

First State Educate's 2026 School Board Candidate Survey

Email *

hecksterde@gmail.com

Full Name *

Mark E. Heck

Cell Phone Number *

4435539350

School District *

Appoquinimink

School board members play an important role in guiding the direction of public school districts. The questions below are designed to help voters understand how candidates think about governance, decision-making, and student success. While candidates may express their ideas in different ways, strong responses often reflect several core principles of effective school board leadership.

Public school boards are responsible for setting direction, overseeing district leadership, and stewarding public resources on behalf of the community. **Why do you want to serve on your local school board?**

I have served my country and state for over 34 years before retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Delaware Air National Guard in 2019, served on the Board of Directors of the largest credit union in Delaware for 7 years, and now currently serve as a JROTC instructor at Glasgow High School have given me the unique skill sets to help the Appoquinimink School Board move forward.

School board members make decisions that affect thousands of students and millions of public dollars. **What principles will guide how you make those decisions?**

Thirty four years serving in the United States military leaves a deeply held conviction towards the way we live our lives. The Air Force core values that have been instilled in my life over those years, I still try to exemplify in my life today. Those core values are Integrity First, Service before Self, and Excellence in all we do.

School boards are ultimately responsible for ensuring districts improve outcomes for students. **What student outcomes should your district improve over the next four years?**

While the Appo School District's proficiency ratings in ELA and Math are above the State's averages which they like to highlight in their 2025 annual report, the averages are only about 60% proficient in ELA and only 40% in Math. These are the highs the 40% in Math is in Elementary School which falls to 25% by High School. While we can debate the value of standardized testing, it is the only effective tool currently available to evaluate learning outcomes. I know the Board is currently working with a literacy program with Elementary programs in ELA that shows promise, and hopefully we can make improvements in the Math arena as well.

School boards must work across differences and remain connected to the communities they serve. **How will you work with fellow board members, district leadership, and families to move your district forward?**

As a military member and a director on a board it is important to have a cohesive team. When an issue is presented, it is important that you argue your thoughts on the issue, and to listen to opposing viewpoints. Once a consensus is made by the Board, you all have to go forth as one team and stand behind what the majority has selected in a unified manner. Clear, concise, and constant communication with the community is imperative in ensuring trust with the decisions being made by the Board.

School boards are making decisions that affect students and district resources. **How should board members use data, research, and community input to guide those decisions?**

My experience in the military, financial institutions, and even my classroom requires the use of data and research to search for root causes, and successful outcomes. You also have to have the ability to identify that the data and research is correct and not biased. When I was the Board lead for the Supervisory Committee for Dover Federal Credit Union, it was my job to take external and internal audit findings, utilize the data and a vast array of reports, to identify and take corrective action ensuring compliance to ensure successful outcomes. During my tenure we raised our rating with the National Credit Union Administration. It is also important to have community input and giving multiple venues available for concerned citizens to voice that input to ensure trust in the process.

School board members communicate decisions to the public. **How will you ensure the community has an honest, clear picture of district conditions and can see how the board is making decisions?**

Appoquinimink School District does a fairly good job of this. They have the Board meetings monthly that are saved and available on the district's website. Families typically don't have the time nor compunction to attend a midweek meeting of the school board for two hours or gather around the computer to watch a school board meeting online. They are relying on the representatives that they elected on providing the right kind of leadership to ensure the continued performance of the district.

School boards often bring together members with different perspectives. **How would you approach working collaboratively with other board members while keeping the focus on the district's long-term goals for students?**

I think everyone that selects to become a member of a school board has the best interests of students on their mind. They have to go through an election process, it costs money to run, there is no compensation, and it is a thankless job, that rarely gets celebrated for its successes but often is subjugated to a barrage of attacks for its failures. That in mind, it is important that the members of the board understand that even though we may have differing viewpoints, were all there for one reason and to work together in collaboration to ensure successful outcomes are realized.

Please upload your Bio (summary of resume or professional experience). We will post your Bio on our candidate page. *

Short Bio - MARK...

↑ Add file

Please upload your picture- high resolution preferred *

picture - MARK H...

↑ Add file

This form was created inside of First State Educate.

Google Forms