

1. As a high school principal and board member for the past 30+ years, I've worked with school budgets and received many audit reports to insure that safeguards are in place to protect public funds. As a school principal, my number one priority was to provide much needed instructional funding for teachers working with our students. In addition, a large part of our NPSB agenda each month is to receive regular financial reports from the financial director, Mr. Richard Foshee. I've also worked to see that the BRE funds in my district are available to make much needed capital improvements at Marthaville Elem./Jr. High School. Visit the school and see how that money is being spent. While serving on the board, I advocated for the formation of a physical facilities committee to oversee the safe operation and physical condition of our schools.
2. Even conservative voters with no children in my district support the public school and know that the school is a vital part of our community. Keeping the school maintained is the key to keeping the school open and serving the needs of our students and community. Many opportunities are available for attending such meetings as open houses, after school activities, regular faculty meetings, PTO meetings and parent teacher conferences. All stake holders including school board members, principals, teachers, staff, parents, and community members all serve a vital part in being accountable for their support of school-related projects and issues. As board members, we give updates and review the needs of the schools as well as how those needs are being addressed.
3. Balancing the budget amid state budget cuts has proven to be a real challenge; however, our last report showed us in the "black" despite having to make tough decisions. Although we have a way to go, our district test scores have shown steady improvement. Our thanks to principals, teachers, support staff, supervisors and students who have contributed much toward making remarkable strides in meeting the challenge of raising test scores. On the other hand, transportation has continued to be an issue. Even though we changed providers, we still faced many difficulties getting the school year started. I did not support contracting out our transportation services since locally owned buses seemed to provide the best service, especially in the rural areas.
4. As a board member in District 9, I represent a specific part of the northwestern part of Natchitoches Parish, which includes the Marthaville and Robeline area and surrounding communities. District 9 also extends into that area of Natchitoches north of Sibley Lake and Old Highway 1. When we look at the overall school district, we must remember that ALL of our public school students on this side of Red River attend Natchitoches Central High School (NCHS). For this reason all school board members share the responsibility for the success of our students at NCHS. I feel just as responsible for the success of that school as I do the school in District 9. As board members, we should all work together to make NCHS all that it can be, and in the words of a former NCHS principal, Julio Torro: "...the best 5A school in Louisiana!"

5. School board members are mandated to follow a chain of command; thus, parents should first be referred to the principal. If the problem is of a serious nature, and/or dangerous to the welfare of a child, I would report this directly to the appropriate authority. If a situation involves a maintenance issue, I would discuss it with the school principal first. It has been my experience, that most of the time, the principal is already addressing the issue.

6. Considering the goals of the A+ Coalition, they are certainly worthy goals and should be the aim of all school systems in the state; however, it is a slow, arduous process. These goals set the bar "very" high and will certainly be a challenge to our system. Not all students are on the same "level playing field" and would require various levels of intervention and instruction. Are these goals attainable? Yes, to a degree, but "little by little and precept upon precept". You will see growth over time.