



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?

[AND]

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

State law currently mandates the funding mechanism for support of our Public Schools. The TEEOSA formula is supposed to recognize the communities resources and needs. – Basically it says Needs minus resources equals state aid.

I believe our community is an ardent supporter of our schools. We must all have an open mind to proposed (or to proposing) changes, recognizing that we have a responsibility to our children and the future of our state to provide a rigorous education.

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?

The Budget process is the first step in encouraging and supporting fiscal responsibility and efficiency. I personally believe we must focus resources on the classroom – making sure that we are meeting the needs of our children.

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?

[AND]

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

Personnel costs are the driving force behind the Lincoln Public Schools. The board has given directives to our staff to use a total package approach to negotiating salary increases. That approach has served our district well. Many districts look at salary and benefits separately. Only by keeping them in a total package can we address the true costs to our community.

Health insurance continues to be a huge factor in our benefits – and we continue to look at options.

A merit based option exists – but has no funding in the current contract. To implement a system such as this – we must consider the amount of dollars needed to implement, reward and maintain such a system. The pilot project in the Denver area for merit based pay had a significant infusion of dollars for this express purpose.

Secondly, there must be a comprehensive evaluative process that would allow any and all teachers to achieve a merit reward. I don’t believe you can just divide a pot up and say this group gets more/ this group gets less – without a comprehensive evaluative tool and a series of clear cut bench marks.

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?

The Chamber has been a strong partner with our Lincoln Schools. Job shadowing, apprenticeships, etc. give students a first look at our business community. We have classes that involve the home builders in our community – and make real impacts on neighborhoods. They build homes and get low to moderate income families into them – to become sustainable partners in our community. Projects such as this do not happen without our business community. I do believe there are opportunities to set up experiences with our students to get detailed information on the jobs of today – and how they must change to meet the future needs. 5). What will be the biggest challenge facing the Lincoln Public School system over the next 5 years?

Lincoln has been a fast growing district for each of the last eight years. In fact we grew 600 students last year – that’s an entire elementary school. Our community recognized that need and approved a comprehensive bond issue to update and add much needed classroom space. But we continue to grow at an alarming rate. We

must work to maintain our ability to provide a competitive and comprehensive educational experience for our children. That is the true stimulus in our economy. Our future depends on preparing our future leaders.

Keeping ahead of technology will be a challenge for a growing district such as Lincoln – and being able to translate that technology to students is a major challenge. Additionally, there is a growing demand for technology ethics. We seem to be a little behind in this area as a community.

Providing technology and innovation is the beginning—but ethical use of technology is also of great value

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

The board has several responsibilities.

- 1. Hire and evaluate the superintendent – it's required by law**
- 2. Establish, update and remain current on policies. Policies give directives to the staff, detailing what is required by our community for our schools. Policy is the major role of the Board of Education. I currently chair the comprehensive policy review committee. Many would consider it to be boring, but my perspective on this would be the board speaks through comprehensive policies.**
- 3. Budget – also required and an integral part of board service.**
- 4. To be a liaison with our constituency and the school district. The board is elected and must serve the community at large, being responsive and responsible to their constituency. Additionally, while we are elected by subdistricts, we have a responsibility to serve the educational needs of all children in our community.**