

School Board Candidate Survey

After soliciting feedback from the community over the past several months, we have created a questionnaire that we hope all school board candidates will complete, to better help ExeterPACT and our community understand where candidates stand on these important issues

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What are your reasons for running for school board this year? *

As a graduate of Exeter High School, I have always been proud of our education system here in SAU16. Since moving back here to raise my children in 2012, I have been sorely disappointed in the decline in rankings and the quality of education that our children are receiving. I am running because it is time to bring a change and it is time for our school boards to prioritize the fundamental education of our children. I have been attending school board meeting since my now 7th grader was in kindergarten so I think it is time that I have a seat at the table. I have knowledge of the inner workings of the school board from my time on the BAC and I want to bring a voice to the table for our parents, teachers and community members.

What do you see as the main challenges facing the school district and what do you want to change? *

The current school board in my opinion is not serving the parents or tax payers the way that they should be. I would like to see more transparency, quality leadership and accountability by our administration. Our decline in rankings is appalling and our kids are behind with no real plan in place on how to rectify the situation. Money is being thrown at technology, facility upgrades and the administration salaries while our teachers are being cut in a time when we need more teachers, not less.

The School District Budget is always heavily discussed and debated. What changes are necessary to the budget and the budget process if any? *

The budget is built by the administration and then debated by the BAC before presented to the school board but the recommendations from the BAC are not binding which means that the school board can approve anything that the admin deems necessary. This year in particular was the first time that the BAC did not vote in favor of the budget. It was VERY disappointing for the school board to go against recommendations of those who were voted in by the taxpayers to represent the individual towns.

What is your opinion regarding the SAU16 policy responses to Covid and what, if anything, would you change? *

Overall the response to COVID has been a nightmare. There have been committee after committee to figure out "what to do" yet these committees are held in secret and cherry picked by the administration without public input. I had found out about the Covid Response Team at a school board meeting and begged to be on it to be sure that there was parent representation - there are only two non-school board parents on the committee. Last year, when the discussion of returning to school was happening many surveys were sent home yet NONE of the data was actually used to make the decision. Over 86% of parents wanted kids in the building and we were remote anyway. As a school board member, I would listen to the parents and make the decisions based on what the voters want even if it did not align with my own beliefs.

Why do you believe animosity has increased during in interactions between the school board, the administration, and the public, and how can the current climate be improved? *

I think that our administration has lost sight of what their job is and is focused so much on the polarizing issues that they have let the actual education of our kids slip through the cracks. Parents have been BEGGING to be heard over the last year and have continued to be ignored. As a school board member, I will work hard to listen to all parents and bring issues to the entire board for discussion. I don't think that board meetings should be one sided and I will always listen and respond to questions. Most of all, I will ask the tough questions and work hard on FULL transparency. As a parent, all of the secrecy and lack of communication has been infuriating and I encourage more parents to find a voice and get involved.

What would you use as a model to gauge academic success? *

There are a few things that I would use to gauge our schools success. First, testing is important and helps us to get a baseline of where students are at but I don't think that it should be looked at in a bubble. I think that reviews of monthly and quarterly assessments that are already done in the classroom need to be looked at more closely so that we can catch those kids falling behind faster and also harness those who may be excelling faster than their peers. Years ago, a monthly report on RIT was done and this was presented to the board and gave a pretty good picture of where our students were at. As a school board member, I would like to work with the administration to get something similar in place so that we may help from a budgetary standpoint.

Would you support the addition of more teachers and para positions? *

Yes

No

Do you believe our SAU has the appropriate number of administrators? *

Yes

No

If elected, what approach will you take in responding to parents' questions and concerns as it relates to their children's educational experiences inside the classroom? *

I would always approach parent questions and concerns with compassion. I may not always agree or know how to fix a problem but I will always do my best to work together with parents, teachers and administrators to do what is best for the children. I think that compassion is the key and it has been forgotten over that last few years.

Do you see yourself primarily as a representative of the community or as a representative of the school system? *

Representative of the community

Representative of the school system

Are you committed to a yearly survey of families, students, community residents, and school staff about what they see as major strengths and shortcomings of the district and its schools? Are you committed to publicly sharing the results? *

Yes I am committed to a yearly survey and yes I am committed to publicly sharing the results

Yes I am committed to a yearly survey but I believe the surveys are information for the school board and administrators

No I am not committed to a yearly survey

Undecided

What makes you the most qualified person for the school board? *

As a mom of 3 children who are or who have attended Newfields Elementary School and most of the time the only parent at the school board meetings, I think I am the best person for the job. I am currently the sole member of the Newfields BAC and have learned the budget process over the last 3 years that I have been on the committee. I have served on the hiring committee for a past principal. I am a vocal member of the community who has often questioned the school board and helped to educate other community members as to what is going on in our schools. I serve on the Newfields Youth Athletic Association and am one of few towns people who could probably name every kid in the school. I have worked closely with the PTO and the teachers to raise money for the school. Overall, I am a very dedicated community member and as someone with very independent views, I am proud of my ability to take in all of the information and make informed decisions.

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