

Application for Mark Zoidis, BUSD board seat.

1. **Why do you want to be a School Board Director?** Last summer I parsed and studied a decision relating to reorganizing Washington elementary school campus that I felt was wrong. I organized a group of parents to reverse the decision at the district level. Eventually we did reverse the decision. Along the way I met the head of the union, BUSD board members and previous and current Superintendents. So this gave me the relationships to start to e-mail in ideas on other issues such as gardening and real estate. Broadly, the process made me start thinking about applying my analytic skills that I use every day in the financial markets on educational issues. As a parent in the system with these strong quantitative skills I think I can add to the board's decision making capacity.
2. **What strengths would you bring to the School Board?**
 - 1) An understanding of inclusive decision making that takes into account the stakeholders in a situation.
 - 2) Quantitative Abilities: numeric ability to parse decisions and norm them against other similar numbers. I believe that nearly any decision can be modeled numerically.
 - 3) Common sense.
3. **What are your three top priorities for Berkeley public schools?**
 - 1) Revising costs for real estate projects at BUSD so that the large amount of bond money is spent wisely. Over \$600 per square foot, plus 30% soft costs for new construction is just too much.
 - 2) Dealing with the Union in a win/win way where teachers are getting their needs met without costing so much that the situation is unsustainable.
 - 3) Adjusting the attitude from "There is no money to do anything" to "Anything is possible."
4. **How would you work with your fellow Board members and Superintendent to address these priorities?** Numeric modeling and best practices is the short answer. Emailing and document collaboration constantly is a big part. I really want to look at numbers versus similar districts in each of these 3 areas. For all of these issues we must look to other districts to see what is working and how these issues are being addressed. For example for real estate, it may be competitive bid that brings costs in. Labor is the hardest issues but same idea, how do we stack up in pay, benefits, hours worked, etc.
5. **How does your experience and knowledge lend itself to promoting the District goals of addressing the opportunity gap and the 2020 Vision?** I have a background in corporate social

responsibility brings this perspective of cultivating human capital is the most important priority of any enterprise.

As a parent of young kids I have seen it play out from a very young age. The independent data confirms that outcomes are largely baked in by second grade along the lines of socio-economic status unless there are interventions. More "High 5" type programs for at risk youth as young as possible 4 and 5 years old can only help. Real progress will take reaching families before they are in the BUSD system and reinforcing the importance of reading with their children.

This 2020 vision area is the most ripe for Cal Berkeley and BHS involvement. It is also an area where money can be raised independently from corporate and philanthropic sources.

6. What are the greatest assets and strengths of BUSD?

- 1) Smart and committed parents, fantastically talented teacher and staff because the labor pool is so great.
- 2) Proximity to Cal Berkeley, one of the great higher learning centers of the world.
- 3) An unstoppable momentum in terms of the fabric of society improving in the east bay. This includes education, civil society, commercial activity, crime, real estate prices. For example, 94703 was the number one appreciating zip code for real estate in 2011.

7. What do you see as your primary role and responsibilities as a School Board Director? To help make smart and well thought out decisions to be made by running the numbers and comparing to comparable situations.

8. How does an effective School Board ensure opportunities for families and community members to express a diverse range of views to inform Board deliberations on important policy issues? One thing that Leah Wilson did was to hold office hours so that people can come and talk about whatever issue they may have. I think all board members should do that. Another is to answer e-mail something that Leah and Josh Daniels both do well.

There is no better way to get opinions than going to events and talking with community members. I would try to do this as much as possible.

9. What has been your involvement with public schools and/or in the community?

Parent activist at Washington Elementary summer 2012 where I developed a spatial density analysis, coordinated a petition (36 signatures), and sought union pressure to reverse site decision on putting largest class sizes in the smallest classrooms (see question 1 for more on this).

Discussing with BUSD staff the idea of saving the Gardening teacher program by replacing all elementary school after school programs with cooking and gardening teachers. This way the programs can be saved in a cost neutral way.

Recently I have been involved with the relocation of BHS Portables to Washington Campus, BAM and other locations. This has put me in communication with board members, and Superintendants about prop 65 issues related to this relocation program and the associated costs.