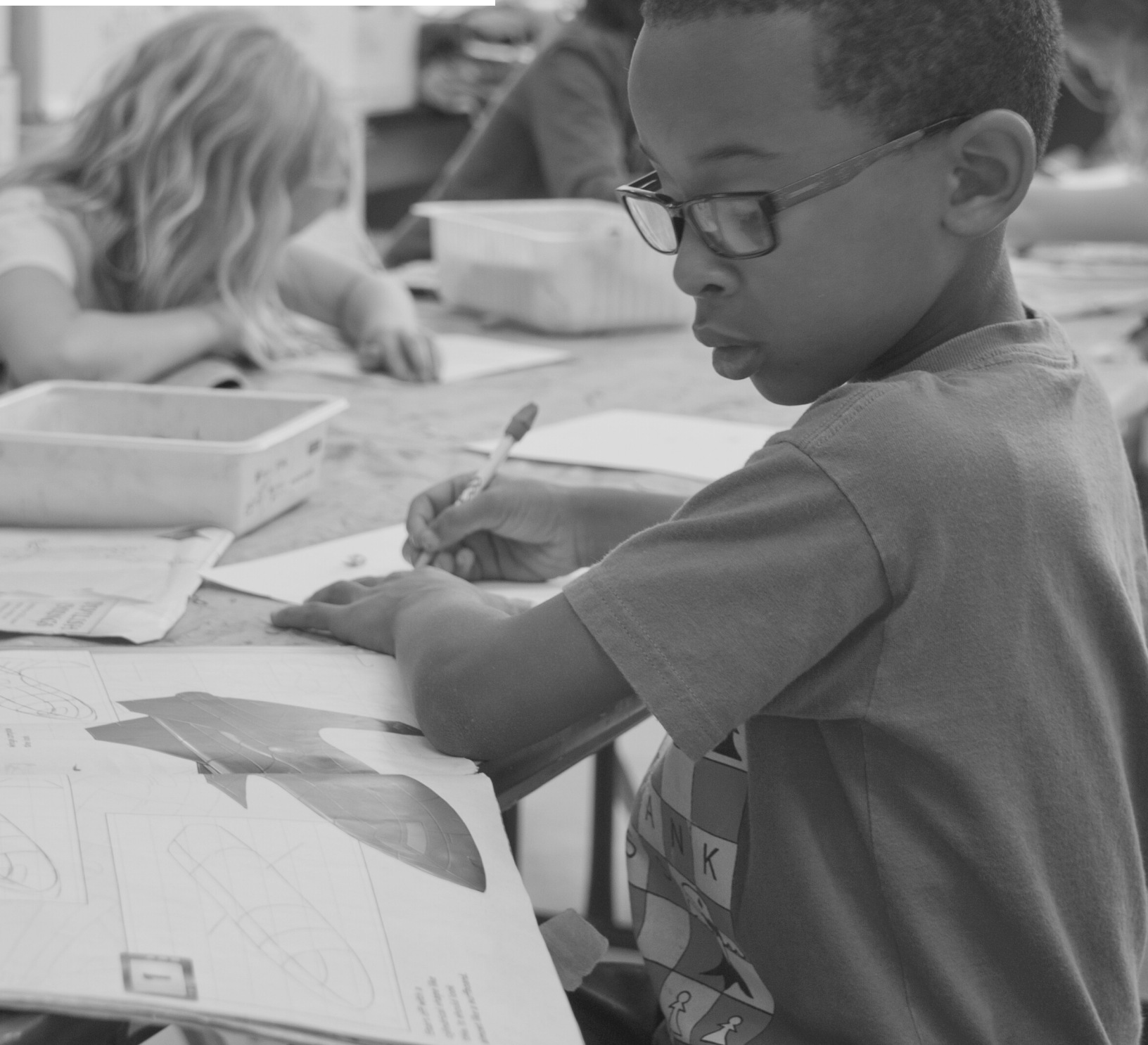


# 2020

## VOTER GUIDE

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Clark County School District &  
Nevada State Board of Education



This guide is brought to you by Opportunity 180, Nevada Partners, Teach For America Las Vegas, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Leaders in Training, HOPE For Nevada, Nevada PTA, Democracy Prep. at the Agassi Campus, and New American Leaders.



**Opportunity 180** is a nonprofit organization that works with the community to ensure more kids can access a great public school in their neighborhood that puts them on track to be college and career ready.



NEVADA PARTNERS

**Nevada Partners** is the lead agency for the West Las Vegas Promise Neighborhood, a bold, place-based, collective impact initiative working to reduce structural inequities that exist along the fault lines of race in key life domains such as health, education, employment, housing, and social justice. Nevada Partners' mission is to build a healthy community where residents achieve their full potential. through jobs, housing, civic & cultural engagement.



**Teach For America's (TFA)** superpower is finding, developing, and supporting exceptional and diverse leaders, so they can transform education and expand opportunities for children, starting in the classroom. TFA envisions an America where one day, regardless of ethnicity or zip code, all children will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education. TFA's mission is to build a movement in Las Vegas and throughout the nation to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort.



**The Guinn Center** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan, independent research center that seeks to identify evidence-based solutions through research, public engagement, and strategic partnerships.



**Leaders in Training's (LIT)** vision is to empower first-generation college graduates from diverse backgrounds to be the next-generation of diverse leaders who end systemic and structural inequities in every sector, in every community: redefining leadership. As an after school college access and community empowerment organization, students who will be the first in their family to attend college become part of a 4-year HS college access program, 4-year Postsecondary program and robust alumni program to empower change from the community, for the community.



**HOPE for Nevada** is an all-volunteer, non-partisan advocacy non-profit with the sole purpose of ensuring a high quality education at state and local levels. Our mission is to educate, communicate and advocate for and be a champion of equity in public education funding and policy, for every student in Nevada.



For more than 80 years **Nevada Parent Teacher Association (Nevada PTA)** has been dedicated to their mission to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

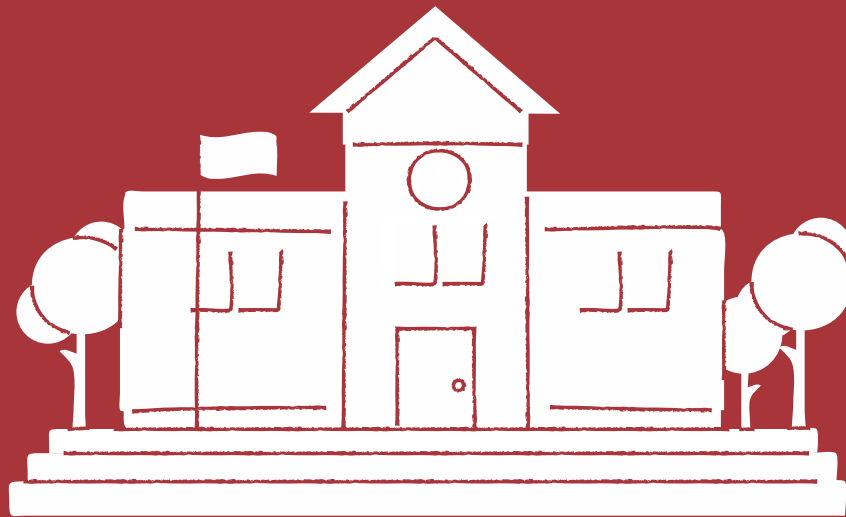


**Democracy Prep at the Agassi Campus (DPAC)** is a K-12 public charter school located in the Historic Westside of Las Vegas with the mission of educating responsible citizens scholars for success in the college of their choice and a life of active citizenship. The DPAC community is unified by their motto: Work Hard. Go to College. Change the World!



**New American Leaders (NAL)** champions New Americans as crucial participants in the American political system, and provides resources to ensure they are included, represented, and engaged in our democracy. NAL works alongside rising stars in American politics, from city council to Congress, to achieve representation that reflects our country's diverse population

# VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE



As parents and community members, you need as much information as possible about the decision-makers that will affect your neighborhoods, your schools, and all kids. This guide was created for educational purposes only.

**Your neighborhoods. Your schools. All kids.**

Opportunity 180, Nevada Partners, Teach For America, Guinn Center for Policy Priorities, Leaders in Training, Hope For Nevada, Nevada PTA, Democracy Prep. at the Agassi Campus, and New American Leaders do not endorse or support political candidates, including educational candidates. Written responses were submitted on a voluntary basis and were published as submitted. For inquiries about this voter guide, please contact Athar Haseebullah, Esq. General Counsel at Opportunity 180, via email at [athar@opportunity180.org](mailto:athar@opportunity180.org)

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# 2020 ELECTION INFORMATION

## Election Info

The 2020 general election, which will be held on Tuesday, November 3, will be a "hybrid" election with an option to vote by mail or vote in-person.

**Mail Ballot Voting:** Active registered voters in Clark County will automatically receive a mail ballot for the General Election. You can check your voter registration status by visiting [www.RegisterToVoteNV.gov](http://www.RegisterToVoteNV.gov). A listing of drop-off sites will be in your mail ballot packet and at [www.ClarkCountyNV.gov/vote](http://www.ClarkCountyNV.gov/vote). If you do not receive your mail ballot packet by October 17, 2020, contact the Election Department by phone at (702) 455-VOTE (8683) or by email at [MailBallotRequest@ClarkCountyNV.gov](mailto:MailBallotRequest@ClarkCountyNV.gov).

Mail ballots sent through the Post Office must be:

- (1) Mailed in the postage-paid return envelope provided which the voter must also sign;
- (2) Postmarked on or before Election Day; and
- (3) Received by the Election Department on or before the 7th day after Election Day.

For the November 3, 2020 General Election, mail ballots must be postmarked on or before Tuesday, November 3, 2020, and received by 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 10, 2020.

**In-Person Voting Using Voting Machines:** Clark County will have 35 early voting sites per day during the period of October 17-30, 2020 (Saturday-Friday) and over 100 Election Day vote centers on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, 2020, where you may cast your ballot on a voting machine. If you have your mail ballot with you, you must surrender it at the voting site. If you do not have it with you, you must sign an affirmation that you are not voting twice in the same election. A schedule of early voting sites and Election Day vote centers will be in your sample ballot and on the Election Department's website at [www.ClarkCountyNV.gov/vote](http://www.ClarkCountyNV.gov/vote).

### 2020 NEVADA ELECTION

## DEAD LINES

Nevadans can vote by mail this election. It's simple, safe, and secure. Voters can track their ballot to confirm it was received and will be counted. Track your ballot at [nvsos.gov/votersearch](http://nvsos.gov/votersearch)

#### SEPTEMBER 28

You may begin to drop off your **Mail-in Ballot** at any designated voting center.

For all locations visit [nvsos.gov/sos/elections](http://nvsos.gov/sos/elections)

#### OCTOBER 6

The **last day to register to vote by mail or in-person.**

Register today at [registertovotenv.gov](http://registertovotenv.gov)

#### OCTOBER 15

The **last day to register to vote online** and receive a mail-in ballot.

Register today at [registertovotenv.gov](http://registertovotenv.gov)

#### OCTOBER 16

If have not received your mail-in ballot by now, call 702-455-VOTE (8683)

#### OCTOBER 17

Early Voting period begins.

For all locations, visit [nvsos.gov/sos/elections](http://nvsos.gov/sos/elections)

#### OCTOBER 20

The **last day to request an absentee ballot.**

#### OCTOBER 29

The **fast day to register to vote online.**

To vote in-person you will need a valid state issued ID.

Register today at [registertovotenv.gov](http://registertovotenv.gov)

#### OCTOBER 30

Early Voting period ends.

For all locations, visit [nvsos.gov/sos/elections](http://nvsos.gov/sos/elections)

#### NOVEMBER 3

The **last day to return mail-in absentee ballots.**

Must be postmarked by 7:00 PM



# FIND YOUR CCSD TRUSTEE DISTRICT

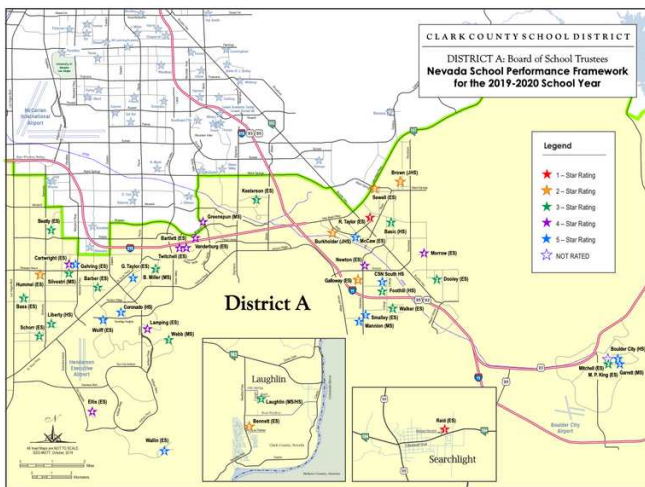
## Clark County Board of School Trustees

The CCSD Board of Trustees is a seven member group that governs the Clark County School District. Each Trustee is elected to a four year tem and represents a different geographic area within Clark County. The Board establishes CCSD policies and employs and evaluates the performance of the superintendent. [Click here to find your CCSD Trustee District.](#)

### District A

Candidates:

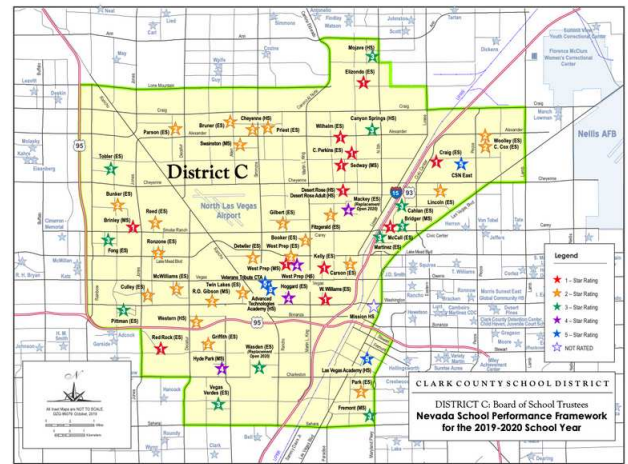
- Lisa Guzman
- Liberty Leavitt



### District C

Candidates:

- Evelyn Garcia Morales
- Tameka Henry



### District E

Candidates:

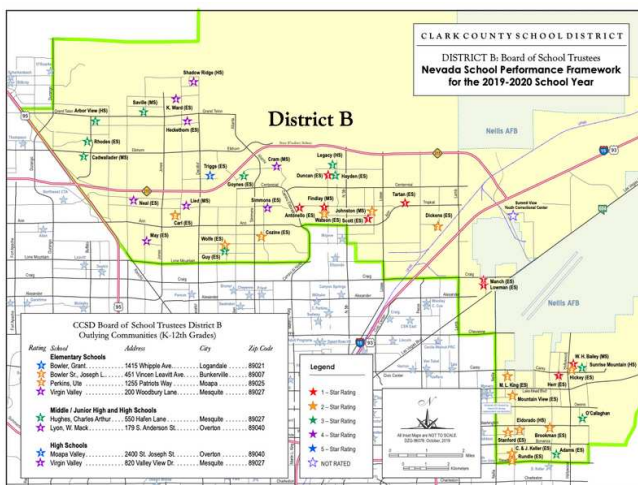
- Lola Brooks
- Alexis Salt



### District B

Candidates:

- Jeff Proffitt
- Katie Williams





# FIND YOUR STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION DISTRICT

## Nevada State Board of Education

The Nevada State Board of Education acts as an advocate and visionary for all children and sets the policy that allows every child equal access to educational services, provides the vision for a premier educational system and works in partnership with other stakeholders to ensure high levels of success for all in terms of job readiness, graduation, ability to be lifelong learners, problem solvers, citizens able to adapt to a changing world and contributing members of society.

The State Board of Education is composed of eleven members. Four members are elected from the four congressional districts in Nevada, and seven members are appointed. [Click here to find your congressional district.](#)

### State Board of Education District 1

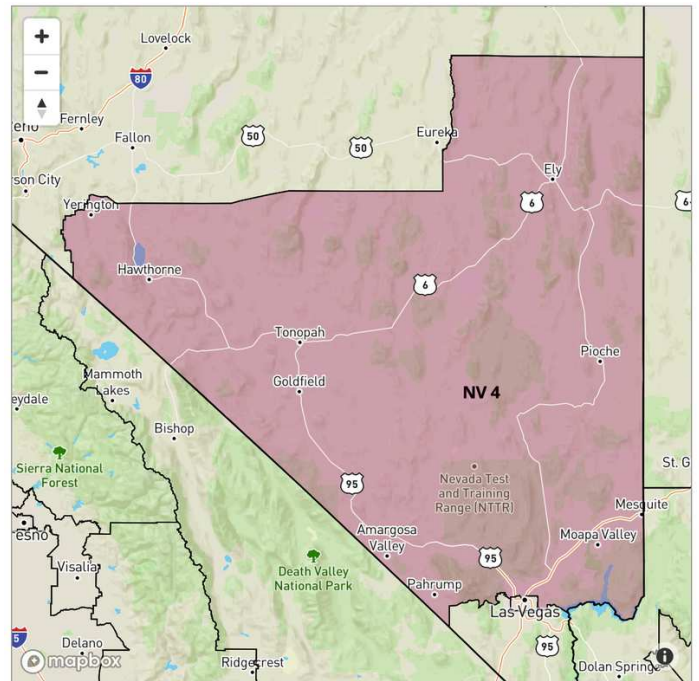
Candidates:

- Angelo Casino
- Tim Hughes

### State Board of Education District 4

Candidates:

- Rene Cantu
- Mark Newburn



# CCSD TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

## Why are you running for CCSD Board of Trustees?



### **Lisa Guzman**

I am running for Trustee because I have a background in educational policy and planning. The number one reason I am running is because I have been an educator and advocate for over 25 years. I am the fourth generation teacher in my family. Due to my family's long line of educators, my core belief is that education is the great equalizer. My vision of success in this role would be more input by the trustees in core planning for the district, a partnership with the superintendent, and board meetings focused on student growth through policy and planning.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

### **Liberty Leavitt**

I have spent my entire career in education, serving as a teacher, magnet theme coordinator and recruiter, an administrator in central office, and I now work at a two-generation education nonprofit. For the last 10 years, my positions have revolved around community outreach and development, and this has allowed me to build relationships with community and business leaders across the state. Through my experience, I have seen firsthand the disconnect that exists throughout the district and between the district and our community. I want to bring insight and cohesiveness to the board and help bridge those gaps so that we can focus on what's most important, student achievement.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)



### **Jeff Proffitt**

For close to 20 years, I have been working with CCSD in various capacities to better student outcomes and provide a pathway for students to college and careers that offer great wages and benefits. I am running because I know that CCSD can provide better education by modernizing the entire system and allowing parents to be more active in their children's education. My decision making does not come from an eccentric political philosophy and that every situation, as Trustee, deserves my full attention, research and empathy.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

### **Katie Williams**

I chose to run for school board because I want the best for my child, like so many other parents out there. For too long we have allowed subpar and inefficient bureaucratic systems to overtake our schools and leave parents completely out of the conversation. My vision of success in this role is to see our students become more successful and to see an increase in fiscal efficiency at the School District.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)



# CCSD TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

## Why are you running for CCSD Board of Trustees?



### **Evelyn Garcia Morales**

I am the right person for this role. Throughout my nearly 20-year career, I have focused on improving the lives of others through education. Today I have the privilege of helping high school students go to college as Executive Director of the Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas. In this role I oversee an annual budget of \$2.2 million dollars and a team of 15 staff. Our board needs leaders who will be ready to start on day one and know how to collaborate, build consensus, and ask critical questions to lead the district towards its mission of educational equity for all students.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

### **Tameka Henry**

I believe that all students in my district and throughout Nevada need a strong advocate who will fight for them to ensure equitable learning opportunities are afforded. As a parent and an engaged community member, I have personally witnessed many families in my situation fall through the gaps in our system. My vision for success in this role is to bring those issues to the forefront and fight for historically-underserved and under-resourced students. My ambition to help realize a better future is rooted in my experience serving on various community boards that directly seek input from students, parents and teachers.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)



### **Lola Brooks**

I'm currently seeking re-election. I originally filed to run four years ago because I wanted to give back to a community that has helped me grow exponentially. At the time, I also felt there wasn't enough focus on the students and families we serve; this is still true to an extent but we are attempting to be more purposeful with our time and energy. I'm running now because I feel the loss of institutional knowledge would be detrimental to the functioning of the Board if I were to transition out as four new board members are sworn in, especially given the need to safely reopen schools. Navigating through uncertainty calls for stable leaders who understand the complex nature of this work.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

### **Alexis Salt**

To bring a classroom perspective to the Dais. So much of our decision making is detached from the realities of the classroom, and the people in charge refuse to listen to those doing the work. My metric for success is ultimately how much my constituents, and the employees of CCSD, feel part of the decision making process. Do they feel empowered to work with the board to solve their problems within their school communities and do we provide them with what is necessary to do so?

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

# NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

## Why are you running for State Board of Education?

### 1 DISTRICT

#### Angelo Casino

I am running to represent the students, teachers, and parents of district 1. As a current middle school history teacher, I see on a daily basis, the impact the board's decisions have in the classrooms. I want to make sure the interests of our students, their parents, and our teachers are fully represented.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

#### Tim Hughes

As a Las Vegas native and 3rd generation Nevadan, I have a great deal of pride in our state, but it's frustrating to see that we are not yet providing ALL of our students with the type of high-quality education that they deserve. As a former teacher, principal, and now as an education non-profit leader, I know what our students are capable of and what it takes to improve results. My motivation for running for this position is to ensure that significantly more kids across Nevada receive equitable educational opportunities and to improve outcomes for all kids.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

### 4 DISTRICT

#### Rene Cantu

I am running because we are at a critical juncture in education where what we do now will affect Nevada students & families for many years to come. We must get this right. NDE must provide leadership and advocacy for creating an adequate stable funding base to fund Nevada education and work with educators, legislators, businesses, and families to help all students succeed. The NDE must advocate for equitable student achievement. This must be Nevada's space race. And I have the knowledge, experience and background in building successful programs that are effective in helping Nevada's most vulnerable students to achieve the highest educational outcomes. I know I can make a difference.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

#### Mark Newburn

During the Great Recession, I ran in 2012 to publicly make the connection between our state's lack of investment in education and our state's inability to diversify our economy. I am running for re-election to continue my work to modernize Nevada's K-12 education system to produce the skilled workforce needed to diversify our economy. My vision for success is expanded and equitable access to special programs such as GATE, AP, STEM, Computer Science, and Career and Technical Education.

[Click here for full questionnaire.](#)

# CANDIDATE RESPONSES



## CANDIDATE RESPONSES CCSD BOARD OF TRUSTEES



# LISA GUZMAN CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Lisa Guzman, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: The role of a trustee is to play a positive role with monitoring and supporting student achievement and progress through knowledgeable oversight. This includes the district's policies, budget, teaching and learning and communication with community stakeholders. Essentially, the role of a Trustee is to go beyond the district's established goals and create policies that encourage students to reach their higher goals.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I am running for Trustee because I have a background in educational policy and planning. The number one reason I am running is because I have been an educator and advocate for over 25 years. I am the fourth-generation teacher in my family. Due to my family's long line of educators, my core belief is that education is the great equalizer. My vision of success in this role would be more input by the trustees in core planning for the district, a partnership with the superintendent, and board meetings focused on student growth through policy and planning.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Every child can learn. Let's start with that premise. Student success is when a child achieves the goals whether it is through an IEP, 504 Plan, classroom work, or gifted education. As a district we need to make sure that when a student has stated a goal, we ensure they reach their goal. I have been a paraeducator, a teacher, an education advocate. I have taught and have lobbied for education funding. I worked with policy makers to create educational policy using my educator lens. I will bring my experience to the board to help with student success.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: This is a challenge for candidates campaigning during COVID-19. I have tried to engage via Facebook Live events, ZOOM calls, Social Distancing Events, and literature dropping. I really want "Saturday Coffee Talks" with parents, students, and community members across my district. I want all of my constituents to feel like they can call, text, or direct message me via social media to share what is happening in their schools. Communicating with my community via my Facebook, Twitter and website will be utilized, but talking and having conversations is valuable when you are in charge of policy writing.

## **Lisa Guzman, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: The number one barrier for educational excellence is funding for education. The Clark County Black Caucus shared the statistics on how to achieve equity in education, and it all starts with funding. I think when a crisis hits our state, because educational funding is the largest part of the budget, it is easy for legislators to cut it. I will engage my community to help me lobby our legislators to make sure that educational funding is not just a talking point but also an accountability benchmark. This is the first step to eliminating equity barriers.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: Yes, there is racism in the district, and it is an issue. I think that funding Zoom and Victory schools is a positive step forward for students of color. The way that I will ensure that these issues are addressed is to start with the administration and analyze what they have put into place to combat racism in the district. One way would be to hire principals and staff that look like the students that attend the schools. The second thing is I will be an advocate for continuing the funding for Zoom and Victory schools.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: The top three challenges the district faces are: the budget, communication, safe and healthy schools. A school board should be transparent and conscious to keep budget cuts as far away from our students as possible. In CCSD, the communication from the administration to staff is broken. CCSD also needs to improve communication to parents and the community. The board should ensure communication at all levels. During COVID-19, there is fear of the unknown. CCSD staff, parents and community members know that safe and healthy schools are imperative. The district should remember that the staff's working conditions are student learning conditions.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: I think that if the board truly followed the "Balanced Governance" approach and they partnered with the Superintendent; it could reach its goals. I do not believe that the Superintendent and the current board have upheld the theory of "Balanced Governance." I would bring the knowledge and advocacy that the district needs for this model. I believe that student achievement should be the focus of our work and that all members of the board and the superintendent should push for this goal together.

## **Lisa Guzman, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: "Balanced Governance" says that student outcomes should be the focus of everything a board does. I would ensure that we monitor and support student achievement and progress through knowledgeable oversight. I would do this by utilizing my experience in educational policy and instruction and professional development. This way my fellow board members will understand that the time spent on this will truly make a difference in student outcomes. I will also request student outcomes be present on every board agenda.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I think that the first thing that the board needs to do once we are elected is to have leadership development training that helps us understand our personality types. Another way is through team building exercises. This does not have to be expensive. In my experience, I have done team building training that had little to no cost. Team building is critical for a board to learn how to work together. I would share my experience in team building, and also leadership development to ensure that our board engages in learning and working together.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I am a negotiations facilitator. The great part about negotiations is that there are options and ways to score the options to see if they are doable within the district. This facilitation method has taught me to come to the table with options. I look at criticism more like feedback and how can I make the message or option I am trying convey better? I hope that the community sees me as an open book and knows we may not do things the way I want them or they want them, but we will find middle ground.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The Superintendent has a tough job. I think that I would use key benchmarks to assess his work: communication, budget, school climate and student achievement. These key benchmarks are determined by the community, the staff, and the students. Communication is key to all constituents and has been lacking for years. School climate and student achievement go hand in glove. If the school climate is not positive, it will show in student achievement and star ratings. Budget transparency is key to how the community feels about the district. These benchmarks guide evaluation, performance, and accountability.



# LIBERTY LEAVITT CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Liberty Leavitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: The CCSD Board of Trustees engages in balanced governance in which the trustees practice informed oversight. Specifically, the role of the board is to work collaboratively to establish a vision and goals for the District, as well as create policies and direction to define performance measurements and ensure accountability for the board and superintendent. The board entrusts the superintendent to implement programs and policies, and both entities are then held accountable for the measures that were specifically put in place. The board is also responsible for hiring and evaluating the superintendent, overseeing the annual budget, and making final decisions on collective bargaining agreements.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I have spent my entire career in education, serving as a teacher, magnet theme coordinator and recruiter, an administrator in central office, and I now work at a two-generation education nonprofit. For the last 10 years, my positions have revolved around community outreach and development, and this has allowed me to build relationships with community and business leaders across the state. Through my experience, I have seen firsthand the disconnect that exists throughout the district and between the district and our community. I want to bring insight and cohesiveness to the board and help bridge those gaps so that we can focus on what's most important, student achievement.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Student success is defined by increased graduation rates, standardized tests scores, preparedness for postsecondary pathways and careers, and civic engagement. However, it is also defined by the goals and personal situation of each student, as well as their health and wellness. In essence, a holistic approach that concentrates on the whole child. As a former educator and now Annual Giving Director for CORE, an education nonprofit centered around the whole child, I know firsthand the positive impact of empowering our students through personalized instruction and care and growth mindset. If elected, I intend to advocate for such instruction and support for our students.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: I believe that transparency and accessibility drive authenticity, which will inevitably increase trust with students and families. If elected, I will continually hold town halls, visit schools, and attend SOT and PTO meetings. I believe it is critical for families and students to be able to reach me directly as well through social media, email, texts and calls. Lastly, I think it is important to understand and appreciate the diversity of our families and where their interests lie. I will work directly with CCSD FACES and Equity and Diversity, as well as community groups to reach out to all of our families, utilizing Spanish and non-education speak to convey information and engage parents.

## **Liberty Leavitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: To begin with, not adequately funding education in NV serves as a tremendous barrier. We must properly fund education to provide the resources we need for student success. The current digital divide and everything from the Student Equity and Access Commission highlights barriers at our most under-resourced schools: the lack of access to pre-k programs, elementary magnet and GATE programs, and accelerated coursework at middle and high school levels. Also, food insecurity, lack of qualified teachers, large class sizes, and limited access to ELL and special education. If elected, I would concentrate on improving these areas by funding and implementing proven programs.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: I recognize that institutionalized racism does exist. Our immigrant students and students of color are our most under-resourced students and are the majority that is most impacted by the inequities listed in question 5. Our African American students are disproportionately expelled or suspended from school and our immigrant students directly face ELL barriers. I support CCSD's restorative justice plan, the School Justice Partnership, and will continue to improve and implement this plan as well as provide trainings on combatting institutionalized racism. As stated above in question 5, I plan on fighting for funding to implement proven programs that directly address CCSD's inequities.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: 1) Lack of credible leadership on the board including a lack of transparency and a loss of public trust. 2) Large class sizes and a shortage of teachers. 3) Inadequate funding for education in Nevada. It is not necessarily bold, but the trustees should be more involved with advocating on behalf of the district and our students to increase funding for education. Relationship building, diplomacy, and compromise must be at the forefront of their advocacy. The trustees must establish bipartisan relationships and speak with a unified voice when advocating for greater financial resources.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: By structure, if you are referring to the varying factions and personalities on the board, I do not believe that the current structure of the board sets the board up to reach their goals. I do believe that every trustee provides a unique experience and insight that should be valued and respected. I pride myself on listening and building on different perspectives to establish rapport and create trust. In doing so, you produce better, collaborative decisions. I will use my personal experience as an educator, administrator and nonprofit development director, as well as diplomacy and respect to improve the current structure of the board.

## **Liberty Leavitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District A**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: I believe that every action taken by the board and superintendent should be centered around performance and should be at the forefront of every board meeting. I believe that our current board spends an inordinate amount of time on business of the district and not student achievement. I will be that trustee that constantly asks how every item up for possible discussion relates or impacts student achievement. I know that there are other current board members and candidates who agree with me and see this as a priority as well. Together we can change the dynamic and bring student achievement to the forefront.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I referred to this a bit in question 8. I believe that the trustees need to hone in on the unique insight and experiences that each trustee brings to the table. In general and especially with the new challenges of COVID-19 and online learning, it is imperative for the trustees to receive the same information and meet with the same experts and groups impacted by district decisions. They should be working together not against each other, siding or only listening to specific outside groups. I will encourage the board to honor and respect what is important to each trustee and learn about those issues and meet with relevant groups.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: There will always be those who disagree or dislike you, especially as a trustee. First, I think that the best way to handle criticisms or challenges is through effective and calm conflict resolution. Being combative and defensive only creates a deeper divide, and most people simply want to be heard and respected. It is always incredibly important to be diplomatic and to act with grace, regardless of one's intentions or how you really feel. As a trustee, integrity and transparency must be at the forefront of everything that you do. Most importantly, this is where rapport is essential because the board must have each other's backs and their messaging must be consistent across the board.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The Superintendent and the board agree to specific goals and expectations for the Superintendent that should be centered around student achievement. I would assess his performance around these measures, but would also look into the current culture and climate of the district. Since culture defines productivity, I think it is critical to understand the type of culture that exists under his leadership as well. Depending upon the results, I would look to extend or end his contract or ask him to reevaluate and change the direction of his plan. If there are areas of both positive and negative results, I would work with him to make changes and after time reevaluate him again.



# JEFF PROFFITT CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Jeff Proffitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: I believe it is the Trustees that set the vision of what CCSD should be and lay out the goals that must be met. For me, I believe that number one needs to be the safety of the student and CCSD staff. Second, we need to engage students at their level and provide equal access to all students; the more interactive the classroom, the better the learning experience will be. Third, engage the community to ensure that all voices are heard and respected. The tone of the Board of Trustees is important.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: For close to 20 years, I have been working with CCSD in various capacities to better student outcomes and provide a pathway for students to college and careers that offer great wages and benefits. I am running because I know that CCSD can provide better education by modernizing the entire system and allowing parents to be more active in their children's education. My decision making does not come from an eccentric political philosophy and that every situation, as Trustee, deserves my full attention, research and empathy.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Student success for me is whether or not a student is ready for the workforce when he or she graduates. I don't believe that a student's success is defined by a corporate testing system.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: I want to use the example of Trustee Young. She has always kept her "door open" to her community. I intent to use social media, and now zoom to conduct regular community meetings. I want to start a student engagement group that will start with high school student councils.

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: There are still many barriers to equity. COVID-19 has shown that families with resources can provide all the tools necessary to meet the challenges of distance education. As Trustee I will work to level the playing field and ensure that disadvantaged students have the same access to resources, and work with administrators and educators to get these resources to the students and their families.

## **Jeff Proffitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B**

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on Board of Trustees?**

Response: Yes, there are challenges to immigrant students and students of color! Racism still exists within pockets of our District. First, we must ensure that our student populations are represented by administrators of their own background. Next, I will advocate for returning funding to underrepresented populations that was taken away in the last special legislative session. Finally, I will push to have racism education for all CCSD employees that is more than sitting and watching YouTube videos. All of us need to take this matter seriously and ensure that the next generation does not go through the same things that we are going through now.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: 1. Trustee interaction with one another – without respect for one another true collaboration and solid decision making cannot be achieved. 2. Reopening the schools safely 3. Budget cuts School reopening need to be planned NOW!! It was very evident at the Thursday, Sept. 24th meeting that central office is not ready to reopen and has not even started the process. We don't know when it will be safe to implement the plan, but we need to be prepared for it when it does happen. I believe that we should have already had our special needs students back in full time classes. The next group to be back full time (when it is safe) is pre-k through 5th grade. And finally, the middle school and high schoolers.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: No, I don't think that the Trustees have enough say in the process. I would like to have the ability to address my constituents needs and never have to say tell them that "It's in the hands of the Superintendent"

### **9. Research suggest that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: The only true way to keep this in the discussion is to show up prepared and use my time during the discussion and planning to incorporate this into every subject.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I think the simple answer to this is to show respect to our fellow Trustees and allow them to present their ideas without animosity.

## **Jeff Proffitt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B**

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I believe that every Trustee has the obligation to make decisions that are well thought out and are based on sound research, data and provide for the best possible outcome of the students. There will never be a time when we get 100% support for the decisions that are made. The Trustee must trust the process and have enough self-awareness to stand tall in the face of criticism. I realize that this job is not for everyone and requires a strong personality. I am no stranger to making difficult decisions. I don't think we should ever be looking to our next election. We must do what's best for the students now and put special interests aside.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: 1. How did he/she meet the goals set forth by the Trustees. 2. Did he/she communicate effectively with the community. 3. Were decisions made based on equity/diversity. I believe that every superintendent should be evaluated yearly and never have an auto-renewal clause in their contracts. A portion of that evaluation needs to be completed by teachers and administrators.

# KATIE WILLIAMS CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Katie Williams, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: The role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees is to provide strategic oversight for the schools, serve as the community's top voice in the District's decision making process, and to serve as stewards and watch dogs over the millions of taxpayer dollars entrusted to the District for the purpose of educating the children of our community.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I chose to run for school board because I want the best for my child, like so many other parents out there. For too long we have allowed subpar and inefficient bureaucratic systems to overtake our schools and leave parents completely out of the conversation. My vision of success in this role is to see our students become more successful and to see an increase in fiscal efficiency at the School District.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: I define student success as seeing low to nonexistent dropout rates and seeing our students graduate equipped to be able to go into whatever workforce or field they want to, regardless of their zip code or background.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: My plan to authentically engage students is to create a task force for District B that includes students from our schools and parents from throughout our community, in concert and separately. My goal is to create a sample of voices that will provide feedback on all decisions and processes at the Board-level, and give me a metric of how the District feels in advance of major issues and decisions.

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: The biggest challenge for our district is its size. We have one of the largest districts in the nation, managed in a way that most metropolitan areas of a similar size have moved away from. I think it's time that we consider measures to separate the district into more effectively manageable areas. No decision made by the Superintendent or the Board is going to improve things everywhere—that's why we need to find ways to make sure each area has its own interests represented. I also think that we evaluate the current system we have, where in my own District B, almost 50% of schools are rated 1-2 stars. This is unacceptable and MUST change soon.

## **Katie Williams, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B**

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: I think the largest issue affecting our minority students is that their needs are not being met in schools, and that their communities are not being engaged to better understand what the district can do for them. My highest goal if elected is increasing student, family, and community engagement across the board so that we can provide the highest quality of education to all of our students.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: I believe the top three issues facing our Board are the size of the District, the lack of fiscal efficiency, and the shortage of teachers we currently face. I believe that to remedy the last, the Board should ask for a bill in the State Legislature that would forgive all student debt for teachers who come to the district for a six year period, AND would allow for anyone who commits to teach in the district for six years to have free in-state tuition and books within our higher education system.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: I don't believe that the current structure of the Board is set for success. It was created well before Clark County had become a major metropolitan area, and the boundaries of the Districts make it difficult for any Board member to adequately represent the interests of their constituency. I will bring to the Board an eye on the budget and a knowledge of what it takes to connect with students, having spent several years as a recruiter in high schools. I will also bring a fresh perspective with the aspiration to find new and better ways to accomplish our goals, as opposed to the status quo that Clark County Schools are used to.

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: I would ensure this by making sure the students of our district have a very present voice in the process of the decisions being made. My goal is to ensure we approach issues and talk each one through all the way to the outcome at the student end, allowing students to provide comment on every decision we make.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: The Board can better engage by becoming more accessible; we should consider adjusting meeting times, moving the meeting locations around the district, and, in advance of large decisions, holding multiple hearings within our own Trustee Districts to truly allow for input from our community on every issue.



## **Katie Williams, CCSD Trustee Candidate District B**

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I firmly believe that no true representative of the people should walk toward a decision having made up their mind before hearing the concerns of those they are there to represent. I will always keep my mind open, regardless of my own personal beliefs, because I recognize that I can be wrong, and that at the end of the day, I am there to be the voice of the people, not myself.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: I believe that the performance of the Superintendent should be evaluated by the performance of students, the fiscal responsibility of the district, and the retention rate of teachers and staff. Problems with these can be indicative of larger problems. I believe the Superintendent should be held accountable in the same fashion as anyone else: if you aren't performing to standard and you are unresponsive to performance counseling, maybe it's time you find a new place to be.

# EVELYN GARCIA MORALES CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Evelyn Garcia Morales, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: As a governing body over the Clark County School District, the School Board of Trustees are responsible for developing a vision and ensuring it works towards achieving its results. Some ways that it works towards the results is by overseeing a multi-billion-dollar budget, reviewing, and developing policies that support the vision, and creating clear expectations and holding the superintendent accountable for achieving results.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I am the right person for this role. Throughout my nearly 20-year career, I have focused on improving the lives of others through education. Today I have the privilege of helping high school students go to college as Executive Director of the Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas. In this role I oversee an annual budget of \$2.2 million dollars and a team of 15 staff. Our board needs leaders who will be ready to start on day one and know how to collaborate, build consensus, and ask critical questions to lead the district towards its mission of educational equity for all students.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Student success means that every student will graduate from high school, college, and career ready and meet milestones such as proficiency in subjects like English language arts and math. Further, if students choose to attend college, they will be matched with the right fit, and not need to take remedial math or English. As Executive Director of the Fulfillment Fund Las Vegas, I work with my team to access data trends, generate solutions, test, and reassess results. As a Trustee, I will use similar strategies, my insight on college access and experience in managing change to cultivate a strong culture that values student success.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: Authentic student and family engagement is grounded in consistent and frequent communication. As a Trustee, I will use various methods to connect with our students and families in English and Spanish. During COVID and beyond, connecting with the use of technology will be essential, such as sending an email newsletter and providing social media updates. Other examples include offering socially distanced events such as town halls and attending and organizing events related to student milestones.

## **Evelyn Garcia Morales, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: COVID-19 has lifted the veil on the systemic challenges our district faces in the pursuit of educational excellence and equity. We cannot look away now. Our success will be measured based on how we treat the most vulnerable in our community. As Trustee I will set clear expectations for the Superintendent In order to achieve this desired result, it is imperative that the Board of Trustee's focus on understanding student achievement gaps and areas of support needed for all students. Further, I will ask to build on the findings and failure points of the Equity Report released in early 2020.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: Yes. We must urgently address the disparities that exist for our students. District C alone has the highest concentration of diversity across all of Clark County, 60% Latino, 20% Black and 24% Emerging English Language/ELL students. District data has also revealed that our most diverse students have a higher chance of not meeting proficiency standards, lacking access to advanced classes, and dropping out of school compared to their peers in neighboring districts. As a Trustee, I will work with my colleagues on the board to direct the superintendent to address the layers of inequity by seeking more data and solutions.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: Today, the most persistent challenges facing the Clark County School Board of Trustees are: 1. Minimal focus on addressing academic achievement, 2. A focus on reactive vs. proactive policy making and 3. Unclear and inconsistent collective vision for the district. To help find solutions to the first challenge, I will work with my colleagues to form a community committee focused on academic achievement gaps to help us identify the failure and success points. This committee will generate a report and hold the board accountable to its recommendations.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: My executive management skills, leadership skills and college access knowledge complement the existing skills of the current Board members. As a Trustee, I'd bring my ability to navigate organizational change efforts, conflict management, managing multimillion-dollar budgets, expertise in college access and persistence to this role.

## **Evelyn Garcia Morales, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: In order to achieve this desired result, it is imperative that the Board of Trustee's spend a significant amount of time (more than 50%) understanding student achievement gaps and areas of support for all students. By spending this amount of time on understanding the data, Trustees can crystalize their vision and expectations for the Superintendent. Further, the Trustee can then create policies or advocate appropriately to other stakeholders so that it is shepherding the efforts forward in closing the achievement gap our district faces today.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: Our pandemic has confirmed that our educators, staff, and administrators are agile and learners at the core. Out of necessity, they have taken a difficult circumstance and have created processes and systems to consistently reassess and improve upon old practices. Our CCSD Board of Trustees also has a responsibility to lead in this capacity and set the tone for the district at-large. As a member of the board, I will use strategies to help generate a learning organization grounded in transparency, feedback and seeking solutions to challenges.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I will approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms the same way that I approach them in the workplace. As Executive Director of a nonprofit I constantly listen, seek understanding, and find solutions with and for from my team, stakeholders, and community.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The CCSD Board of Trustee's is responsible for developing a vision and clear expectations for the Superintendent so that they are held accountable. I would work closely with my fellow Trustee's to establish performance measures and track its progress grounded in the collective vision of the district.

# TAMEKA HENRY CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Tameka Henry, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: The primary functions of a Trustee are fiscal oversight and evaluating the performance of the Superintendent. This is, however, a mere description of the statutory function of a CCSD Trustee. A Trustee--as the term implies--is a person entrusted with ensuring that our education system serves students first. Trustees are advocates for students and their families. Their role is to direct the system and the leadership of the district to establish a culture of support and success. The Board must represent the interests of students while also engaging with the community when setting district's priorities to ensure that students' needs are met and their success is paramount to all other issues.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I believe that all students in my district and throughout Nevada need a strong advocate who will fight for them to ensure equitable learning opportunities are afforded. As a parent and an engaged community member, I have personally witnessed many families in my situation fall through the gaps in our system. My vision for success in this role is to bring those issues to the forefront and fight for historically-underserved and under-resourced students. My ambition to help realize a better future is rooted in my experience serving on various community boards that directly seek input from students, parents and teachers.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Success for every student is different, dependent upon their ultimate goal for their post-high school lives. What is "success" for one student may not be success for another student. I believe that our education system must be nimble enough to adjust to student needs. It must also be diverse enough to support student needs. Student success to me is a student leaving the K - 12 system prepared for the future, be it higher ed, trade school or the work world in general. Simply put student success, is a student prepared for the future.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: I plan on authentically engaging students and families by not only being present at their schools for special events and family engagement nights but also hosting roundtables and community events in their neighborhoods. During the era of COVID, I will host virtual events to allow families to participate regardless of their location or comfort level in group settings. I will also gather community information by conducting surveys and canvassing families to see what topics they would like to discuss as well as days and times that would be better for them. I will strive to meet families where they are.



## **Tameka Henry, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: Barriers that exist for our students include access to broadband internet and technical devices necessary to participate not only in learning, but also in finding other opportunities to engage in their communities. Lack of access to the Internet inhibits the educational opportunities of students without such connectivity in their homes, and limits their ability to find resources that may assist them in succeeding outside of the school day, as well. We must also ensure that all CCSD students have resources necessary to increase cultural awareness and encourage intercultural exchanges so all students feel respected and equal in the classroom.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: Yes, racism is an issue in every educational institution that furthers the school-to-prison pipeline that I would fight to end with programs designed to encourage students, rather than stifle them. We need to provide our young people of color within CCSD with access to mentorship and restorative justice programs and support their need to succeed, rather than increasing policing in our schools and our communities. The students, parents, and educators of District C need a strong advocate who will fight to fill these chasms of educational opportunity. If elected, I will help create a better, equitable future for students.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: 1. Effective leadership: As a parent and product of CCSD, I have seen many families, including mine, fall through the gaps in our system. We need a system that begins with student needs first but includes staff, teachers and administration. Each party is responsible for leading and advocating. 2. Chasms in opportunity and technology. We must work to close these gaps by allocating resources to underserved students. 3. Lack of including parents, students, families and educators in district-wide decisions. My experience as a CCSD parent will ensure that I am open to input from all community stakeholders.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: Each trustee is elected by their constituents to bring representation from their respective districts. It is important that the Trustees work together to create their goals through strategic planning, do quarterly or bi-annual check ins on progress, and make adjustments as necessary. Through intentional outreach to students, families, staff and community I will bring a unique perspective to the board, one of inclusiveness of thought. While decisions will not always make everyone happy, as a trustee, I will work to make sure there is transparency and engagement from the board.

## **Tameka Henry, CCSD Trustee Candidate District C**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: My experience serving on several boards and familiarity with evaluating student outcomes enables me to hold the Board accountable to committing more than 50 percent of every meeting to outcomes. I will work with the board and board staff to ensure that the agenda is reflective of student outcomes. This is the purpose of the school board, student outcomes should be the focus of our meetings. If we set that as the goal while we discuss business we will be able to discuss that business from the angle of student success.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: The CCSD Board of Trustees can better engage in learning together by participating in team building experiences as well as leadership and governance training. They can also work together by completing an annual self-assessment of themselves. I would work to ensure that this happens by assessing what systems of board evaluations or self-assessment tools already exist and work to create new systems where necessary. The Board must continually evaluate the systems in place and work to find new ways to serve our community, including regular training and assessments.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I would approach challenging questions and conversations respectfully. I honor transparency and will be willing to hold discussions with fellow Trustees, stakeholders, and the broader community to gain better understanding when issues arise. Our students deserve Trustees that will give this position their all and not avoid difficult conversations -- but they must be addressed with grace to put our students over political squabbles.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: Superintendents have contracts that include performance measures and outcomes. When working with the current superintendent, it is important that trustees not wait until annual evaluations to discuss performance. The performance should be discussed on a regular basis and the measures and outcome should be presented in a transparent manner. We must hold the Superintendent accountable by regularly meeting and conferring with students, educators, and families to garner input on the performance of the Superintendent.

# LOLA BROOKS CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Lola Brooks, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E

### 1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?

Response: The Board provides informed oversight to the District by hiring, directing, and supervising the Superintendent. Because individual board members have no authority on their own, board decisions are made collectively by a majority of the Board during public meetings under open meeting law. Collectively, the Board sets the District's vision, hires the Superintendent to work on making that vision a reality, adopts goals that align to the vision, and monitors the District's progress towards those goals. In addition, they provide fiscal oversight, oversee collective bargaining, and ensure District policies reflect community values.

### 2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?

Response: I'm currently seeking re-election. I originally filed to run four years ago because I wanted to give back to a community that has helped me grow exponentially. At the time, I also felt there wasn't enough focus on the students and families we serve; this is still true to an extent but we are attempting to be more purposeful with our time and energy. I'm running now because I feel the loss of institutional knowledge would be detrimental to the functioning of the Board if I were to transition out as four new board members are sworn in, especially given the need to safely reopen schools. Navigating through uncertainty calls for stable leaders who understand the complex nature of this work.

### 3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?

Response: To me student success means that students are given a broad base of foundational knowledge to build on, a lifelong love of learning, and the skills needed to become informed citizens and contribute to society. The most important role the board has in this pursuit is ensuring equity issues are addressed and that all students have a real opportunity to succeed.

### 4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?

Response: I'm open to engaging in any spaces I'm invited to, unless it's clear the space only exists to create drama with a strong commitment to misunderstanding others. I tend to be responsive to direct communication and will collaborate with anyone whose goals align with serving our students and families. During my first term, I introduced new ways to engage, including streaming meetings and Q&As on Facebook Live, collaborative co-opted trustee meetings, comprehensive lists of questions with answers posted in a centralized location, and leveraging external groups on social media to create a less formal means of engaging with people who might not engage in traditional settings.

## **Lola Brooks, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: Not all students have the same opportunity for success. Adults in the system spend a lot of time fighting over limited resources instead of collectively focusing on addressing issues with climate/culture, chronic underfunding, and decentralized schools with disjointed academic programming. I've attempted to address it by being collaborative in nature and finding a common ground when possible. I am also a proponent of making sure expectations are clearly defined and growing people to meet those expectations when possible.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: Yes, challenges with immigrant students have increased since political discourse has recently been so negatively slanted towards them. Society assumes that racial injustice has mostly been addressed but systemic racism still exists. As a nation, we should be willing to critically examine practices that disproportionately affect any community. Trustees should be mindful of the potential implications a policy could have on different groups of students. They should also be willing to look at granular data to critically examine disparities, while using this information to inform policy revisions.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: Chronic underfunding, inequities between schools, disjointed communication. The boldest actions someone in this position can do is to recognize when unsolicited advice is actually detrimental to students, become deeply informed about as much as possible without being forced, be willing to adapt as needed, think long term, and do good without seeking credit.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: Yes, the board can be successful with their current structure. It would be helpful for the public to know how the board is supposed to function, so they recognize when people are genuinely advocating for the best interest of the community and performing their duties properly. My professional background is in Macro Social Work and Data Science. I'm well versed in addressing issues holistically, at the system-level, using objective information from multiple formal and informal sources. Overcoming adversity during my youth has also made me better equipped to handle intense scrutiny and immense public pressure.

## **Lola Brooks, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: I've tried to shift the focus to student outcomes through policy formation and agenda setting as the Board President. In November of 2019, I brought forward a policy revision that provided more specific guidance for how agenda requests were addressed by the Board. This prevents the Board from hearing the same items over and over again, ensures that items reflect what a majority of the Board feels is appropriate to focus on, and requires requestors to reflect on how requests align with the Board's role. The Board also adopted a formal monitoring calendar to ensure we periodically monitor progress for goals outlined in the District's strategic plan.

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I believe in professional development being tailored to the needs of individuals; they should have some autonomy over selecting the methods that help them learn best. I'm fortunate to be able to learn in most formats so I tend to let others choose whichever option works best for them. I do think learning and growing together is an important exercise for any team. The Board is currently undergoing Balanced Governance training to ensure the remaining members are fully prepared to support new members in January after they are sworn in.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: I knowingly accept that seven people will not always agree on everything. I try to enter spaces with a willingness to be swayed by logical reasoning. I'm responsive to communication and willing to debate most topics. I feel it's important to be calm and professional, even if you're on the losing side of the vote, even when other Board members fail to do so, and even in instances where public criticism is unwarranted. This practice extends beyond the boardroom for me. For this to work, it helps to have a healthy dose of humility and recognize we're all human. I try to practice unconditional positive regard and also recognize we're all fallible.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The board evaluates the Superintendent annually. A new evaluation process was developed over the last year, which added a midyear check in process. The Superintendent's evaluation is based on the District's progress toward reaching the goals embedded within our strategic plan, which is formally adopted by the Board. There are also leadership qualities embedded in the process which center around collaboration, communication, and operational effectiveness.



# ALEXIS SALT CANDIDATE FOR CCSD TRUSTEE



## Alexis Salt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E

### **1. What is the role of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees?**

Response: It is the role of the Trustees to set the vision and goals of the district, and to serve as the bridge between the community and the bureaucracy of the school district. The Trustees also control the purse-strings of the district, and as such have a powerful say in direction that it turns in terms of testing and curriculum.

### **2. Why are you running for CCSD Trustee? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: To bring a classroom perspective to the Dais. So much of our decision making is detached from the realities of the classroom, and the people in charge refuse to listen to those doing the work. My metric for success is ultimately how much my constituents, and the employees of CCSD, feel part of the decision making process. Do they feel empowered to work with the board to solve their problems within their school communities and do we provide them with what is necessary to do so?

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: I see success as students having choices for opportunities that mean something to them- not a score on a test or an arbitrary graduation rate. Right now about 35% of our students take a 4 year college degree after graduation, and yet over 90% of our coursework is devoted towards college prep. We need to provide opportunities for students for skilled trades apprenticeships and other post-graduation options that give them the future that they want for themselves, and not the one we see for them. College is a wonderful path, it is the path I took, but we have to stop acting like the only way to be successful in life is through college. That starts with changing our definition of what success is.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the CCSD Board of Trustees?**

Response: As both a teacher within CCSD and the parent of a CCSD student, I understand the importance of engaging students and families in any decision made by the Board of Trustees. I will commit to monthly (at least) town halls where my constituents can ask questions and get updates about our district. I would also like to attend as many SOT meetings as humanly possible a month to talk with staff, parents, and students, about what is happening in their schools.

## Alexis Salt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the Board of Trustees, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: Within CCSD, we have seen a wide disparity in opportunities available to students of different schools and within different districts of CCSD. We must work to bridge the technology and opportunity chasms at play within CCSD, to give every student the same chance to succeed. We must also address the implicit biases of teachers against students from different socioeconomic and racial backgrounds, and provide extra attention and opportunity for students that are often overlooked or underserved.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within CCSD? Is racism an issue within CCSD? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the Board of Trustees?**

Response: Racism is an issue within CCSD and within our educational systems across the state and country as a whole. Every teacher should be made to analyze and address their implicit and explicit racial biases, and protect our students from the bigotry they unfairly face outside of the classroom while they are in our care. We need more diversity in our workforce as well, students need to see themselves represented as authority figures. As a Trustee, I will look at options to address our lack of diversity through policy.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the CCSD Board of Trustees? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: 1. Lack of input from students, families, and teachers. 2. Faulty leadership. 3. Lack of financial transparency. To fix the lack of transparency, I will request that CCSD switch to SOX compliant software which alerts all stakeholders of accounting irregularities. This will give lawmakers more faith in our finances.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the Board of Trustees sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: Yes, I think that under its current structure the board can achieve its goals. There are policy changes that could be made to make this more efficient, such as limiting speaking time. I feel like with a firm commitment to Robert's Rules as well as to team building, the board is in a good position to make a positive impact on the kids of CCSD.

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the board allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: As a classroom teacher, I am used to managing many different personality types towards a common goal. I am confident in my ability to stick to an agenda and to spend the public's time on pettiness. That said, I would like to see the board adopt an official policy keeping meeting to 50% or more discussion on student achievement and giving schools the tools that they need.

## Alexis Salt, CCSD Trustee Candidate District E

### **10. How can the CCSD Board of Trustees better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I think the board needs more training on both balanced governance and how to work together as a team. As a Trustee, I will commit to attending each of those trainings and work sessions in whole and to really do the work involved in putting aside the me for the we. Our kids deserve it.

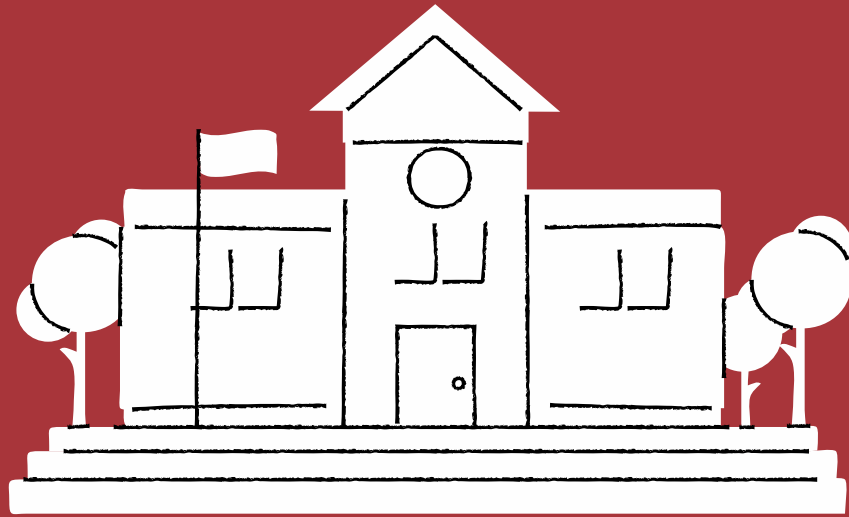
### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: Having served our students and their families within CCSD for more than a decade, I understand the importance of ensuring that political squabbles do not undermine the work of the Board. Serving on the CCSD Board of Trustees is more important than securing an elected position within our community -- it is an opportunity to serve our students, teachers and families at the highest level available to me, and I would treat the opportunity with the respect and reverence that it deserves. While I have been called "fiery" and "intense" by my peers in the past, I would take that same passion in pushing for our students and finding solutions to better the experience of our students and teachers.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of CCSD's Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: My first policy, if elected, will be to form an advisory committee for each: teachers, ESPs, building administrators, and community members and tie real engagement with each to the Superintendent's evaluation. I see engagement with staff and community as key if we are to reach our goals and I see adding that to the evaluation as something this is appropriate.

# CANDIDATE RESPONSES



## CANDIDATE RESPONSES STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

# ANGELO CASINO CANDIDATE FOR NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Angelo Casino, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate  
District 1



## **1. What is the role of the State Board of Education?**

Response: The role of the Nevada Board of Education is to facilitate and insure the successful implementation of Nevada's education system.

## **2. Why are you running for a seat on the State Board of Education? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: I am running to represent the students, teachers, and parents of district 1. As a current middle school history teacher, I see on a daily basis, the impact the board's decisions have in the classrooms. I want to make sure the interests of our students, their parents, and our teachers are fully represented.

## **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Student success can be determined and measured by academic and social growth. As a teacher, I work and advocate for my students every single day. I cannot think of a better opportunity to impact our future generation than being the teacher of today's youth.

## **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: As I have said and promised in this campaign, during my first four years in office I promise I will visit every single school in my district. I will be visiting all the schools to hear first-hand from the teachers, students, and administrators their concerns and ideas. When I am on the board of education, I will not be representing myself, instead, I will be there to represent every single child and parent in my district.

## **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the State Board of Education, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: Indeed, there are currently many barriers that are preventing Nevada's education system to fully reach its potential. Nevada's teacher shortage, or specifically the lack of quality teachers, remain one of the most crucial barrier. I do not believe in "relaxing" the state requirements for teacher licensing, to fix our current shortage. While the latter will fix our current teacher shortage, its effect would mean less qualified teachers in the classroom. We can fix our current teacher shortage by making sure we pay our teachers competitively, and provide equal retirement benefits, when compared to other states.



## **Angelo Casino, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 1**

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within Nevada schools? Is racism an issue? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: Absolutely, there are challenges specific to immigrant students and students of color within Nevada schools. Aside from bullying and discrimination, our immigrant students are part of Nevada schools' English language learner programs. When I am on the board, I will advocate for the expansion of this program, knowing and understanding the importance of students learning how to speak English and better prepare them for the outside world.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the State Board of Education? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: The top three challenges facing the board are funding, under staffing of Nevada's schools, specifically Title I schools, and, finally, addressing the inequality that exists in Nevada's education system. In tackling the staffing issues in Nevada's Title I schools, I would propose a bonus or incentive pay to entice teachers to accept the jobs in Title I schools.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the State Board of Education sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: No, the current structure of the State Board of Education is not setup to reach its full potential. I feel the board needs more representation from teachers, students, and parents. These are the stakeholders of our education system. Their concerns and ideas should be upheld the most.

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the State Board of Education allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: We can insure that 50% of a board meeting is focused on student outcomes by creating and establishing more accountability in the board's agenda. The board's agenda should be approved by the stakeholders to ensure compliance prior to the meeting.

### **10. How can the State Board of Education better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: The State Board of Education needs to do a better job in engaging and learning together. This is a non-political public office and partisanship has no place on the board. Board members can take part in "field" studies, where they actually visit the schools and classrooms that are affected by the decisions they make. Board members need to be out in the community, in the schools, to understand the needs of Nevada's education system.

## **Angelo Casino, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 1**

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: As I always tell my students, always "listen" more than "talking." I will work hard to listen to my colleagues, to put myself in their "shoes," and work towards a higher form of synergy that is worthy of Nevada's future generations.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of Nevada's State Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The key indicators, would have to include, surveys from the stakeholders, to include students, parents, administrators, and teachers.

# TIM HUGHES CANDIDATE FOR NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Tim Hughes, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 1

### **1. What is the role of the State Board of Education?**

Response: The State Board of Education focuses on policy and accountability for education systems across Nevada with a focus on ensuring strong outcomes for all kids. The board ensures that education policies passed by the Legislature are effectively implemented and they are often tasked with approving or rejecting specific regulations created by the Department of Education. The board also plays a key role in developing and monitoring progress towards an annual plan to improve student achievement. Some of the specific areas of focus include: graduation and testing requirements, standards, educator preparation, evaluation systems, and other issues designated by the Legislature.

### **2. Why are you running for a seat on the State Board of Education? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: As a Las Vegas native and 3rd generation Nevadan, I have a great deal of pride in our state, but it's frustrating to see that we are not yet providing ALL of our students with the type of high-quality education that they deserve. As a former teacher, principal, and now as an education non-profit leader, I know what our students are capable of and what it takes to improve results. My motivation for running for this position is to ensure that significantly more kids across Nevada receive equitable educational opportunities and to improve outcomes for all kids.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: Success occurs when students are prepared to pursue any goal that they have for their future. I have dedicated my career to supporting students -- serving as a teacher and principal, and now in my role working with states, districts, and schools to improve education outcomes. Over time I have gained an in-depth understanding of teacher recruitment and development, improving instructional practices, early childhood education, literacy, and school transformation. I intend to utilize all that I have learned, along with my commitment to our community, to advocate for the policies and practices that will lead to greater student success.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: It is critical for students and families to have a seat at the table in decisions related to education! If elected, I intend to develop two-way communication systems where I can continually hear about the experiences and perspectives of students and families, and also share information with them about the work of the State Board. I also plan to regularly visit and engage with schools and other community organizations to ensure that I stay connected to the current challenges and needs of our students and families.

## **Tim Hughes, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 1**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the State Board of Education, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: There are many barriers that we must address to improve equity for our students, including: recruiting and retaining a diverse teacher workforce, providing students with specific services and supports matched to their unique learning and social-emotional needs, improving the training and support we provide our educators, expanding access to early childhood programs, ensuring all students have consistent access to technology, and providing greater resources for our schools and districts, to name a few. Given that each of these topics is complex, I would be happy to share more details about my ideas in each area – feel free to contact me!

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within Nevada schools? Is racism an issue? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: There are disparities in academic achievement, opportunity, and access for our students of color, those from low-income backgrounds, and those with diverse learning needs. These students are just as brilliant and capable as others, but as a system we have not adequately provided the right types of resources and supports to allow them thrive. Racist practices and systems have certainly played a role in these disparities, and it is important for the State Board to address this head on by making data accessible, eliminating bias in our policies, and holding our systems accountable for effectively serving all students.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the State Board of Education? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: Some of the most persistent challenges facing education in Nevada include: providing equitable access to the supports and resources students need to be successful, lack of robust early interventions, and recruiting and retaining enough teachers to staff every school. To expand and diversify our teacher workforce, I would propose better support and accountability around retention, improving how we support our newest teachers, addressing climate and culture challenges at schools, eliminating barriers to entering the profession, getting more aggressive with developing local pipeline programs, and collaborating with districts and legislators to ensure that we have competitive compensation.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the State Board of Education sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: The State Board is a hybrid board composed of members who are elected and appointed. I think this is a helpful structure as it provides a way to ensure the board has the right set of knowledge and skills and also provides diverse perspectives. Given my current role working with schools and districts across the country, I will be able to bring all that I have learned about what others are doing to improve outcomes for students to Nevada. As a Nevada native, I will also bring my understanding of the assets and challenges facing our communities to the Board.

## **Tim Hughes, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 1**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the State Board of Education allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: The State Board is designed to focus on improving outcomes for students across Nevada. Given this, my expectation is that the Board should spend the vast majority of its time focused on this. If topics that come before the Board cannot be linked to improving student outcomes I will definitely raise questions about how we are spending our time. I will also work to make student outcomes a key part of every discussion.

### **10. How can the State Board of Education better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: I believe that all elected officials should continue to push themselves and each other to learn and grow. The State Board can work together to stay up to date on the latest research, spend time visiting schools together and listening and learning from our educators, students, and families, and can attend professional learning opportunities to better understand how others across the country may be addressing similar challenges. I will both lead by example and will encourage my fellow members to engage in these types of learning experiences.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: My approach to challenging conversations is always to listen first and try to understand the views of the other person and what I can learn from that perspective. I believe that it is important to look for common ground and ways to collaborate on particular issues. At the same time, I will also be transparent and communicate my views and the rationale for my decisions. It is critical to keep our focus on students and improving education and not waste time focused on personal issues that can distract from the work at hand.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of Nevada's State Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: Effective superintendents have a bold vision for the future and a plan for how to make progress, effectively lead and manage their team to achieve results, cultivate relationships with communities and stakeholders, and advocate for the tough decisions needed to improve our education system. The ultimate measure of success is the progress made by Nevada's students and the extent to which we close achievement and opportunity gaps. I will hold the superintendent accountable by regularly monitoring progress, ensuring that the public is informed about progress, and raising the tough questions about the superintendent's performance as needed.

# RENE CANTU CANDIDATE FOR NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Rene Cantu, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 4

### 1. What is the role of the State Board of Education?

Response: The NDE's role is to provide leadership and advocacy to promote student achievement and to ensure that teacher preparation is effective enough to help teachers serve as the drivers of positive educational outcomes for all students. It is by advocacy, a commitment to student centered values, and the development of substantive, effective policy that NDE can help to achieve its greatest impact, as its influence on educational outcomes is more indirect than that of local school districts. The NDE has the bully pulpit, the ear of the governor and legislature, and can at best be the cohesive center to lead districts in advocating for themselves and for the students they serve.

### 2. Why are you running for a seat on the State Board of Education? What is your vision of success for this role?

Response: I am running because we are at a critical juncture in education where what we do now will affect Nevada students & families for many years to come. We must get this right. NDE must provide leadership and advocacy for creating an adequate stable funding base to fund Nevada education and work with educators, legislators, businesses, and families to help all students succeed. The NDE must advocate for equitable student achievement. This must be Nevada's space race. And I have the knowledge, experience and background in building successful programs that are effective in helping Nevada's most vulnerable students to achieve the highest educational outcomes. I know I can make a difference.

### 3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?

Response: Student success encompasses the attainment of literacy and numeracy & the attainment of essential traits like resiliency, critical thinking, problem-solving, and personal motivation. School retention, completion and college entry are critical indicators. I have spent 20 years building high performing programs that help Nevada's most vulnerable & challenged youth find their own personal success by giving them the tools they need to reach their own self-determined potential. Programs like Jobs for Nevada's Graduates (with a 97.74% graduation rate), the Latin Chamber Foundation youth program & Nevada State College's Upward Bound program provide evidence of my successful experience & commitment.

### 4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the State Board of Education?

Response: As representative for the families of District 4, I would strive to achieve authentic student and family engagement by traveling and working extensively in the urban and rural communities of District 4. I already do this extensively as Executive Director for the JAG program, and I will continue to engage, meet with, speak with and most importantly, listen to students and families to inform my decisions. The driving question in my work (my North Star) at NDE (as in all my work) would be: is this the best decision for students and families?



## **Rene Cantu, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 4**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the State Board of Education, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: We live in a society where everything from access to pre-natal healthcare to food and housing security vary greatly, and where inequality is pervasive (poverty, racism, geographic isolation). Students come to school with dramatically different needs and levels of preparation. Upon arriving, our schools treat students very differently too, with poor and minority students being least well served (e.g., disproportionality in discipline and access to CTE). My commitment is to serve as a catalyst for positive change on the board to achieve educational equity for all students by making what is best for students the center of all my decision making. This is why I am running.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within Nevada schools? Is racism an issue? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: Language barriers, poverty, stress stemming from fear of family deportation, cultural misunderstandings & racism are issues immigrant students face. African-American students face some of the greatest challenges with higher, more severe disciplinary rates, and less access to high quality teachers and programs. Native American students suffer from low academic expectations & disparate access to quality teachers and programs (esp. in rural communities). Redressing these inequities is my top priority and I will give voice, advocacy and support to drive better outcomes for these students by providing families with transparent data and focus on practices to close the achievement gap for all.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the State Board of Education? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: First, replacing the Nevada Plan with the more equitable Per Pupil Funding Plan is vital to provide equitable access to opportunity for all Nevada students. Second, advocating for increased per pupil funding (and a stable funding base) from the where we are now (48th out of 51 or roughly 8K per pupil) to the middle (roughly 12K per pupil) is indispensable to improving outcomes. Third, more closely tying student outcomes (using a growth plan model) to teacher & administrator performance, compensation and raises will provide the accountability for the greater investment I advocate. This third priority represents the seed for developing a bold plan of action for improving student outcomes.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the State Board of Education sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: The board's structure, comprised of elected representatives and appointed members is well structured overall to accomplish its goals, but there appear to be gaps in knowledge/experience/voice. I believe the board would be strengthened and better able to achieve its lofty goals if it included two key voting voices: 1. the parent of a public school student in Nevada (serving as a parent) and 2. a representative from business, especially if it is someone with intimate knowledge of the Nevada workforce. Tying in a parental voice as well as a workforce development voice I believe would well-serve the NDE as it strives to achieve its goals.

## **Rene Cantu, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 4**

### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the State Board of Education allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: Student outcomes should serve as the North Star for all of NDE's work and 100% of discussions should place students outcomes at their center. Everything from credentialing and compensation to student testing must be seen through the lens of achieving excellent student outcomes for all students. I will strive to make all my decisions viewing every discussion through the lens of student-centeredness and high student outcomes as my core commitment and value.

### **10. How can the State Board of Education better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: Ongoing training and professional development is vital. In my experience, I have interacted with good (effective) and bad (ineffective) boards. Bad boards can create much damage. I believe the board must undergo professional development and training to be effective in its vital oversight role. When I was a CCSD Trustee, the board had been trained on policy governance. This training helped the board work together more effectively (despite differences of opinion), support and guide the superintendent well, and to stay in its lane (out of the business of micromanagement). Board development is vital to help the board do its job better.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: Candid conversations are essential for progress in any endeavor. Infused in any effective, honest form of communication listening to others is vital, too. Direct, honest communication helps individuals understand each other. Criticism needs to be constructive and solution oriented. Sometimes, it is important to walk away without responding when we have an emotional reaction to others. To me, self-reflection and taking my own inventory helps me be a better leader. Admitting when the fault is mine is important. I would do my best to live up to these ideals, and when I err, I would admit and correct them quickly.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of Nevada's State Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: Progress towards the achievement of the five state board goals should be the primary basis for the evaluation of the state superintendent. Helping Nevada improve student achievement as evidenced by improved state educational rankings is another key metric for evaluation. In addition, there are other factors such as the ability to work with the governor, legislators and other stakeholders; the ability to lead staff in the accomplishment of these goals; and the ability to communicate with the public at large that are also important qualitative considerations.

# MARK NEWBURN CANDIDATE FOR NEVADA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



## Mark Newburn, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 4

### **1. What is the role of the State Board of Education?**

Response: At the highest level, the State Board acts as an advocate and visionary for all children, especially in the area of equity. The Board develops regulations that set statewide education policies, expectations, and accountability measures. The Board plays a central role in determining what our children need to know and be able to do at each grade. Generally, the State Board determines "what" needs to be done in education while the local school districts that determine "how" things are done. Additionally, the State Board acts as education thought leaders and serves as a public forum to address current education issues.

### **2. Why are you running for a seat on the State Board of Education? What is your vision of success for this role?**

Response: During the Great Recession, I ran in 2012 to publicly make the connection between our state's lack of investment in education and our state's inability to diversify our economy. I am running for re-election to continue my work to modernize Nevada's K-12 education system to produce the skilled workforce needed to diversify our economy. My vision for success is expanded and equitable access to special programs such as GATE, AP, STEM, Computer Science, and Career and Technical Education.

### **3. How do you define student success? What experience do you have and what role do you intend to play in advocating for student success?**

Response: I define student success as graduating College, Career, and Community ready. As a member of the State Board of Education for the last eight years, I have been part of the decision process that sets graduation requirements, per subject academic standards (expectations), per grade achievement levels, and approves all Career and Technical Programs. I serve as chairman of the State Board's High School Graduation Committee and was instrumental in developing the new College and Career Ready Diploma designed to have students College, Career, and Community ready. I will continue to make student success and improving student outcomes board priorities.

### **4. How do you plan to authentically engage students and families if you are elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: During my time on the State Board, I have built a reputation for being active in the state and local education community and actively engaging all education stakeholders. I am noted for attending most education-related events and have an active presence on social media, including following the CCSD Parent Facebook page. I use my social media to inform stakeholders on important items before the State Board and answer stakeholder questions. I also make myself available to address individual stakeholder groups. My email address and phone number are posted on the State Board website. I plan to continue this authentic engagement.

## **Mark Newburn, Nevada State Board of Education Candidate District 4**

### **5. What, if any, barriers currently exist to educational excellence and equity for every student? If elected to the State Board of Education, how will you help eliminate these barriers?**

Response: Barriers are 1) Equitable access to the most effective administrators and educators and 2) Equitable access to the programs and resources. The local school districts often fail to provide equitable access to educational excellence, so one of the major roles of the State Board is to hold the district accountable and shine a light on these inequities. I have championed increasing per school financial transparency to show when districts are moving resources from schools serving lower-income neighborhoods to schools serving upper-income neighborhoods. After re-election, we will be rolling out the new ESSA requirement to show "actual" dollars spent per school.

### **6. Are there challenges specific to immigrant students and/or students of color within Nevada schools? Is racism an issue? How will you ensure these issues are addressed with fidelity if elected to serve on the State Board of Education?**

Response: Immigrant students and/or students of color often face racism in the form of implicit bias that can result in lower expectations, increased disciplinary actions, and reduced access to special programs such as GATE and STEM. While on the State Board, I have used and will continue to use the State Board's accountability authority to shine a light on these inequities while working with the legislature and the district to eliminate them. The State is also active in working with the districts to enact required Multicultural Training.

### **7. What do you believe are the top three most persistent challenges facing the State Board of Education? What is an example of a bold approach you would propose to address one of those challenges?**

Response: 1) Setting student grade and graduation expectations that are reasonable and prepare the student to be College, Career, and Community Ready in a rapidly changing world. 2) Holding the local school districts to the right levels of transparency and accountability. 3) Performing 1) and 2) in an environment of changing political priorities and inadequate funding. When it became clear that Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning could make our future graduates obsolete, I led the state's effort that will make computer science a core academic student and require all students to have access.

### **8. Do you believe the current structure of the State Board of Education sets the Board up to reach its goals? What will you bring to the role that will complement the skills of existing Board members?**

Response: The State Board of Education is a hybrid school board consisting of elected voting members, appointed voting members, and appointed nonvoting members. This structure gives the State Board broad representation and deep education expertise while still being directly accountable to the voters. Each appointed member is an exemplar in their specific area, making the State Board a school board of experts. Since joining in 2013, the State Board has become the most respected and student outcome-focused public school board in the state. My background is in high technology, so I have brought an intimate knowledge of those industries' workforce requirements.

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### **9. Research suggests that more than 50% of a board meeting should be focused on student outcomes. How would you ensure the State Board of Education allocates this amount of time to student outcomes?**

Response: As board vice president, I have been a part of the State Board Leadership Team for the last five years. Our leadership focus has been on 1) improving student outcomes and 2) improving equitable access to educational excellence. Because of this focus, the State Board has been one of the few school boards that consistently spends at least 50% of the board meeting time on issues that directly affect student outcomes. When re-elected, I will maintain this focus and goal.

### **10. How can the State Board of Education better engage in learning together? If elected to the Board, what steps will you take to ensure this happens?**

Response: The State Board is unique in that our appointed members come in as experts in their respective areas. But, there are areas where we could make significant improvements. As a senior board member, I am often tasked with mentoring new members through the onboarding process. Based on this experience, I have been working with the board president and the state superintendent on the need for better onboard training, board governance training, and creating a national best practice training retreat for board members. This January, our members are scheduled to receive the first of this new training.

### **11. If elected to the Board, how would you approach challenging conversations and/or criticisms that might arise from fellow Board members, stakeholders, and the broader community?**

Response: During my time on the board, we have faced several controversial and even volatile education policy decisions. I have proven capable of handling tough policy questions that need to be determined by a body with broad representation in an open meeting fashion that must weigh input from a variety of stakeholders that may have conflicting views. I have a reputation as a board peacemaker working to build policy consensus by remembering it is always about better outcomes for children. One advantage we have is our hybrid structure makes for a better policy team with fewer egos.

### **12. What key indicators would you use to assess the performance of Nevada's State Superintendent? How would you hold the Superintendent accountable?**

Response: The State Board is an independent policy board and does not assess the State Superintendent. The State Superintendent works for the Governor and not the State Board. The State Board and the State Superintendent work together as a partnership. The State Board holds the State Superintendent accountable indirectly through this partnership based on responsiveness. We use our role in the State Superintendent selection process to guarantee the candidates we present to the Governor all share our board goals and priorities. I have worked with four different State Superintendents. Building a good working relationship is an area where experience counts.