

2017 Iowa City Education Association School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Attention: Brady Shutt at shutt.brady@iowacityschools.org or at shuttsaylor@yahoo.com

Due: 5PM on Monday, August 7.

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 am running for school board because I want to make a positive difference in the lives of the children and families in our School District community by working together in a positive manner with my fellow board members. I also want to advocate for those who aren't heard, especially in the special needs and immigrant community. My goal is to be a strong voice for all ICCSD students and families and rebuild the trust between our families and the school district administration.

I am a parent of 3 children who have attended or attend school in the district. I was founder and owner of Children's Center for Therapy ("CCT" now ChildServe), which provides professional therapies and services to children with disabilities. We were the largest provider of therapy services in the community with locations in Iowa City, North Liberty, and outreaches in Washington, Fairfield, and other small communities. At CCT, I dedicated 12 years of my life to my passion of giving opportunities for learning and growth to children. I have also been a hands-on advocate for immigrant support and have successfully bridged gaps in friendship, employment, education, housing, and life skills for those in need. Many of the community programs I have helped start are still functioning successfully today. These include Manantial (Hispanic support group for mothers with special needs children), Hill's Christmas Party (serves hundreds of people every year) Community Bike Camp (uses special techniques to teach special needs kids to ride a bike independently), and social skills classes.

I am currently the vice-president PTO chair at West High School. I served as the president of the Northwest Junior High PTO and this past year I served on the Liberty High Transition Committee and the Immigration Task Force. I have been a member of the Special Education Advisory committee. I have also been involved in volunteer work outside the ICCSD community. I currently serve on the grant committee of Johnson County Foundation, am a member 5224 Good Grants and I am treasurer of Prairie Green School. I also served as a board member and Treasurer to the Iowa Children's Museum and Iowa City Compassion, supported Girls on the Run and was a Big Brother/Big Sister for 6 years.

I have a proven record of leadership, fiscal knowledge and responsibility along with my no nonsense/pragmatic approach to problem-solving. In addition, I am a service oriented individual that loves the opportunity to serve our school staff and community to help others succeed.

2. Please list your top priorities if elected.

My top priorities will initially be to: ensure that teachers and their respective schools have what they need to be successful for the 2017-2018 school year, that we as a district provide requisite supports children need to be successful students, and that the opening of Liberty High and all district schools proceed smoothly for everyone.

My short term priority is to work with my fellow board members to manage and effectively eliminate the extreme distrust amongst our community for the district leadership so we can create a better relationship between families, their schools, and our administration. A parent or guardian's involvement at their child's school is a key factor to the success of the student. It is vital they feel their input is welcomed. If needed or asked by staff I would help by using my connections in the community to help support their efforts to find a successful way to bridge the gaps in communication to help everyone feel connected to our common purpose of helping ALL children succeed.

My long term priorities are firstly to supply teachers with the tools they need to provide effective classroom instruction and to ensure that any outside impediments to their work in the classroom are eliminated or minimized. Secondly, I will listen to teachers and students and review the data to determine if the district is effectively utilizing its non-teacher resources, or if those resources could be put to use better in the classroom. Finally, if the general obligation bond is successful, I intend to work together with my fellow board members to ensure proper and responsible implementation of the district's facilities master plan.

Overall, my top priority is to work with the next group of board members so we can all have an effective working relationship and keep our focus on helping students to be successful by resolving the issues of inequality and special needs, as well as continuing the many excellent programs provided by our amazing community of teachers and staff.

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?

The board's biggest success has been the adoption of the weighted resource allocation model.

The board's biggest failure is its inability to find common ground to work better together. I feel that was highly evident when they voted 4-3 to give our Superintendent a raise that would surpass what would be available for teachers and staff, and possibly negatively affect the staff morale. In addition, it is concerning that our school district has not shown positive growth in the challenges facing our district in regards to the concerns with special education. The concerns and issues in this area only seem to continue to get worse, as well the achievement gaps between students who are white and non-white, and affluent and FRL. The highly controversial decision of giving the Superintendent a raise has made the passing of the GO Bond even more challenging.

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

As the exclusive and sole bargaining representative for all the teachers and paraeducators within the ICCSD, ICEA has a central role to play in the district's decision making process. In addition to its role as the exclusive and sole bargaining representative for teachers and paraeducators, I fully support having an open dialog with the ICEA representatives and its members and working together to make ICCSD the best school possible for all children and their families.

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?

Our priority must be to ensure that the classrooms in our district are adequately sized and staffed with teachers and paraeducators. My understanding is that while 80% of the ICCSD's budget may go for personnel costs, not all of those personnel costs are teachers or paraeducators. While we do not know what the future holds, my intent would be to work with the the ICEA, fellow board members, and the superintendent to examine all areas, including central administration personnel and money spent on consulting contracts to determine how to best keep cuts from impacting the classroom and ultimately our students. Hopefully, our lobbying efforts will be successful and the Iowa legislature will recognize that Iowa must fund education to better compete against other states and prepare our children for the future.

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

I do support the District having a Facilities Master Plan. I recognize that growing enrollment, while a good situation to be in, may be challenging going forward for many reasons.

I also support the District seeking a general obligation bond. However, I do have some concerns about the present bond referendum. Having said that, if I am elected to serve on the board, I will fully support the community's vote on the matter. If it is necessary to bring a future bond forward, I would work with my fellow board members to bring unified support to pass it as well as work diligently with the ICCSD community to listen to their concerns/issues with the prior bond and understanding why it did not pass.

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?

I do not support what the legislature has done with regard to Iowa's Collective Bargaining law. I strongly believe that the Iowa City Community School District should bargain in good faith with the ICEA. Since the Board's only employee is the Superintendent, the Board and its superintendent should negotiate in good faith and come to an agreement with the ICEA so that we can all focus our attention on the students. As an individual board member, I expect to work with my fellow board members to recognize the importance of keeping satisfied teachers in the classroom.