

# The Beacon News

## Candidate Questionnaire

**Why are you running for school board?** As a parent and now grandparent, I am very involved in the school. I attend board meetings regularly and feel it is time to get some new ideas in the district.

**If the economy continues on its current path, what specific programs would you recommend to cut from the district budget?** I think all programs, departments, and expenses need to be looked at for ways to trim any excess.

By asking the individual schools to recommend budget cuts and to put forth improvement plans and letting the public also be aware of these plans I think we can reduce spending and increase academic achievement.

**Is there a way to address funding shortages without having to cut programs or services (i.e. short-term borrowing or a referendum)? Would you support such measures?**

I did not support the last referendum or bond. I think the families on the East side of Aurora are having enough financial problems which is evident by the number of foreclosures. People that are struggling to keep their houses should not be called upon to pay more taxes until the district has exhausted all other means and gone through every line of the budget with an open mind.

**Do you support cutting arts programs such as music and drama to help balance the district's budget? Extracurricular activities? Early childhood initiatives? Explain.**

I do not believe in cutting the Fine Arts in order to balance a budget. Too much research has been done that shows that participating in the Fine Arts actually helps students achieve in their other core classes.

I think extra-curricular activities need to be examined. Questions that need to be asked are how many students benefit from this club/activity vs. the cost? Can this activity be found through another resource such as Park District, township program or church group?

I don't think cutting early childhood initiatives is the answer. These programs lay the foundation to help this population of the students succeed and get help before they reach elementary school.

**What, if anything, can the district be doing (that it isn't already) to encourage lawmakers in Springfield and Washington, D.C. to address funding issues back home?**

I think that continually reminding our lawmakers of the importance of the education money and encouraging all taxpayers to do will help. Also inviting our representatives and senators to our schools to see what is needed would also help to keep the needs of the district always in the forefront of our legislatures' minds.

**Do you support the current administration? Explain.** I think there are many fine administrators in our district at the elementary and high school levels along with many good teachers. If we would give these people more of a say in what is getting done in their buildings and then hold them accountable for the results we would see positive results.

**What role can the school board play (that it isn't already) in improving student achievement?**

It is the job of the board to oversee and further the goals of the District. This includes financial responsibility to insure that all funds are being used to best support these goals and that all programs funded are supporting those goals.

The entire Board needs to work together and become a team along with the superintendent and his staff at the schools. Open discussion and debate should be encouraged so that the best possible outcome for the students is always the result.

**What are the three biggest issues facing the school district? How would you address them?**

1. Finances- As I have already said every line of the budget needs to be scrutinized and cuts made at every level not just always losing teachers.
2. Test Scores- District 131 still is failing to meet test requirements at several of our schools. I am not an educator but I am certain that if we let the principals and their staffs have more control and then hold them accountable for their plans success could be achieved.
3. Communications-There is a great deal of distrust of the district by the taxpayers. More open communications in a timely manner need to occur so that taxpayers and parents feel like they are a part of the plan. Board minutes need to get posted quicker, the check registry needs to be made clearer, the website needs to be finished and updates posted sooner. At the board meetings it would be nice for the audience to understand what is being voted on and some of the secrecy to be eliminated. When something is mentioned the audience is not able to make any comments before votes because they occur after the community comments part of the meeting. By the time community members get most news it has already been decided.

**For everyone but the incumbent – Why should voters choose you over the incumbent(s)?**

I have always been a very active parent, involved in any way that I could. I live and work in the community and take great pride in Aurora and District 131. My business background dealing with unions, procurement activities, being accountable for budgets, and being held responsible for shipments gives me a goal oriented perspective. I have also worked on many team projects so I understand the dynamics of teams and how to get results.

