

First State Educate's 2026 School Board Candidate Survey

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Red Clay Consolidated 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?**

After being a school board member for close to four years and a classroom teacher in the district over twenty years, I have realized the importance of community input on items and areas of discussion that school boards are entrusted to debate before making sound, data-based decisions that impact all stakeholders. It is important to hear the voices of all stakeholders including students, families, educators, and district personnel that board members take an oath to serve. It is also important to hold district leadership accountable in decisions affecting the success and welfare of our students in an equitable way, ensuring adequate resources for those of highest need. It is essential that district leaders are transparent with the board and the community to minimize mistrust and the spread of misinformation. District communities must be confident that their school board members are good stewards of their tax dollars and demand these funds are distributed equitably regardless of where one lives or socio-economic status. I am honored to be a school board member and proud to represent the wishes and needs of my constituents.

With nearly four years of experience as a school board member and over twenty years as a classroom teacher in this district, I have developed a deep understanding of the importance of community input in school board decision-making. School boards are entrusted to engage in thoughtful, data-informed discussions that impact all stakeholders, and those decisions must be grounded in the voices of the community.

It is essential that we actively listen to and consider the perspectives of students, families, educators, and district personnel, those we are elected to serve. Strong governance requires not only informed decision-making but also accountability. School boards must hold district leadership accountable for decisions that affect student success, ensuring that resources are allocated equitably and that the needs of our most vulnerable students are prioritized.

Transparency is also critical. When district leadership communicates openly with both the board and the community, it builds trust and reduces the spread of misinformation. Our communities deserve confidence that their school board members are responsible stewards of public funds and are committed to equitable investment across all schools, regardless of zip code or socioeconomic status. It is an honor to serve as a school board member, and I am proud to represent the voices, needs, and aspirations of my community

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

I have dedicated my life to serving this community, and that commitment continues to guide every decision I make. As a school board member, I lead with a clear set of principles: equity, accountability, transparency, trust, and a focus on meaningful outcomes for our community.

Every decision should be grounded in accurate, relevant data—but also in a deep understanding of the people behind that data. Our students, families, and educators deserve decisions that reflect both their needs and their lived experiences.

I recognize that board decisions do not impact every part of our district equally. That is why equity must remain at the center of our work. Resources should be directed where they are needed most, not simply where voices are the loudest or influence is strongest.

I am committed to ensuring that our district operates with transparency and integrity, building trust with the community we serve. Families should feel confident that decisions are made thoughtfully, responsibly, and always with students at the forefront.

For me, this role is not just about governance, it is about service. It is about making decisions that create opportunities, strengthen our schools, and ensure every student has what they need to succeed.

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

Over the next four years, our focus must be on improving student achievement, especially in early literacy, while also addressing declining enrollment in a thoughtful and strategic way. We have made important investments in pre-K and early literacy because we know that reading proficiency by third grade is foundational to long-term success. At the same time, we must ensure that our highest-need schools, often in low-income communities, receive the resources and support necessary to close achievement gaps.

As a board member, I have prioritized transparency and accuracy in how we understand student outcomes. Early in my tenure, I recognized that district data was being presented in a way that masked disparities between schools. I took action to ensure we disaggregate that data so we can clearly identify where support is needed most and respond accordingly. That work led to the creation of a Curriculum and Student Achievement Committee, helping us make more informed, targeted decisions.

I also believe in pairing data with action. When we saw enrollment declining and programs shrinking, I helped lead the creation of a community-driven task force and later a district-wide committee to identify solutions. That work resulted in innovative approaches to expanding opportunities for students, including career pathways that better reflect today's workforce.

Improving student outcomes in our district must focus on both increasing overall achievement and addressing disparities between our highest- and lowest-performing schools. While we have made important investments in early childhood education and science of learning curricula to strengthen foundational literacy, particularly third grade reading proficiency, we must continue to ensure these strategies are producing measurable results across all schools.

A key priority is ensuring equity in outcomes, especially for students in our highest-need, low-income communities. This requires not only equitable allocation of resources, such as Title I funding and support staff, but also a commitment to using disaggregated data to clearly identify where gaps exist and where interventions are needed most.

Additionally, improving student outcomes must include strengthening transparency and accountability in how data is presented. By separating and closely analyzing school-level performance, we can better target support, monitor progress in real time, and engage the community in understanding both challenges and successes.

Finally, student success must also be aligned with post-secondary readiness. Expanding career pathways and program offerings to ensure students are prepared for a variety of futures—whether college, career, or technical training, particularly given that many graduates pursue options outside of traditional four-year institutions.

My approach is simple: be honest about the challenges, use data to guide decisions, and always bring forward solutions. Our students deserve nothing less.

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?**

Moving a school district forward requires more than just decision-making, it requires trust, collaboration, and a willingness to listen, especially when perspectives differ. I approach board service by focusing on shared goals and keeping students at the center of every conversation. While we may not always agree, I believe respectful dialogue and data-informed discussions lead to stronger, more thoughtful outcomes. With district leadership, I prioritize transparency and accountability. That means asking the right questions, ensuring we have accurate and timely information, and maintaining open communication so the board can make informed decisions. A strong partnership between the board and administration is essential to turning ideas into action and ensuring our work reflects both district priorities and community needs.

Equally important is staying connected to the community we serve. I am committed to being visible, accessible, and actively listening, not just during times of concern, but consistently. Families and educators deserve to know their voices are heard and that their input helps shape decisions. When we engage meaningfully and communicate clearly, we build trust and strengthen our schools. Ultimately, progress happens when we work across differences, stay grounded in data, and remain focused on what matters most and that is delivering the best possible outcomes for our students. Our district has both incredible strengths and urgent challenges. We must be honest about both if we want to move forward.

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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?

Strong school board decisions don't come from one source, they come from the thoughtful balance of data, research, and the voices of the community.

Data provides the foundation. It gives us a clear, objective picture of student outcomes, enrollment trends, and how resources are being used. But data must be presented transparently and broken down in a way that allows us to truly understand where we are succeeding and where we need to do better.

Without that clarity, we risk overlooking the students and schools that need the most support.

Research helps us move forward with confidence. By looking at proven practices and learning from what works in other districts, we can make informed, forward-thinking decisions that are sustainable not just quick fixes.

Equally important is community input. Families, educators, and students bring perspectives that data alone cannot capture. Listening early and often, ensures that decisions reflect real experiences and build trust within the community. At the same time, it is our responsibility to balance those perspectives with data and research so decisions serve the entire district, not just the loudest voices.

When we bring these three elements together, we create a stronger, more transparent decision-making process. A district that is equitable, responsible, and always centered on what matters most: student success.

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?

Clear and honest communication is essential to building and maintaining public trust. As a board member, I believe the community deserves a transparent, accurate understanding of district conditions and how decisions are made. I will advocate for data to be presented clearly, accurately, and disaggregated so the public can see both our strengths and our challenges without information being oversimplified or misleading. Transparency means sharing not only positive outcomes, but also areas where improvement is needed and explaining why certain decisions are made.

I am committed to ensuring board discussions and decisions are accessible to the public through open meetings, clear agendas, and thoughtful explanations of the data, research, and community input that inform our actions. When complex or difficult decisions arise, I believe it is especially important to communicate the rationale behind them, the alternatives considered, and how community feedback was weighed.

Equally important is listening. I will remain visible and accessible to families and community members, encourage ongoing dialogue, and take responsibility for answering questions honestly and respectfully. By communicating consistently, grounding decisions in transparent data, and engaging the community throughout the process, the board can foster trust and ensure the public understands not just what decisions are made, but how and why they are made.

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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?**

School boards bring together individuals with diverse experiences, perspectives, and priorities, and effective governance depends on the ability to work through those differences respectfully and productively. I approach collaboration by focusing on shared goals, most importantly, what will best serve students and strengthen the district over the long term, rather than individual positions or agendas. I believe strong collaboration begins with listening. I value thoughtful dialogue, ask questions to understand differing viewpoints, and remain open to ideas that may challenge my own thinking. Even when disagreement exists, I strive to keep discussions respectful, data informed and grounded in facts rather than emotion. Diverse perspectives, when approached constructively, lead to stronger and more sustainable decisions.

Keeping the district's long-term goals at the forefront requires discipline and clarity. I work to anchor board discussions in strategic priorities, student outcomes, and reliable data so decisions are not driven by short term pressures or the loudest voices. When difficult decisions arise, I focus on how choices will impact students not just today, but years from now.

Ultimately, collaboration is built on trust, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to students. By working across differences, remaining focused on evidence and long-term outcomes, and treating fellow board members as partners in service, I believe boards can make decisions that are thoughtful, responsible, and centered on the future success of all students.

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