**Name**: Joe Mitchner

**Age**: 53

**Occupation**: Financial Manager

**City of residence:** Mountain View

I**n one sentence, please state why you are pursuing a seat on the Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District Board of Trustees:**

I am excited about our District’s positive momentum, proud of the achievements of our students, and would like to continue serving in a leadership role as we build on our successes in raising academic achievement, narrowing the Achievement Gap, and adding classes and programs that meet the evolving needs of our students.

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**Q&A -**your responses will count against your 500-word limit

**1) How would you define the role of a MVLA board member?**

Board members represent the community in setting vision, adopting policies, approving budgets, and overseeing curriculum and program effectiveness for the community’s schools. The overarching goal is to ensure that EVERY student is prepared for college and career, and that District resources are aligned towards that goal.

It is important to listen, study available data, and be open to compromise. Trustees should always ask: “What’s best for students?”

**2) Do you feel the board should be doing things differently? How would you improve the board?**

The Board can improve public accessibility. I support the webcasting of Board meetings to enable a wider audience to view how the Board conducts business and discusses issues. We should also explore other avenues for communicating Board proceedings.

To encourage district-wide feedback, the Board could sponsor school surveys to solicit parent and student opinions.

**3) What are the top priorities for the district in the next ten years?**

* Improving academic achievement at ALL levels:

Provide classes for students at all ability levels, with a support structure to ensure success. This priority goes hand-in-hand with ongoing increases in college and career-readiness.

* Ensuring financial plans are responsible, sustainable, and aligned with District Goals:

As a Basic Aid District receiving 85% of its income from property taxes, MVLA is effected by a cyclical economy, as well as other financial challenges.

* Increasing support programs and outreach to under-represented students and families:

Building on successful programs like homework clubs and bilingual counseling, MVLA will introduce two new initiatives in 2014-15: the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), and the Equal Opportunity Schools venture. Effectively serving under-represented students requires long-term commitment.

* Providing classes and programs that meet the evolving needs of students, with an openness to innovative new approaches:

The pace of new course introductions has increased in the past five years, expanding students’ breadth of opportunities. The future will likely include content delivery using technology (e.g., online, blended learning).

* Planning proactively for District growth:

Classroom space has been well-planned. Continue to explore solutions for other impacted facilities (libraries, tutorial centers, gyms).

**4) What immediate issues should the board be addressing?**

* Common Core Implementation and Testing:

Ensure that teachers continue to receive the professional development and support they need and that students are well-prepared for new computerized testing.

* LCAP Implementation:

This new plan describes MVLA’s goals and strategies to increase academic achievement for under-represented students.

* Curriculum and Assessment Alignment:

Ensure consistency across courses.

* Board Communication:

Consider webcasting and other ideas.

* “Cloud Computing”:

Ensure student and teacher success in this innovative program.

* Student Stress:

Explore additional ways to reduce anxiety and develop resiliency strategies.

**5) What does the ideal MVLA graduate look like and what policies would you enact to ensure the students have the tools necessary to succeed?**

Each student is different, and should graduate with the tools and confidence needed to pursue aspirations beyond high school. The “toolkit” should include:

* Academic preparedness (college-ready)
* Tech competency (experienced in online technology)
* Exposure to possible career paths (Engineering, Arts, Psychology, Computer Science, Occupation-related)
* Critical thinking skills
* Civic-mindedness

Because students are already fully engaged, rather than add requirements, we should look for creative ways to integrate the tools within the framework of the school day. For example, “Cloud Computing” not only provides 21st century learning, but is also a delivery mechanism for students to gain experience studying, researching, and collaborating through digital devices.