

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Brad von Gillern – LD 4

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?

This is a delicate balance because local school districts desire state funding but want to maintain full control over educational matters. In recent years the Legislature has considered a number of different funding options, including and up to full funding of public schools. That was not embraced as it was believed that local control would be diminished if that were to happen. I am of the belief that our TEEOSA funding formula is not perfect and am hopeful that the current School Financing Review Commission will offer some new ideas. The best outcomes for kids and taxpayers would be that local constituents increase their level of engagement with school boards to elect solid board members who act with financial integrity, and the state doesn't have to be involved.

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?

See above. I am grateful for the work of the SFRC and am confident that the members have the best interests of Nebraskans in mind for their work. I intend to embrace their findings and am especially appreciative of the data driven approach to their work.

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?

Other than public safety and keeping students and families safe, I can think of no greater priority than educating our children. An educated populace who understands the impact of their decisions, understands both mistakes and triumphs in our nation's history and can "do the math", is necessary for the continued success of both Nebraska and the US. I will do all that I can to provide the best education for every child in the State of Nebraska, while also working hard to ensure that districts are stewarding their taxpayer dollars well.

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?

The Legislature has passed several significant programs in recent years including the Teacher Recruitment and Retention Act, and student loan repayment assistance via grants, and forgivable loan programs. These, along with other newer programs have contributed to a significant drop in vacancies, even though specific areas such as Special Education continue to be challenging roles to fill.

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?

There never seems to be a shortage of "good ideas" that float around the legislature about how schools should be managed, what curriculum is being overtaught, or not taught at all, and ways that we can improve the lives of students and their families. Most of these should be brought at the local level where the families impacted would have the most say, and the taxpayers impacted could weigh-in on whether they want to pay for it or not (see response above regarding local control). I, myself brought a mandate in my second year which was, in itself, pretty innocuous, but on top of the 20-30 other mandates that each district must manage, was likely burdensome. I doubt that these mandates will cease, but we certainly need to be more thoughtful as to the impact on districts.

Final Thoughts

I believe that overall our educational systems in the State of Nebraska are healthy and high-performing. There are certainly areas of concern that need additional focus. Throwing more money at problems does not seem to change performance however and state money is certainly at risk under the current budget projections. I will fight for education and am pleased to have a good working relationship with all of the district leaders in my Legislative District Four, and with the NASB leadership. We must maintain those relationships to ensure that we can thoughtfully consider all ideas that may improve educational performance while stewarding funds well.

How can voters contact you?

Email is the best way to contact me: Bvg4ne@gmail.com