

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?

I feel the school finance coursework that I completed during my Master's program, to earn Educational Administration certification prepared me to work with the budget principles of a school system. I used these principles I learned to create the annual school budget during my tenure as principal of a Pre-K through 8th grade school.

Given that the budget for the entire school system is lengthy and encompasses all the schools as well as transportation, salaries, tax revenues, government mandates at the expense of the school system and so much more I would address it as any budget. I would study the amount taken in by our school system, projected revenues and shortfalls and prioritize the monies going out by necessary operating costs, review and rank the currently funded programs by cost-effectiveness while making student centered decisions and discontinuing programs that aren't achieving their objectives or that are not cost effective. However, with any budget, many of the expenses of concern are not flexible since they may be mandated or have funding restrictions placed on them that are out of the control of the local system.

My commitment to the public would be transparency by informing the public of revenues and expenditures with an explanation or reasoning behind the balancing of the annual district budget. I would also like to see partnerships formed with the community to allow input for creative solutions and prioritizing local needs.

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?

Many of the constituents of our parish do not have children in school at this point. As a voter, we need their support in bond issues that provide funding for our school district. It would be my job to remind these voters that even without a student in school they are affected by the public school system economically through the community. Local education directly impacts the ability of an area to provide an educated workforce that will sustain local industry employment needs as well as to help attract future industry in our area. Property values are reliant upon many aspects that can be directly related to education, such as an educated and ready workforce, employment opportunities provided by attracting and sustaining local industry, desirable schools providing a top notch education and certainly the correlation between education and the crime level.

The school board can prove itself accountable by setting and attaining high goals for our students and our district. The school district report cards provided by the state are a major accountability factor that includes school attendance, test scores, student growth, dropout rate, meeting the needs of minorities, low income families and special needs students and so much more. However, I believe we need more feedback from our community ranging from parent and civic involvement, local industries, and advocate agencies. I feel partnerships should be formed with law enforcement agencies, and local councils. Opinion surveys may give areas of concern and focus for local educational forums and committees that seek and embrace direct input into area educational needs specific to Natchitoches parish.

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.

In my opinion, over the last five years the district has worked diligently to provide clear, concise and practical curriculum support to our teachers to meet the challenges they face daily in a high stakes testing environment. Despite challenges and setbacks I have seen the curriculum team assess the data and revamp grade level and subject area curriculum to align our district with the state requirements.

I have also seen the district and the Sherriff's Department work together to create a mutual partnership benefitting both. Between the DARE program, attendance assistance and having a deputy at each school this has been a successful partnership.

However, I feel that the workplace we have created for our teachers, administrators and other employees has become extremely negative, stressful and isn't encouraging input from the people that are directly involved with students on a daily basis. I feel that our district is not focused on the needs of our students and their individual schools as much as it has become focused on providing a recipe for all to follow, despite each school's unique needs or relativity of that recipe. Guidelines are needed and create continuity across a district, but we cannot forget that each school has its own culture as well as strengths and weaknesses. We need a leader that will allow input, a positive culture and allow educators to make decisions they have been trained to do for their individual students and schools. Without those makings we will fail to retain highly qualified and invested teachers and employees in this district.

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?

District 7 covers a very diverse portion of Natchitoches parish. The students in the district are zoned for Lakeview High School, Natchitoches Central High School, Goldonna Elementary/Jr. High School, Fairview Alpha

Elementary and the city schools in Natchitoches (previously L.P. Vaughn). My concern would be for all of the citizens in this district, not only those in the area that I live, since I would be the representative to all in District 7 if elected. I believe we should perform as a team that works together to support each other to create a successful parish for all of us to reside in.

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?

If a parent or a principal were to approach me about a maintenance issue at a campus or a situation I would refer them to the director of that program or the superintendent. The parent or principal should follow the policy and protocol that has been implemented by the district. If either of these people has followed that path and remains unhappy with the outcome, I would want them to contact me as a school board member, allow me to hear the concerns and I would approach the superintendent to understand the reason for whatever the resolution would be. I would welcome the opportunity to act as a liaison between the two parties if the issue is just a misunderstanding. However, if the issue is more than a misunderstanding and regarded a policy that was unfair or an outdated procedure causing dissension then I should put forth the proposal for a change in policy. At that point, it would be up to the superintendent or board to vote on and possibly implement that change in policy.

6. Consider the goals of the A+ Coalition, listed on the attached cover letter; do you believe those are achievable goals? Why or why not? Are any of particular importance to you? Why?

I believe the goals that the A+ Coalition has set to be met by the 2025 school year are in direct agreement with the goals set by the state of Louisiana. I do believe these goals are challenging, but with the tools and support provided by the state and the district to our teachers and

administrators I do believe that the goals can be met. Each year the state has created a path for transition to meet these goals and the district curriculum team has worked tirelessly along with the teachers to implement the needed changes in our classrooms. Some form of dual enrollment or workplace preparation is extremely important to me. I would love to see more partnerships with the technical schools, colleges and even creating internships with local industry if possible. Along with the dual enrollment process I would encourage our district to offer counseling to assist the students in identifying the correct educational program to suit their individual needs. So many of our students do not know the necessary requirements for jobs or even what jobs are available in our society today. They begin higher education with the thoughts of achieving a degree but not necessarily knowing the path they would like to pursue. I feel we can do a better job of opening their eyes to opportunities available to them.

However, I feel that it will also take the parents and community providing support to our district in order for that to happen. In the end, it will benefit all areas of our parish and should be approached as a team effort. We should be mindful that all we do should always be about the kids.