

Chris Colohan Candidate Interview for Palo Alto School Board

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Opening Remarks

My name is Chris Colohan and I'm running to represent you on our school board um I'm a stay-at-home dad with uh lots of management experience and also lots of experience in our schools not only do I have two kids who are currently in Sixth and eth grade but I've served on PTA boards for the past seven years both at duvic and green including being a PTA president during the pandemic when I um got to hear a lot of parent anxieties um I've also uh served as a volunteer for pi doing fun raising for the past year for green and um I've been a substitute teacher for the past two years I've taught in all 15 schools in every grade from kindergarten the 12th grade and I'm hoping to join the school board this um this January

All six of the candidates for the palo alto school board in 2024 were invited to these interviews the five active candidates responded and were provided with a complete copy of the questions in advance these questions do focus on special education but I believe they will give you a good sense of the way each of the candidates think and will approach whatever issues they face on the job uh full details and the transcripts of all of the interviews will be available at disabilityalmanac.com/p2024 again disabilityalmanac.com/p2024 enjoy the interview.

If you are talking to your grandkids 10 or 25 years from now long after you've served your two terms if you want on the school board what accomplishment would you share with them?

so hopefully it's not just one accomplishment hopefully it's a series of accomplishments um something that really speaks to me from my ta experience is they've got the slogan every child one voice and that sort of captures the two aspects of what I really want to get done on the board which is I want to support all of our children and I want to support our children both um not not not only individually and their individual accomplishments but also the community that they build together and so the thing I want to share with my grandchildren is a series of stories stories of how different individual children were able to do better because of the things that we accomplished then um they would have been able to do without that

There are both general education students and special education students who are not going to college at PAUSD what are your thoughts on the current state of our vocational and post-secondary programs now and where do you think they should move?

so I have to admit um as I mentioned my kids are in Sixth and eth grade so this is an area where I'm still learning I'm still learning what our School District offers and how it tends to work for kids um also our both our general education and special education students they're divided into so many different subpopulations um we have people on IPS and 504s who are just have um some supports in our classrooms who we fully expect to go to college we have those who we don't and so we really need to parse it down by population to figure out what's out there um one of the things we have out there is the CT program and um from what I've heard of the CTE program it's fantastic there are all sorts of options for our kids and some of our special education students do Thrive when they go through the CTE program and they I should explain CT is Career Technical education it's where we're aiming to get our students into a career when they finish High School um and those Pathways I'd argue one of the big problems that I've heard about is they're not necessarily explained well and so like many things in our school district we have a communication issue and that can that's definitely something which we really need to work on um but we have other students with um with higher needs such as the students in our futures program and from talking to folks it sounds like there are some successes in um in in getting them set on on interesting Pathways um we have internship programs um I believe we have an arrangement with Addis Cafe for one of of those internship programs also with the VA Hospital we've have placements there um and yeah I I I I hope I I'm hoping those are working and I'm hoping that we can encourage more things that work out for families

Deciding to run for the school board is a big decision was there a specific reason or incident or experience or a straw that broke the camel's back that inspired you to run now this year?

I think it's the same thing that that broke everyone's back which was Co um honestly before Co I had no idea what our school board was nor did I see any reason to care um but I saw during Co that that has a huge impact on every one of our fam's Lives they make important decisions and it actually really matters who's in those roles and so um I having seen that and having seen that there are three openings this year um because none of our incumbents are running again uh I I I decided that my background and my skills would be really helpful in this role and I wanted to throw my hat in the ring and and off offer my help because I it may be a failure mode of mine but I'm I'm drawn like a moth to Flame when it comes to volunteering and helping out with things and uh yeah so here I am

Inclusion for students with disabilities has been steadily improving nationally but according to the 21 March report by the school district, inclusion has been steadily declining over the past 5 years here. What is your read on the situation for inclusion in Palo Alto and what if anything needs to be done?

I can start with a really simple short sound bite answer I don't know sorry but that that that's true so what what I did instead is I asked a bunch of people about it because when I don't know something the first thing I do is I go into consult with experts right and so sorry I've got some notes Here uh so I'm

going to look at my notes and and point out some of the things I learned um one is that inclusion in our classrooms really wasn't that much of a thing up until the mid 2010s with the every student succeeds act or Essa and when that came through palto went hard into inclusion and they tried to include our special special education students in the classroom as much as possible and and that's what they've been doing since then but the way they did it is they just said okay we're doing this and there wasn't shall we say a really strong transition plan and there wasn't necessarily as much um training of the teachers as you would want ideally if you're just going to make a dramatic change like this and so in some cases it works works out fantastically we have some really strong teachers who work really well with certain groupings of students and it um and it actually benefits everyone um it benefits the students who are included who otherwise wouldn't be included it benefits the other students because they get to get exposed to a wider range of people and and we get to build a stronger community and when you build a community everybody wins in some cases there have been challenges um and when you have those challenges it creates pressure um sometimes uh it creates pressure to add more staff to try and solve the problem you either hire AIDS in the classroom or you do more pullouts because the students need more instruction outside of the classroom to compensate for those issues and sometimes um it gets a teacher who's just like I can't deal with this anymore and they add pressure to do more pullouts not because it's necessarily the best thing but because they need it for their their own Survival or or their own um dealing with the classroom and this is actually less than ideal um so yeah so I'm not going to claim that this is perfect um but this 80% metric I think is actually kind of interesting because I honestly don't know is Stephen can you tell me is this like an arbitrary indicator or is this something which um like is this like a defined metric that uh is measured the Department of Education has three levels of they monitor educational settings uh in school public schools and outside of them and don't ask me why they divided things into 80% or more in General Ed uh and then 40% or less in General Ed okay so so this is a doe threshold this this is a uh yeah this is a national thing uh everybody does it the states get rolled up it gets rolled up to the state and the state rolls it up to okay Department of Education okay yeah cool so

like so this 80% threshold when we see that it's declining over time you can come to a number of conclusions and actually given what I know um on this topic I don't know which of these conclusions is the right conclusion one conclusion is that the district has a problem not doing as much inclusion as ideal and if that's true I I think we should fix it um another thing that this could indicate is that the district has thrown a lot of resources at these students and they're actually doing more pullouts than other districts for the students who are impacted and those more pullets are negatively affecting the stat while giving a better educational experience to the students because they're getting more instruction that is tailored to their needs which allows them to catch up in the general Edge classroom and perform better in that environment um also potentially impacting this is over time we found that parents are getting better at asking for pullout services and for additional help for their kids which I think is a good thing that parents are getting better at requesting what their children need and advocate for their children um and it means that but the downside is it negatively affects the stat um another possibility is that the population in our schools is changing over time um and I know from talking to folks in the district that there was a dramatic shift in our special education population both the numbers and the needs of the folks in our district that happened over covid this Co really messed everything up I don't know how that um is reflected in the stat and if that if that's what you're observing here or if there's any impact to that what you're observing here um you you might be able to answer that but this is my inter you're interviewing me I'm not interviewing you um I and so so I I don't have more than anecdotal data on that honestly um so in terms of what I would do about this what I would do is I would involve the experts I would be talking to uh Lana Conway and asking her to track this and to tell me why this is changing over time so that we can identify if this is actually a good thing or a bad thing based on the change over time and then take the appropriate measures

At the very last board meeting in June in the information only slide packages there was a report that was not discussed showing that there was a substantial number of eighth grade students failing math what are your thoughts on this matter and what do you think about how the district and board should handle issues like this in the future?

so there actually are two ways of answering this question uh the first way of answering it is a technical answer which is this is a predictable outcome of the deling of e8th grade math and the acceleration sorry the danding middle school math and the acceleration of middle school math that was instituted in 2020 starting in 2020 which is um the district did two things one is they they did um deling of our M schal math but the other thing they did is they accelerated it they said that every single student needs to take algebra in 8th grade while previously we had a whole C cohort of students who were identified as having more challenges in math who were taking a eighth grade math course that didn't include algebra and then not proceeding to algebra until 9th grade and so by raising the expectations on all these students what they did is they actually dramatically increased how many students were completing successfully eth grade Al or algebra in eth grade I should say and so you know you could celebrate that as a success because students who previously weren't on a track to where they could take it calculus by the end of high school now we're on that track the downside of this change is that they took a bunch of students who weren't necessarily prepared or ready to take algebra in 8th grade I should probably highlight that algebra in e8th grade is accelerated the Common Core Curriculum says that you're supposed to take it in n9th grade but Paul Alto accelerates their math um uh and those students are not being successful in eth grade algebra and that's being reflected in the stats and that's why we're seeing a bump in failures in eth grade math um but my other approach is to say that quite frankly we shouldn't call this failures we should call this not succeeding in getting well you know we can Wordsmith all this all we want but this this is a group of students who previously were not learning eth U algebra in e8th grade who still aren't learning algebra in eth grade to a level at which is sufficient to proceed on to the next math class and these students are taking algebra again in 9th grade and what we don't know yet is how successful they've been at ninth grade because we're still you know trying out this program and um and it's still proceeding through the system uh so what do I think we need to do we need to offer every support to the students in e8th grade and before to help them be more successful in this accelerated program that we're doing we need to do everything we can to destigmatize any case where student needs to repeat algebra when they reach 9th grade because quite honestly this is everywhere else what's considered the normal pathway for Math and um and we also need to focus on this issue because quite frankly the these are students who we were failing before because they weren't you know getting as advanced math as as are going through math as quickly as as they could have and now we're actually shining in Spotlight on them and actually showing that hey this they're actually there and we can you know spend more efforts on them

What are your thoughts on suspending students in elementary and middle school some other school districts have banned suspension for children this young as they are not really of an age where they can make rational decisions the children probably consider being out of school a reward and the data shows that there's substantial dis proportionality in the use of these suspensions?

my thoughts on this is that we should not be doing this period we um Elementary School students

they're if if they're engaging in behaviors that um that escalate suspension we need to figure out how to deal with it um through whatever means hiring behaviorists educ um teacher teacher training whatever we need to find mechanisms to I I don't think this is a solution we should be deploying

You've been running for several months now and listening to a lot of people without naming names or revealing something specific or personal what have you learned that has surprised you the most?

the thing I've been hearing a lot is stories stories well quite frankly when you run for school board um a lot of parents come out of the woodwork who have had things go wrong because those are the folks who you know car to talk to School board candidates the most when they first hear about you because they hope that you can help the thing help them with the things that have gone wrong and the thing that surprised me in all the stories is the number of instances of racism that we have in our district um I am come from a privileged position I I admit I'm a white male and um I'm hearing stories from parents of children who are in minorities which are just awful and they're awful both in the experience of their kids and and to be clear the thing that shocked me most was not that I heard this at the middle school and the high school level because I'm familiar with teasing and I know that teasing can cross a line into horrible things at times but I've heard stories of this happening at the elementary level which just blows me away um um and so uh yeah that's surprised me a lot um it's also surprised me to hear some of the stories of instances where this wasn't handled well by the school district and so both the fact that this is happening but also the responses that sometimes are happening I'm I'm sure no one's going to come and tell me the stories about when it's hap been handled well because you know it's been handled well uh but we need to make sure that we always consistently handle such things well\

There seems to be a lot of tension between the teachers and the school board and the District administration the negotiations with the teachers union appeared quite contentious and at least in board meetings there were a number of cases where the district and teachers did not seem to be communicating how do you read the situation and what if anything would you do either about the relationship between the board and the teachers or the district and the teachers

I'm so glad you've asked me such an easy to answer question uh I mean uh no actually quite seriously uh I'm going to may look at my notes a couple signs for this because I want to be careful about um what I say because this is actually quite a contentious issue in our district um and so the first thing I want to emphasize is that palto is actually a fantastic environment for our teachers I actually just yesterday I was at the uh palto uh art fair downtown and I had a retired palto teacher come up to me and tell me how much he loved his career in our school district and honestly there there are reasons why um well actually at the last board meeting um our superintendent got up and announced that they'd hired 72 new staff members at the beginning of the year and 71 of them came as people who left their jobs in other school districts and came to palto because they wanted to come to palto um which is you know another sign that we're a place that's great at attracting people um and there actually are reasons why we're good we're we're good at hiring people and the answer is well it's really simple we pay really well um on for teachers we have some of the best pay in the area um we have great benefits um and we also have the strong support of our community and Community Support matters a lot when you're working in school and also we have the best student to teer ratio in all of California um teachers love small class sizes and so yeah the teachers really like PA Alto so then going back to this question what happened at negotiations um well it's important to understand um what the negotiations are in our school dist it's actually a three-way conversation between the district and the two unions the classified

Union and the teachers union and and so and this is paea and CA and so the income in our district is relatively fixed it's fixed based on property taxes and other tax revenues which you can't really control as a school district um but these um revenues they actually increase year-over-year and so any increases in Pay which you negotiate for one group comes at a cost which is either taking something some of the money out of the increase in revenue and allocating it to that and so you can argue over which group gets the what share of that increase in revenue or by cutting spending somewhere else um and cutting spending in our district is a really really hard thing to do because currently if you look at our budget 87% of the budget is being spent on salaries and benefits which means that cuts almost always have to involve not filling jobs that you otherwise would be filling say you know when people retire or leave uh because there isn't a lot to cut other than people if you're going to make Cuts so okay so the negotiation a three-way uh a three-way discussion and um and each Union has a has a vested interest in advocating for their own position that's their job and so my read on what happened last spring was there was a fun AI difference in opinion on um how optimistic or conservatively the district should be forecasting future increases in Revenue um the district tends to do conservative modeling because they want to feel safe they want they want the district to be safe when something goes wrong an example of something going wrong covid was unexpected went wrong and it was miraculous that we had such conservative Financial positions it help it really helped it us get through that successfully um the teachers union has a vested interest in arguing for optimism because the more optimistic we are in our future Revenue projections the more we can allocate to salaries and the more and the more we can pay them which is something which I think is great for teachers and I really do support getting the teachers as much money as we can without you know putting the districts fundamental structure at risk um and so at the end of the negotiations it seems that the teachers union basically got what they wanted the district adopted um more aggressive pay raises for the teachers and they actually did adopt this year a slightly more optimistic than previous years Revenue model for for projecting future revenues they went from a two 2% predicted property tax increase one year ahead to 4% but that's a detail you don't actually care about um but even with the new optimistic Revenue projections that the district is using uh the uh financial office in the district forecast that we're going to have a \$15 million structural shortfall or deficit in revenues ongoing and so that means that this fall there's going to be some fascinating conversations at the board level about how do they make up that \$15 million shortfall um and yeah because that's they have to prepare for the strong possibility that that their conservative projections may become reality will they have to implement these plans once they come up with the plans depends on how property taxes go depends on how taxes go but honestly all this discussion is about money and um but actually during these negotiations there's a I think an equally important maybe even more important less tangible thing that was being negotiated and that's the Goodwill of our community

um I was on both pi and PTA last year and I found well fundraising for both organizations was a real struggle last year they had to kick in and do extra efforts in order to meet their goals at the pi level and at the PTA level and the PTA I uh well in the duic PTA which I was involved in we had some major shortfalls um we managed to make up for them with a major push at the end of the year but we didn't fully make up for them and uh so here we are so we've seen the impact of adversarial negotiations between our three parties in uh in the school district on our organizations our community organizations such as the PTA and pi and I'm I'm actually worried that this

um this using up of community Goodwill um will have other negative effects like I've heard rumors that there's um uh that there are folks who are planning on advocating against our next parcel tax and if that actually happens that will be quite frankly um seriously consequential to our District's uh budget and so we're going to and so if that happens we'll have figure that out I'm hoping that doesn't happen but I really I I really um honestly I'm hoping that we can encourage more collaborative negotiations in

the future and fewer adversarial stances because adversarial stances although they may result in short-term gains I think overall they result in longer term losses which we really don't want

From the perspective of a number of parents of students with disabilities that's 1,58 out of the 10,318 total students in the district in the Years 2022 2023 the district has been restructuring the program without meaningful prior parental consultation and reducing Services uh there's been a reduction of Elementary Learning Center sites from 7 to 5 in 2023 and the restructuring of the preschool program to a Learning Center uh from a previously inclusive program in 2024 and dropping a math program at JLS in 2023 what is your view of the situation and what if anything do you intend to do about it?

so I can give you the legalistic answer which is uh Essa or the every student Deeds act uh requires that um every district has a parent and family engagement policy and this parent and family engagement policy has to be followed it should be and so you know we should ensure that our district has a robust policy and we should hold their feet to the fire if they are not following that policy but quite honestly you already knew this right because you know you're an expert in this kind of stuff um but the reality is in our district uh the impression I get is that quite frankly um we've had weak Management in special education and this has resulted in um a lot of the staff acting in a a reactive mode instead of proactive mode and so what I'm hoping um is that since we now have new leadership uh with Lana Conway and she has a track record of being of providing strong leadership in in our district that she provides strong strong leadership in this area and how I want this to resolve is that we get a plan we get a plan for what is it we want out of our special education system and that's plan is clearly communicated to everyone and then when we Implement parts of that plan we get clear communication to the families about what's you know going on and why and um that's not been happening in an ideal way um and okay so how do we as a board actually make sure this happens well the first thing we do is I think we should monitor the current situation since we have new leadership give them a chance to thrive give them a chance to actually do better um and if it's if it isn't happening we'll have to set goals and one structure which we can use to set goals is by using the Swift framework that the board already has in place and add targets and goals to the Swift framework that um want to that allow us to measure and evaluate progress in in improving special education

How do you see the participation by the members of the public in School board meetings as meetings held in public where the public is principally the audience for a meeting of the board or as a public meeting where the public is a critical part of the proceedings both to raise new topics and explore agenda items?

I think this is one of your favorite questions because I've heard it from you repeatedly different people um but my perspective is this uh like you know well I could give the legal answer which is well what does the law require it you you have the brown Act and the brown act guides um you know what interactions are allowed or not allowed between board members and things like that but honestly my perspective is this which is that the purpose of the board meeting is to bring the board together and to have have discussions and make decisions that impact our school board if they're going to make have good discussions and make good decisions they need to be well informed right and to be well informed you have to have public input because the people making decisions have to really understand what's going on and how people feel about it um this input can come in many forms it can come in emails it

can come in conversations it comes in speeches at the meeting with in in comment sessions um but all this information needs to be absorbed synthesized and balanced by the board members in order to come to Fair decisions that benefit all the members of our community um and so do I so I do support having public comment I do support hearing from from people to our community but I also want to make sure that the voices that show up at a meeting and yell don't Dominate and don't overwhelm any any silent majorities or others who are communicating through whatever their preferred communication medium is whether it's conversations because they don't have The Bravery to stand up in front of public audiences or um emails or whatever else I want I want to accommodate everyone and make sure that we hear all the voices and balance them and and make sure that we make decisions that support everyone

Lots of parents are going to come to you for advice what would you advise a parent who is concerned about getting their child assessed for special education services and B how would you advise a parent whose child has been determined to be eligible for special education services but is concerned about using them?

I probably shouldn't admit this in an interview but I've not gone through this process myself because I've been fortunate enough to not have to deal with it myself but I've talked to lot of families of parents who have and quite honestly um this question has an implied in implied thing behind it which seems to be that parents might be concerned about getting their child assessed for special education services because there's a stigma or other reason why you wouldn't want to do that and so I would try and counter that by arguing that why the heck wouldn't you do everything for your child possible to make sure that your child has the best education possible if you're being asked the question would you like your child to be assessed for something usually it's because there's a reason for it right you maybe they're having some challenges in the classroom and and whoever is talking to you wants to find out are there things that we should be doing or could be doing that we're not doing to help your child if your child's sick you don't say uh should I take them to the doctor or not no you take them to the doctor and you and you can get them help if your child is struggling in a class many parents will decide I need to hire a tutor to help my student and support them and we should take the same attitude I think towards special education Services if a child needs additional help in some area we should figure out how to get them that help and and make sure that they have every possibility of um of doing well in school now um the other thing I'd like to highlight is um if you're concerned about using them often the way that concern is manifested is through delay oh maybe we should wait and see and quite honestly in education early intervention is better than late it's better if your child is struggling in early grades to get them help in their early grades so that they can get the fundamentals build a strong F foundation and then hopefully they may not need as many services in later grades because they had the help early um and and it it compounds they're you know just like problems compound and get worse over time so does help help compounds and gets better over time and so that that's basically what I'd say in terms of you know encouragement in terms of how do they get more expert advice than from someone like me who has doesn't have direct experience um I try pointing out the resources they have available to them um we have staff in the district whose job is to help folks navigate this process um if they haven't been in contact with them already I would try and point them in the right direction uh we have every PTA in our district have parents who have volunteered to be special education representatives for the PTA um who are typically parents who have experience in the system they've also received training from the PTA on how to help parents and what resources available and how to connect people up so i' try and hook them up with other parents such as these PTA reps who have experience and know what's going on and know how the system works and can help give them some some you know more direct more relevant advice

The number of students has been steadily decreasing for the past several years now in Palo Alto Unified School District at the rate of around 200 students per year and is projected to continue to do so according to the District budget estimates the number of students with disabilities is also decreasing at a similar though slightly lower rate how do you perceive this situation and what do you intend to do about it if you are elected?

if you are elected I our population is decreasing I want to make sure that our projections for f future population are as accurate as possible and then we're going to have to make some tough choices quite frankly if we're losing 200 students a year that means we're losing an elementary school every two years effectively in terms of student population and so the question is going to be raised does that mean we should be mothballing one of our schools um and when we get to that point we're going to have those tough conversations and it's going to be really challenging and we're going to have to figure out what the best path forward is

Nationally and in Palo Alto there is a lot of discrimination against disabled people and children what do you think the school district should do to change that culture ?

so the short answer is often at the board level um it's hard to make changes without data and so what I would encourage folks to do is when things happen make sure they get documented we have a title line process um Robert Universal complaint process UCP as it's called um and we have an amazing manager I've heard nothing but great things about him Robert Andrade who uh run runs to ground all of our tit online complaints and so if we can successfully get as many of the issues as we have successfully documented then we can use that data to drive policy um if we're not if we're if we have an aversion to documentation if we've made the process too hard if we've made it so that's it's culturally unacceptable to do so that I arguably will will create a negative feedback loop and just make problems worse um so I think one thing we can do is we can try and encourage folks to document problems as they occur um and once we have data we can then you know Drive policy making if policy making needs to be done to to try and change the situation U one thing I also want to point out is that we have our Swift plan which has a strong focus on helping children in underrepresented categories including uh disabled people and uh and we can if we have the if we have the data we can then put targets and goals in there and try and use that to drive change as well

One of the biggest impacts you are likely to have as a school board member is on Direct constituent Services addressing the problems that families have that they haven't been able to address through other means how do you plan to be available to parents for this service and navigate between individual issues and larger policy problems?

personally the my easiest availability is through email feel free to email me any time chrischris for schoolboard.com and you will reach me and um I've had many people tell I'm amazingly responsive to email having said that um question is once I'm a board member what am I going to do with those emails and I've actually talked to existing board members about this and the number one thing they do when they get issues raised to them is they act as a router they using their knowledge of the school district redirect parents towards the folks in the district whose job is is to solve their problems and try and make sure that they are connected with those folks so that their problems get solved um and honestly from my view of what a board member's role is we should be trying to make it so that it is easy to avoid emailing a board member it should be easier for you to reach out to the right person

because it's easy to identify who the right person is um and that person should be doing their job in a way that they solve your problems or if they don't solve their problems they make it clear to you exactly why they can't and you're you know if not happy at least you understand the outcome um what we can't do systemically is have a system where board members are effectively the problem solvers for the folks who are well connected um we need to make sure that our system as a whole is able to address people's problems as address everyone's problems whatever the appropriate addressing and resolution is um because that's the only thing that scale scales and it's also the only thing that's fair to All Families we don't really want to have a system where you have a a one system for the well-connected and an inferior system for those who are not well connected

While Palo Alto is very highly ranked for general education in California the performance gap between our special education students and general education students is larger virtually across the board and this is true for other marginalized groups as well a particular note is that 43.5% of suspensions are of students with disabilities even though they are just 10.3% of our student population what is your goal to close the performance Gap and other areas of disproportionality and how quickly do you want the district to work to close it?

I think we covered this in an earlier question on the suspensions question which is at the elementary and middle school level we should be trying other techniques of than suspensions and so hopefully that gets rid of some of this statistic you quote here um but in terms of at the high school level and also the academic performance gap which you highlight um I want to know why I I honestly I am not an expert in this area um so the first thing I would do as a board member is I would consult with our special education experts on staff and ask them to explain to me what what's going on and try and learn as much as I can so I can become dive in the way I solve problems I dive into things as deep as I can so that I can use that to then come up with you know the best Solutions I can working with others uh so uh how quickly do I want the district to close it well as quickly as we can but without having a deep understanding as to how we got here and what what's going on I I I can't really give you a concrete answer on that

Four years from today at the end of your first term you are up for reelection what is one concrete substantial accomplishment that you will be telling us about in this forum in four years?

i' probably want to tell you about something I achieved in special education and quite honestly it may seem like a small achievement but what I want is to be able to tell you that we've got a plan that we have a Clear Vision as to where we're going in special education and where we're coming from and that we are making concrete progress towards achieving that plan and that the plan is actually a good one that everyone agrees is is is a a good place to be um we seem to be largely reactive in many aspects of special education reactive for many reasons one is because special education is hard um one most well partially because there's so many um different regulations surrounding it and just purely following regulations um gets you to a really weird bureaucratic place um but we actually I think we really should have a plan that outlines where we're going not only just to meet what the regulations require of us and the changing regulatory require landscape requires of us but also that you know we can look at and say hey yeah this is this is the place we want to be

I hope you will join me in thanking the five active candidates for the Palo Alto school board in 20124 for participating in this interview you can find the full transcript uh and all of the videos at disabilityalmanac.com/pa2024