

2017 Iowa City Education Association School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Candidates, please send your written responses to Brady Shutt at shutt.brady@iowacityschools.org or at shuttsaylor@yahoo.com no later than 5PM on Monday, August 7. If you have any questions or experience technical problems, please email Brady or call/text him at 319-383-4141.

1. Please share with us why you are running for the Board. Specifically highlight professional or personal experiences that will make you a good Board member.

I taught special education at West High School from 2004 to 2014. I was active in ICEA serving on the Rep Council, Exec Board, as President, as a member of the Labor Management Team and the Health Insurance Committee and co-chief negotiator for the Negotiated Agreement. In addition I am currently serving a term as a community member on the Johnson County Juvenile Justice and Youth Development Committee, and am a member of the Rape Victim Advocacy Program's Advisory Council. I currently serve as Co-PTO President at Kirkwood Elementary. I also currently work as an educator in the Inpatient Child and Adolescent Psychiatric unit at the UIHC.

2. Please list your top priorities if elected.

Seeing the FMP through to completion is critical. We also need to increase a feeling of belonging and ensure equitable educational opportunities for racial minority youth, LGBTQA students and students with disabilities. One of the most important things in the current political climate is to ensure our teachers and staff retain the benefits and protections many of us have fought hard for.

3. In the past two years, what do you think the Board's biggest success has been and what do you think its biggest failure has been?

Getting the FMP up and moving on time and on budget is a great success. Many schools are benefiting from these projects. Also having solid strategic goals for student achievement is another success. The biggest failure has been communication with the community and allowing the perception of mistrust to continue.

4. In your view, what is the appropriate role for ICEA--the teachers' union--to play in the District's decision making process?

In my view the role the ICEA has been playing, or the many roles, are very appropriate. I also know from experience that District's in general have been forced by law to engage in a relationship with the Teachers Association. I would like to see that continue uninterrupted as possible, obviously taking into account the new legal landscape.

5. Over the past several years, funding from the State of Iowa (Supplemental State Aid) has been woefully inadequate. Cuts to federal funding for education are also likely. Approximately 80% of the Iowa City School District's budget goes for personnel costs. Given these factors, what will your budget priorities and goals be if you are elected to the Board? What (if any) areas would be off limits from cuts?

I believe that the 80% is money well spent because it is how we directly impact students. I would not support seeing that lowered. One reason I support the GO Bond is that quite simply I believe in extra money for educational needs. I am also concerned in the current climate that the Administration will want to see that 80% for personnel lower than that. I am a big believer that wasteful spending can recoup dollars, and we have a responsibility to cut back on that to help the bottom line.

6. Do you support the September GO Bond? Do you support the District's Facilities Master Plan?

7. In February 2017, the Iowa Legislature gutted much of the language in Chapter 20 of the Iowa Code that, for over forty years, had provided a proven, effective method for labor and management to come together in the collective bargaining process to resolve differences over topics such as wages, safety, leave, workplace conditions and insurance policies in the creation of a negotiated agreement (i.e. a contract). As a prospective Board member, how do you think the District should move forward after these changes? What role do you see the Board playing? And, what do you see your role as an individual Board member being in this?

As stated previously, I would like to see the District continue its positive and respectful relationship with the ICEA. I do see Boards playing a tremendous role now because legally it is ONLY school boards that can ensure Administrations provide important protections and benefits to the employees, and I plan on taking that very seriously. As an individual Board member I will be able to provide my colleagues with the knowledge of what questions to ask, a bit of the inside baseball of how the process (used to) work, and a perspective of someone who has been in the classroom doing the work on the front lines every day.

8. The salary schedule for the Iowa City Schools uses base wage as a starting point and then compensates teachers for their additional years of experience as a teacher, as well as for reaching certain educational benchmarks (e.g. MA plus 30 graduate hours). This salary schedule is the result of decades of collective bargaining. Will you commit to support the salary schedule being used in the Iowa City School District?

Yes.

9. Do you support maintaining all benefits in the current contract that were agreed upon in good faith over decades of bargaining?

Yes.

10. There is a shortage of teachers at the state and national level. The continued attacks on public education are worsening this problem. How can Iowa City Schools continue to attract and retain the best and brightest teachers and staff members? If elected to the Board, how will you contribute to that effort?

The only thing I love better than teaching youth, is reaching out and recruiting teachers. I feel ICCSD will be in a beneficial position to attract the best and the brightest simply due to it being desirable and our attractive contract. In addition I would like to see more work done reaching out to local minority communities, or our own promising minority youth to bring more minorities into teaching, I think the more our teaching staff resembles our student populations the easier it will be to help close achievement gaps.

