



**Lincoln Public Schools Candidate Questionnaire**  
(Please feel free to attach your answers on a separate piece of paper)

1). The Lincoln Public Schools consolidated tax levy is currently \$1.37 per \$100 of valuation. Overall, Lincoln Public Schools receives 63% of all property tax revenue in Lincoln, the City of Lincoln receives 14%, Lancaster County receives 14%, and all other taxing authorities share the remaining 8%.

Do you feel this is the appropriate level of funding for Lincoln Public Schools?

**ANSWER:** Yes, but I think it is important to note that other local governmental subdivisions have decided over several years to not keep their levy levels up with inflation or the city's growth. This has caused fiscal crises that through measured and conservative increases in their levy rates would have prevented the ballooning fiscal crises facing some governmental subdivisions.

[AND]

Is the way, we as a community, currently allocate the overall property tax levy appropriate?

**ANSWER:** No. I think as a state we need to revisit our tax structure. Too many needed governmental services and infrastructure support get their funding from property taxes, which are probably some of the most unfair taxes there are. For instance, State Aid to Education was created to relieve property taxpayers. It is made up of state sales and income taxes. Most of those taxes are gathered in Lincoln and Omaha and go out to school districts across the state. If entities other than individual taxpayers were required to carry their fair share, property taxes could go down for everyone and over reliance on state sales and income taxes would decrease.

2). In our Six Statements of Core Policy, the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce encourages fiscal responsibility and the pursuit of government efficiencies.

In what ways do you plan to encourage fiscal responsibility and efficiencies in the Lincoln Public Schools System?

**ANSWER:** As a Member of the Lincoln Board of Education, I provide oversight regarding LPS's annual budget. I ask probing questions and insist on transparency. I have worked for and successfully secured contractual agreements with teachers and other unionized staff that keep staff costs within reason, while keeping the teaching profession attractive for people to have a career in. I have long been an advocate for depreciation funds so replacement of District's transportation fleet, computers, etc. does not become a sudden, overpriced burden, hurting taxpayers' pocketbooks.

**3). Personnel costs are most often the largest driving force behind municipal budgets.**

**As a member of the Board of Education, how will you work to keep personnel cost manageable?**

**ANSWER:** By advocating for fair and balanced raises that meet the demands of inflation and respect the immense amount of education and dedication required to become an effective, successful teacher.

**[ AND ]**

**Should the district move to a “merit-based” system for salary increases?**

**ANSWER:** A real way to bust a school district's budget is to institute a "merit-based" system for salary increases. Substantial sums of money are needed to make across the board "merit-based" salary increases effective. Additionally, careful work must be done to ensure that the collegial work environment is not destroyed through well-meaning, but ill-thought out "merit-based" salary increases.

**At the same time, I do believe we can institute outcome-based measures for any future salary increases among our District's highest level administrators, as well as building level administrators. I believe it is fair and that we can explore ways to fund "merit-based" salary increases that require administrators to develop measurable outcomes that respond to issues such as our graduation rate and achievement gap.**

**4). What are some ways in which the business community can better partner with the public schools to meet the ever-growing need for an educated workforce in Lincoln?**

**ANSWER:** Meaningful partnerships with the business community could include businesses providing funding for workers to complete community service on work time for two hours per week. Mentoring students would be a good use of workers' time. Additionally, I would like to see a return to the concept of "school-to-work" relationships between junior and senior high students and employers. Matching interested students up with potential employers that would be willing to create

**apprenticeship opportunities in their businesses that would lead to full-time employment upon graduation could prove to be beneficial to everyone. Providing targeted scholarships to worthy, low-income students so they can pursue post-secondary educational objectives could be combined with internship programs leading to employment.**

**5). What will be the biggest challenge facing the Lincoln Public School system over the next 5 years?**

**ANSWER: Maintaining academic excellence during an austere economic climate will be our biggest challenge. We as school board members must strike a delicate balance between the needs for an educated workforce and the financial concerns among local taxpayers.**

**6). What do you see as your role as a member of the Lincoln Public Schools Board of Education?**

**ANSWER: A school board member is many things to many people. Among my responsibilities is to ensure an open and fair budget process that meets the needs of our community's students while respecting the concerns of taxpayers. It is also important that I am available to constituents from not only my subdistrict, but from across our community because all of our children and their families count and need a representative that is willing to be an active listener who follows through when change is needed.**