

## A+ Coalition Candidate Forum

- 1. What experience do you have with complicated budgets? When you are given a very lengthy budget for the district, what will be your process to determine if it is a good budget for the system?**

Over the past 25 years, I have dealt with budgets for the water systems for Goldonna and Chi-Chi Bay. During that time, there have been many shortfalls concerning budget. Each time I have worked to balance the budgets and maintain the water system within a balanced budget. I will attend the Natchitoches School Board's Budget Committee meetings and actively participate in discussions so that I am more knowledgeable of the expenses outlined and our current standing as a district. I will work with all stakeholders to maintain a balanced budget, while meeting the needs of our school system.

- 2. In an era of more limited financial resources, how will you enlist support for bond issues or public-school spending from conservative voters or taxpayers with no children in the public schools? How can the school board prove itself accountable to those citizens?**

As a present Natchitoches Parish School system board member, the link between the school system and the public is very important. With their help through bond issues, I have gotten almost 8 million dollars for the schools in my district. During my time as a School Board member for District 7, I have secured funding for: air conditioning and heat system upgrade; replacement of flooring; improved Electronic Security Systems; upgraded the lighting Systems to LED's; a new activity bus; new outdoor playground equipment and basketball court; All-weather 8-lane athletic track; renovations to athletic dressing rooms; renovations to the concession stand; restrooms at baseball/softball field; upgrades to the weight-lifting room; a culinary arts kitchen; and a new baseball/softball field. In rural areas, often our public schools serve as our community centers. Therefore, all residents should have a vested interest in the condition of our facilities.

- 3. In your view, what has the district done well over the last five years? What has the district done poorly that you would change? Please provide specific examples.**

Over the past 5 years, our district has continually improved test scores. We are maintaining a high level of continued achievement in all academic areas. This year, Natchitoches Parish was recognized by the Louisiana Department of Education as an "Outstanding School System in Louisiana". Natchitoches Parish ranked among the top 13 parishes demonstrating student growth towards mastery in ELA and Math year-after-year. The district received an A in student progress and was recognized as one of the top 8 parishes for growth of economically disadvantaged students. The district needs to work on celebrating the successes, while improving communication with the stakeholders.

**4. You represent a specific part of Natchitoches Parish – how will you balance the needs of your specific constituents with the needs of the overall school district?**

I will work tirelessly to communicate with the other board members for the good of the district. Across the district, we all share common needs and goals and should work together as a team for all our students. We are all in need of certified teachers, and we all have repairs that need to be made across our campuses.

**5. If a parent or a principal comes to you regarding, for example, a maintenance issue at a campus or a situation involving a particular teacher, how do you see your role as a school board member in resolving that issue?**

My role is to be a liaison between the school system and the people who live in the district. It is important that the people and parents follow the appropriate channels to come to an agreement. I would instruct the parent to speak to the principal and I would follow up with the principal and parent at a later date.

**6. Consider the goals of the A+ Coalition, do you believe those are achievable goals? Why or why not? Are any of particular importance to you? Why?**

The goals of the A+ Coalition are achievable given the appropriate time frame. The process of change takes time. We need to provide our teachers with the resources and training needed to promote change. With the increased accountability system, teachers have a more vested interest in how students perform on state exams. I think any goal centered on increased student achievement will have a positive impact on a community. Our students will be better equipped for well-paying jobs.