

A+ Coalition
School Board Candidate Questionnaire Response

1. After serving as the executive director of the Women's Resource Center for over four years, I became very familiar with larger, intricate budgets. This included not only the operating budget, but I was also responsible for creating and overseeing the budgets for various grants. When examining a budget to determine if it is a good fit, there are a few questions I look to answer:

- a. Is it balanced?
- b. When was the last time this budget was audited by an independent agency?
- c. Are there sufficient funds for competitive salaries, raises, trainings, etc.?
- d. Does it leave sufficient funds for upkeep, repairs/maintenance, and emergencies?
- e. Is this a budget that allows for growth?
- f. What checks have been established to ensure accountability in spending?

2. Financial accountability is key to enlisting support for bond issues and public school spending from all voters and taxpayers. This can start with being financially transparent and openly and effectively communicating with the public. This can begin with posting the annual budget on the school board website so that it is easily accessible to anyone along with the monthly financial report and minutes from previous meetings. One parish that has done an exceptional job in this area is Lafayette Parish. They have implemented a Checkbook program that allows the public access to detailed financial reports including specific expenditures. When people can see that their tax dollars are being spent wisely, they are more willing to invest. In addition to financial transparency, I would work to show individuals that investing in a strong educational system not only benefits the child and his/her family, but the community as well. A stronger educational system results in a better educated work force and will in turn attract new businesses, bringing with them employment opportunities and increased revenue to our parish.

3. Over the last five years, we have seen improvement in test scores and school letter grades at several of our parish schools. It is also wonderful to see the school board exploring innovative technological tools such as the Milo robots that work with children who have autism. Another great step the school board has made in the last five years is recognizing the students in the parish who scored in the top 5% of their school's end of year assessments, as they did at this year's Shining Star award ceremonies. This is a great step toward showing our student's that we value their hard work and academic achievements.

Two areas in which the school board can improve are financial transparency and communicating with the public. Financial transparency brings accountability and a greater willingness by voters and taxpayers to invest in the school system while clear and effective communication allows the public to be actively involved and informed. One example of a time when communication was lacking was when the banding of the within city schools was announced. This took many citizens by surprise as they did not even know this was a consideration until the vote had passed. Whether you agree or disagree with the banding isn't the point, it is the fact that clearly and effectively communicating this consideration with the public, while being receptive to input, could have prevented the feeling of "being left in the dark" that so many in our parish experienced. I also disagree with the closing of any of our rural schools. These schools are vital to the communities and allow children to be involved in extracurricular activities, experience

hometown pride, and prevents long bus commutes. Keeping our rural schools also facilitates parental involvement which has been directly linked to a child's academic success.

4. I believe that overall, what benefits the individuals in District 9 will be of benefit to the remainder of the parish and vice versa. However, when there is a conflict between the needs of the constituents and the needs of the parish, ultimately my role is to serve the individuals in District 9. Being elected to the school board holds with it the responsibility to represent the people of District 9 and it is my job to be their voice.

5. If a parent or principal were to come to me regarding a campus or teacher related issue, I would listen, advise the individual to put the complaint in writing, and then direct them to the appropriate individual so that the issue can be resolved at the lowest level in the chain of command. Additionally, I would check in with the individual to ensure that the issue was resolved satisfactorily, and if not, then direct them to the next individual to address by working through the chain of command.

6. I believe that all five goals of the A+ Coalition are achievable. Not only are they achievable, but they are in line with the 2025 Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education's goals for the entire state. I believe that each goal is important and that they work hand – in – hand. For instance, in working toward the goal of 50% mastery or better on 3rd – 8th grade assessments, a natural result will be more A and B schools and fewer C, D, and F schools. Another example is that as we see an increase in ACT scores, we will see more students graduating with dual enrollment courses as having an ACT of 21 or greater is a prerequisite for dual enrollment. All of these goals will work toward higher graduation rates: when children and young adults see themselves as successful academics, they are more likely to be motivated to continue in their education, thereby increasing the graduation rates.

Respectfully,

Beverly Broadway
School Board Candidate, District 9