

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2024



Dawn Liphardt – LD 27

1. **Local Control** - With so many decisions from the legislature impacting local boards, NASB is interested in your view of local control. Regarding education, what decisions do you feel are best made at the school board level vs. the State level?

I am a strong supporter of local control. I believe the role and responsibility at the state level is to set guidelines and required goals to assure our students are prepared for life whether they go on to college or choose another path. It is the responsibility of our local school boards, working with parents, to implement the general policies as set at the state level.

2. **School Funding** - Every year the legislature makes decisions about the way schools are funded, making predictability of funding a challenge. What changes and/or adjustments, if any, do you think the Legislature should address?

Our current funding is not working for either our education system or the taxpayers funding the needs of our teachers and students. I have a set of guiding principles I will look to when trying to address education funding. They include making sure our public schools have the tools and resources they need to prepare students for the future, putting into place policies making it easier for teachers qualified in other states to obtain certificates in Nebraska, and developing a tax system which provides year to year stability to our education budget.

3. **Role of Education in the State** - What role do you think PK-12 Education plays in the future success of the State and your community?

Investing in PK-12 Education is investing in the future of Nebraska for many reasons. A child's education provides them with the foundational knowledge, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills necessary for success. PK-12 Education is important for social and emotional development and fosters lifelong learning habits that produce responsible young adults. Public Schools are important because they provide equity and access for all to have an education and this in turn provides for better economic growth and stability for Nebraska.

4. **Educational Workforce** - Educational workforce continues to be a challenge across the State from teachers to bus drivers. What would be your plan to address this challenge?

At the state level I would work for occupational licensing reform and jobs training programs to help bolster the workforce. I would support investing state dollars into high school students who want to begin learning and working in vocational trades. I would also support occupational licensing reform as a way to address the workforce issue.

5. **Mandates** - School districts continue to be challenged by the increasing unfunded mandates put upon them by the State and Federal government. What is your response to mandates and the State's role in them?

In general, I do not like mandates handed down from the state without first working with the districts to determine how they would affect both practice and the district's budget. Not all mandates are applicable to all districts. We must avoid creating more work and more expense at the peril of our local school districts. Of course, the number one priority for any mandate is that it meets the criteria of safe schools and properly preparing our students for the future.

Final Thoughts

Overall Nebraska's Education system has many strengths, particularly in community support and high graduation rates, but it also faces significant challenges. With strategic investment and focus on equity, technology, and workforce alignment, Nebraska can continue to improve its educational outcomes and provide high quality education for all students.

How can voters contact you?

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