

Coastside Democrats County Superintendent of Schools Candidate Survey

An email address is required to ensure integrity. Please note this form in its entirety will be posted for Public Review.

Thank you for your interest in applying for the endorsement of the Coastside Democrats. Please complete this submission by Saturday, May 2nd 2026. All Club members will vote on candidate endorsements. A question with a red asterisk requires a response to proceed.



Candidate Name *

Chelsea Bonini

As a Club under the California Democratic Party, we only endorse fellow Democrats. *

If you do not wish to proceed further, please email demclubcoastside@gmail.com

Click this box to confirm you are registered to vote as a Democrat.

I am a registered Democrat and have been since... *

1990 (when I turned 18)

I certify the information provided on this application and in any subsequent interview or written submission is true and correct. *

Yes

No

If this form is filled out by someone other than the Candidate, please provide the Staffer's name

n/a

Statement Questionnaire

Answers are limited to 1000 characters. Your answers below will be shared with all members and publicly broadcast.

Why are you running for this office?* *

I am running for San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools because every student must have access to an excellent education, strong mental health supports, and well-funded schools. As a current and twice-elected San Mateo County Board of Education Trustee, I prioritize literacy, safety, wellness, disability rights, college and career pathways, workforce housing, sustainable education funding, and wise expenditures of tax dollars. I believe that we can improve educational outcomes across San Mateo County if we work together to support students, families, and educators. I will continue to show up for San Mateo County's students with accountability, transparency, and a relentless focus on their success, just as I have done over the last 6 years on the County Board of Education and in all other positions I have held. I believe that San Mateo County can become the county where every student learns to read in our schools and is well-supported by a strong network of care.

What will your top priorities be if elected? *

My priorities currently and as County Superintendent are:

- (1) Literacy for All: expansion of science-based (structured) literacy supports and creation of traction for adoption across all 23 districts and in our County Board's Court & Community Schools;
- (2) Accessible Mental Health Supports: strengthening mental health infrastructure in schools, including through a more diverse set of culturally responsive lenses and better coordination with BHRS and community partners;
- (3) Closing our Local Funding Equity Gap: advocating at the state level and directing COE resources strategically to our most under-resourced districts;
- (4) Academic Excellence for Every Student: ensuring that all students receive the supports they are entitled to and deserve, including support classes and advanced placement/honors opportunities; and
- (5) Fiscal Transparency and Accountability: ensuring accountability to taxpayers and the public.

What do you see as the major issues on the Coastside that your office will address? *

Some of the issues on the Coastside that I will address if elected include:

- (1) Access to ongoing and crisis-related mental health supports -- to be addressed through partnerships, funding, countywide networks, and best practices for district-embedded services;
- (2) Fiscal stability impacted by a continuing decline in enrollment -- to be addressed through technical assistance, fiscal oversight, workforce development and recruitment, proactive governance, community engagement, and communication;
- (3) Academic achievement gaps -- to be addressed through the implementation of best practices in structured literacy instruction for K-12 students, including English language learners and students with disabilities;
- (4) Geographic isolation from county resources for enrichment, career development, and needed support services for students and families -- to be addressed by being a visible and proactive partner to the school districts, families, and local organizations.

Specific Questions

Coastside parents feel the Cabrillo Unified School District is underfunded, with our schools needing more resources. What will you do to help support our local school district? *

If elected as County Superintendent of Schools, I plan to work with districts countywide to assess their needs, to provide additional services and professional supports to offset costs that smaller districts incur through a better economies of scale (and equity) model than we currently employ, to encourage cross-district resource sharing to offset costs, and to continue to advocate to increased funding for our county office (i.e. to retain our current excess property tax collections by the state -- which amounted to \$41.5M in 2025-26) to enable additional direct and indirect financial supports for districts such as CUSD.

What are your views on teacher and school workforce housing? Where do you stand on using district resources to build teacher/staff housing? *

I believe that teacher and school workforce housing is one tool that we can use to attract and retain teachers in our school districts, especially in our county with its high cost of living. Although some districts have been able to fund and finance workforce housing developments through community funding (such as bonds and other financial mechanisms), I do not believe that this is the best use of district resources. I think that this is a wider community issue, which is better solved by collaboration with city and county entities, as well as other funding sources. In furtherance if this, I have worked closely with our County Board and our County Office to approve an alternate mechanism for teacher/staff housing through our current MOU with HEART of San Mateo County, which has the opportunity to provide subsidized below-market teacher/staff housing countywide into the future.

How will you work with, lead, motivate, and support the School District's officers and employees? *

As a parent, a former teacher, a local school board Trustee, and a Personnel Commissioner for the County Office of Education's classified employees -- as well as in my current role as a Trustee on the County Board of Education, I have have deep respect for all school district officers and employees. In every leadership role in which I have served, I lead with listening and learning about the current state of affairs as well as the historical context. I am attuned to and respectful of individual and collaborative contributions, expertise, and culture, as well as ensuring that systems are productive, efficient, and mutually-respectful.

How would you support CUSD and Coastside communities to develop MOUs for sharing/providing recreational resources (such as swimming pool facilities, tennis courts, etc.) with the public? *

If there is a desire for CUSD and the Coastside communities to develop agreements for sharing/providing recreational resources (such as swimming pool facilities, tennis courts, etc.) with the public, I have the experience and expertise to assist in these community discussions and the development of MOUs or facilities use agreements. In my role as a school board trustee as well as in serving as legal counsel for school districts, special districts, and other entities, I have engaged in similar discussions with respect for diverse perspectives, fiduciary obligations, and community engagement.

Is there anything else about you we should know? *

My prior local school district experience, my legal background, my leadership to ensure that all students' needs are met, my understanding of literacy practices and implementation for broad-based student success, and my longstanding focus on students' mental health and special education needs are unique to my candidacy. I am running to serve students, families, and educators and to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed -- and I know that this can happen if we all work toward this goal and hold high expectations for every single student.

Click Back to return to a previous question. Toggle the option below to request a copy of your responses. Click Submit when you are done.

Feel free to contact demclubcoastside@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Final results will be posted on <https://coastside Dems.org>

Google Forms