

First State Educate's 2026 School Board Candidate Survey

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Christina School District

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've been part of the Christina School District community since my oldest started kindergarten in 2003. What began as PTA volunteering and teaching Junior Achievement in classrooms – work I still do today – grew into a deep commitment to making sure every child in our district gets a real chance to succeed. As Trevor Noah writes, 'you can only dream of what you can imagine.' Many of our students come from communities where their sense of what's possible has been limited by circumstances beyond their control. I show up every day because I believe we can change that – and because I've seen what happens when a school board is focused, intentional, and genuinely committed to kids.

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

Two principles guide every decision I make. First, every student matters – not as a group, not as a statistic, but as an individual child deserving of a real education and a real future. Every dollar we spend and every policy we pass should connect back to that. Second, our educators are the experts. Teachers, principals, librarians, and administrators have professional training and experience that deserves respect. The board's job is to set clear goals and make sure the resources are there to meet them – then trust the professionals to do their work.

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

Two outcomes are at the forefront of our work. First, third grade literacy. Research is clear – students who are not reading proficiently by third grade face significant challenges throughout their education. This is the foundation everything else is built on, and it aligns with Delaware's own strategic plan. We must get this right.

Second, graduation readiness. Not just earning a diploma, but being genuinely prepared for whatever comes next – skilled trades, military, workforce, or college. Many of our students arrive at high school carrying gaps from earlier grades. We owe it to them to close those gaps and make sure they leave us ready to imagine and pursue a future that is genuinely their own.

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?**

It all starts with listening – not to respond, but to understand. That means creating space for people to feel genuinely heard and respected. It means learning to listen through the pauses, giving others time to think and articulate what they really mean.

It means respecting that every board member, educator, and family brings real expertise and lived experience to the table. And it means being honest when I don't know something or when I've made a mistake.

That kind of listening is how trust is built – with fellow board members, with our superintendent and staff, and with the families we serve. And trust is what makes it possible to move forward together, even across real differences.

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?**

Research tells us what might work. Data tells us where we are and whether what research suggests is actually working in our district. Community input tells us what matters to the people we serve. All three are essential – and knowing when to lean on each one is a skill the board is actively developing. One of the most important things we are learning is how to ask the right questions. A board's job is to ask strategic questions – are our students learning, are we closing gaps, are we keeping our promises to the community – and trust our superintendent and staff to work out the how. That distinction sounds simple but takes real practice. We are doing that work, and we are doing it transparently.

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?**

Honest communication starts with closing the loop. Our community listening campaign was designed to hear what matters to families and community members. Now the board will return to that same community with a clear report on where we are and whether we are delivering on what we heard. Beyond that, more than half of our board meeting time will be dedicated to discussing our goals and tracking our progress – in public, transparently, where anyone can see how we are making decisions and whether they are working. We also conduct quarterly self evaluations – grading ourselves on how well we are governing and discussing openly what we need to do better. We set the goals together with our community. We owe it to them to report back honestly – including when things aren't going as planned.

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?**

When board members disagree – and we do – the most important thing is having something concrete to come back to. For us that is data and a shared focus on student outcomes: what students know and are able to do. Not what we feel, not what we prefer, not what is easiest.

Everything else – programs, budgets, staffing, facilities – is either an input or an output. Important, but not the board's primary focus. When we stay anchored to that question – are our students learning – it becomes easier to work across differences because we are all looking at the same thing.

That shared language and shared focus is what keeps a board pointed in the right direction, even when perspectives differ.

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

Monica Moriak B...

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