



GET ON
BOARD



SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE FORUMS

Community members need to know as much as possible about a candidate for their school board. The following questions can help citizens understand the views of candidates. These questions can also help prospective school board members think about the broad range of issues that form the basis of constructive boardsmanship.

This list is intended to help the media or community groups in selecting questions for candidate forums or publications. Choose from the questions below to help create a set of questions that best fits the needs of your community and the format of your forum. Be sure to provide the questions you choose to candidates in advance to allow them time for a thoughtful response.

BACKGROUND/REASONS FOR SEEKING ELECTION

- What motivates you to want to become a board member?
- What particular skills or experiences qualify you to serve as a school board member?
- How long have you lived in this school district?
- In what school or district activities have you been involved?
- How much time will you/can you give to board service?

EDUCATION ISSUES AND NEEDS

- What do you see as the current challenges facing public education in our state? In our country?
- What are 2–3 strengths of which our district can be proud? Why do you see these as strengths?
- What are your best hopes for the future of this school district? How would your aspirations help our students?
- If elected, what would you hope would be key accomplishments of the board during your years of service?
- How can our district best ensure students are prepared for success in school and life?

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

- Why are school boards necessary?
- What are the leadership responsibilities of school board members?
- What do you believe are the most important characteristics of an effective school board? Of an effective school board member?
- What specific strengths would you bring to the board table?

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATE FORUMS

- An individual school board member has no authority; only the board as a whole can make decisions for the district. What skills or traits will allow you to contribute to effective operations of the board as a whole?

SPECIFIC ISSUES

You may have specific issues that have been in discussion in your district. Adapt the questions below as appropriate regarding issues current in your district.

BASED ON YOUR CURRENT UNDERSTANDING

- How can schools address the learning needs of diverse students?
- What is your opinion of your school district's policies toward _____? (Examples: students with special needs; English as a second language; special education programs; students with behavioral problems)
- What roles, if any, should districts assume for dealing with such societal problems as poverty, hunger, emotional illness or drug abuse?
- What should our school district be doing to ensure the safety of students and staff?
- What do you think about vouchers? Tuition tax credits? Charter schools?
- What should our district be doing to address the challenges of declining/increasing enrollment?
- What do you see as the role of technology in education?



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