts

5:05pm- Introduction and explanation of event

- We ask that all participants (audience and candidates) uphold our CHS expectations of respect, responsibility, and integrity. As well as maintaining a courteous attitude toward all guests and candidates. Please do not make comments while a candidate is speaking or laugh at what the candidate is saying. All students are expected to abide by school and district policies and
- Candidates will each have 2 min to respond to the question if they choose.
- Follow up questions will be asked by the student facilitator and audience.
- Each candidate will have 1 min to answer follow up questions. If a clarifying question is directed toward a specific candidate, only that candidate will have 1 min to answer
- We ask that the audience raise their hand and be recognized by the student facilitator before asking your question.

5:15pm- Candidate introductions

- Each Candidate will have 1 minute to introduce themselves to the audience.

5:20pm- First 2 topics

School Safety & Security

1. In regards to the recent school shooting and invasion, what is your plan of action for making schools in FUSD safer?

I think the seminar from Crisis Reality Training that Coconino just had is an excellent place to start. I would like our district to start with a recognized expert to begin our plan of action. I would like this expert to train and give certifications so we can begin a local chapter to give regular trainings. We need to protect our schools so our students have safety without making it feel like a prison. I have reached out to a Marine Veteran who has given me their safety protocol outline. It involves summer trainings, local law enforcement officers, veterans, teachers, students and parents. It includes summer trainings, and certifications. We can implement safety for the schools in our community.

2. On social media, many FUSD schools, such as our own, have drama and gossip pages that target students and teachers invading their privacy. While taking a photo of someone in a public place and posting it is not a crime, these accounts are negatively affecting students and staff alike. Have you been aware of this problem and what resources would you have the district to combat harassment and bullying online?

I'm saddened to say, I have been aware of this problem. This is wrong and should not be tolerated. We should be teaching our students wisdom to help govern our hearts starting with treat others as you would want to be treated. In school I advise you to seek out friends, teachers and staff that will take these photos down and do their best to hold the perpetrating students accountable. Record the date, time and event to print out a history that can be referred to in the event we have to call parents, use policies, code of conduct or apply any laws we already have. As for you personally, I want you to know that you don't need to get your identity from anyone, any photo or any bully's texts online. Ignore these hurtful things, block these people or don't use the app. I personally use constraint so I'm not online too much. I get my identity from the Bible. What you give your attention to are going to fuel your thoughts and how you think of yourself. So, choose carefully what you listen to, what you watch and what you read. You are a wonderful unique treasure and you should treat yourself with dignity and respect. And choose friends who will treat you with dignity and respect. It is my hope that you will have someone in your life that will inspire you, encourage you and lift you up. If you think there is a need, I would be personally willing to help start a group where you can find like-minded people to lift up, support and encourage you. I believe it should be a group supported by private people instead of the district if we can. Because the more power you give to government, the more power they have over you. We need to remember our Constitutional Republic gives the people the power.

3. To what extent do you support disciplinary measures of suspension and expulsion, and at what point do those steps need to be taken?

I do support disciplinary measures. I believe the first step from bullying is to do what you can to protect yourself if possible. Record what happened and by who. Don't isolate yourself; that is how bullies win. So, tell your parents so they are aware of what happened and tell them any steps you took to stop it. If it happens again, involve a school employee you trust, and your parents should call the school and see how to proceed from there. In the event that the bullying is more than just a gradual word, or more than one person, your parents and the school need to know so it can be taken care of immediately.

Teacher Accountability & Retention

4. What is your plan of action to maintain teacher accountability and professionalism in the classroom?

My plan of action for accountability is to follow the procedures we already have on the books and work to change any policies that hinder this process. There are disciplinary actions and a chain of command that we are supposed to follow. The record of what happened is important. Accountability can't happen without it. Anyone can record the date and event that happened and report it anonymously. If there is a teacher not following protocol, then the principal is the first that needs to know. If there is not a positive change, the events need to be recorded or written down and the teacher needs to be continually reported to the principal and the school board. It is the school board's job to hold district employees accountable. If the school board is not doing their job, they can be reported to the State Attorney General's office for accountability.

5. What oversight will be made to make sure teachers are following Arizona state laws such as the Bill of Rights, Constitution, and proper displaying of the U.S. flag in the classroom?

I intend to personally tour the schools and classrooms to see for myself what classrooms look like and then keep a record of the results for accountability. Teachers, parents and students can report what laws are not being followed to the principal and/or school board. It's our responsibility as a community to make sure oversight is occurring.

6. It's impossible for anyone to not have a bias within school but it is expected of teachers and staff to not let their personal biases affect the classroom environment. Unfortunately, this is not the case and students who are a part of certain groups have felt as if their teachers have targeted them and their beliefs. How would you protect students who feel they are singled out for their beliefs and opinions?

Teachers are held to a higher account and are subject to more severe actions than students. I would ask that the events be recorded by the student, parents be told and the school principal be called. At the very least it's a misunderstanding that can be cleared up. Otherwise the recorded event needs to be a report in that teacher's file immediately. Any further events should lead to disciplinary action against that teacher. If the principal is not stopping the bullying, the school board should step in and hold both the principal and the teacher accountable.

- Intermission/Break -

Final 3 topics

Curriculum & Instruction

7. How do you think the district can implement more American minority history into general history courses without giving difference to a certain perspective?

America is one of the greatest historical achievements in the world. There has never been a country like America in the history of the world because of the principles in our founding documents, our laws, and because of the absolutely amazing people. When we teach the actual history of our country, it will include all the different peoples and what they did. It will include the good, the bad and the ugly. It will include the freedom we fought for, our victories, our wars and the complex relationships before and after America was a nation. Our laws and founding documents are designed to hold our actions accountable and teach us to identify the content of our character. We cannot tell one small perspective and act like it's the whole truth. When we tell the truth from different perspectives, our students will begin to learn about the monumental hurdles our forefathers overcame to be free from the same tyranny we face today. It will also reveal the mistakes that we never want to repeat, precisely because people did not live up to our laws and principles. They will learn that the content of our character and how we choose to live, is more important than any one race or skin color. Americans of all races have made great accomplishments and they have fought and died side by side throughout our history. Do we now pick up hurts and offenses from past people that no longer live that can never be made right in order to force people who are now living to pay for them? How can we force children to see others by what they look like or tell them to focus how they are feeling, instead of teaching them that we all live through common experiences? It's illogical, irrational, and destroying the freedom we need to protect. We must get back to teaching the skills of reasoning to our students. There are heroes and villains in every generation. The way we move forward and win is to hold the perpetrators accountable, do what we can to fix what was broken, forgive the wrongs, and work at not making the same mistakes. This is what should be reflected in our curriculum.

8. What role do you believe parents and students should play in determining curriculum that is taught in FUSD schools?

AZ Daily Sun Article has reported that FUSD's new standardized testing shows the most recent student test scores range in proficiency from 15% -38%. It's essential to improve their test scores by focusing on the reasoning skills. Our only agenda must be the proficiency of our children and increasing their knowledge and skill level. While teachers may have a wider view of the curriculum options, parents are the primary stakeholders and have the primary role and responsibility when choosing the curriculum. Students should voice any concerns or positive feedback about the curriculum they have to use. It's important for students to say if they think the curriculum is appropriately challenging or not working.

Parent & Student Rights

9. In some districts, there have been policies passed where students are now not allowed to bring their phones to school to limit distractions. Where do you stand on this decision and do you see FUSD implementing this in the future?

I would like to see a logical policy that clearly states what phones should be used for in class and what is not appropriate. Phones can be a great asset in some classes, while not in others. The student also needs to have self-control so that the phone is being used for problem solving, not for entertainment. Any student who is responsible should be able to use the phone to appropriately keep in contact with parents and use it wisely as a tool for class. The more we can use self-control over our actions, the less need there is to give control to someone else over us.

FUSD Budget & Bond Initiatives

10. What are your thoughts on FUSD's current budget?

When I look at the audit and financial expenditure reports, I see that FUSD has spent \$137 million last year in many different categories. And our district is regularly asking for more money, while claiming it's still not enough to include the essentials. A negative overall total shows that our district has overspent for the last 2 years. But I cannot tell you what the actual budget is.

11. What are your thoughts on how to maintain and/or improve the budget?

FUSD published a 122 page audit that did not cover the internal controls of spending. I would like to get a thorough detailed breakdown of all the general categories from the audit, so we can get a precise understanding on the spending of \$137 million dollars the district received last year. I would like to know why we have been spending \$2.2 million in desegregation fees every year since the 1980s. That's over \$82 million by now. Why did we start paying those fees? Why haven't we fixed the problem? Why is this a recurring fee with no end in sight? Why can't we afford good healthy lunches for our students? Why are we relying on Federal funds for lunch money? A budget means that we are not spending more than our tax payers can afford. So, I need to answer many questions before I can ever get to maintaining or improving the budget. But, I believe that with the help of parents, we can do this together.

12. What is your standpoint on the priorities of the current FUSD bond initiative?

My standpoint on the \$100 million bond is no. The FUSD district has \$80.5 million in public debt that we will be paying for until 2036. Our district has already obligated our children, grandchildren and our great-grand-children to pay this debt before they ever receive their high school diploma. How long would we be paying for \$100 million more? College students have told me that after graduating NAU they are moving away because rent and property is too expensive and they cannot afford to live in Flagstaff. The city council wants \$100 million for projects. There is a group in town that wants to add \$20 million to every tax payer for housing instead of organizing their own group and build by donations. Other school board candidates have said they want to expand property taxes to cover teacher housing. What happened to all the Covid funds the city and the district received that came out of our federal money and yet was never voted on by the people? When do we say no to more debt, and look at ways to pay off the debt we already have? We are soon approaching the time when our debt becomes more than we can earn. So, until we can get back to common financial sense, my answer is no.

6:45pm- Parent and student questions

Final questions from the audience on any topic

6:55pm-

This will conclude our event and we'd like to thank you for coming and wish you a safe evening

Personal thanks to candidates and volunteers

7:00pm- Cleanup