

**Candidate Giovanni Capriglione for Texas House of Representatives District 98  
Responses to Keller ISD Council of PTAs 2018 Candidate Questionnaire**

Please respond with answers no more than 250 words:

**1. Recent events have put a focus on school safety and security. If elected, what criteria would you use to prioritize safety recommendations? What will be the funding source for these measures?**

I recently held a school safety forum open to the public. The panel we put together had a variety of experts including law enforcement and school security representatives. I am a member of the House Appropriations Committee, and in October we held a full hearing on school safety ideas, costs, and funding concepts. In this hearing we heard from the Texas Education Agency, the Legislative Budget Board and from Santa Fe ISD. I am including a link to the Austin Statesman article here: <https://tinyurl.com/TXSafety>

Mental Health and Well Being, School Mental Health Professionals, School Safety Planning & Training, School Infrastructure, and Law Enforcement Resources are my top priorities. I support these measures, but I want to make clear that whatever we do is funded and not just empty mandates. I'd like to see options in place so each ISD can decide the best way to implement these proposals in a manner that is ideally suited for each unique community. I also pray that we can get past the politics for these safety proposals – the legislature is a place where ideas routinely get shot down and I hope we can quickly come to an agreement on this critical topic.

**2. The A-F campus and school district rating systems are complex as well as controversial. How do you respond to the critics of this system? Elementary, Intermediate, and Middle Schools rating are based solely on the STAAR exam. What changes would you make to the rating system and the STAAR exam? What other indicators do you think are relevant to evaluate a campus or a school district?**

The Texas Education Agency recently released its 2018 Accountability report and school districts in our area received high marks. Carroll ISD, Grapevine-Colleyville ISD, Keller ISD, Northwest ISD, HEB ISD, and the Westlake Academy Charter School all earned A grades! While most would acknowledge that the reports and their assessments are not perfect, these grades affirm what we already knew: our area's faculty, staff, students and the entire community of stakeholders are best in class. Having worked on the enabling legislation, I do see several ways that we can improve the Accountability report. For starters, I believe that there are too many STAAR tests. These standardized exams ultimately change the classroom focus too much towards test-taking. Additional factors outside of the listed categories would be useful in evaluating education and readiness. A method being worked on by some school districts is a community-based assessment report. In this structure, each community works on those assessments that are the most appropriate for their area. I would

suggest that these community-based assessments replace a portion of the scoring currently used by the STAAR tests.

I look forward to hearing any thoughts you may have on school accountability assessments, but in the meantime, I am honored to represent some of the best performing school districts in the state and the country.

**3. Texas public school revenue per student was \$8,755 for 2017-2018 according to the Texas Education Agency's PEIMS Budgeted Financial Data. Do you think this is sufficient for Texas's 5.3 million students? What changes do you think should be made to the current tax structure to fund public schools?**

The state's share of school funding has decreased. To reduce Robin Hood and to reverse climbing property taxes, the state should return these local property tax payments back to the local communities. Historically, the percentage split has been closer to a 50/50 partnership; this was an acceptable balance. As the percentage committed by the state has decreased, homeowners have seen higher property tax payments, and more local dollars being sent to the state. The real way to solve this is for the Texas State Legislature to pass a bill like House Bill 21. I co-authored and helped pass HB21 in the House. HB 21 proposed that the state should return \$1.9 billion back to local communities. This legislation would have reduced Robin Hood, lowered property taxes, and addressed some of the inequities in school funding. The plan I co-authored would also have returned current state sales tax dollars back to KISD – lowering property taxes and reducing Robin Hood. The state would then have to live within its means as required by the Texas Constitution.

**4. What is your position on vouchers and other methods to use tax revenue to fund private education?**

We know there's no one size fits all solution to education in Texas, just like there's no one size solution for each of our children. We have fantastic public schools in our district, but I know that's not the case in every area of the state. That's why it's important that we have a variety of tools in our toolbox, and why I coauthored multiple bills to put more money into our public-school classrooms and why I helped to make sure that we could create an online learning program for a local school district. While I voted to allow our House Appropriations Conferees to consider school choice in the budget, in the 85th legislative session I did not co-author or author voucher legislation, and no such voucher legislation was voted on in the House. As the Vice Chair of the House Committee on Government Transparency & Operations, and the Sub-Committee Chair on Budget Transparency & Reform, I feel that it is incumbent upon the state to require the utmost level of equal transparency and accountability on all uses of taxpayer dollars. My priority is reducing Robin Hood and fixing the currently broken school finance system.