

LAKE COUNTY NAACP - BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2023

Please place an x under the response which most closely matches your view. If you wish you may use the Comments section to clarify any of your responses.

Please print this as part of my response: The answers to many of these questions or statements are far more nuanced than a check box can accurately represent. It is also too easy for those with an agenda to take answers out of context. For this reason, I have not placed an "X" as an answer to any of the questions below. I would ask that you not generalize my answers and instead ask for further clarity if I have been unclear or incomplete in my responses.

1. Students should be allowed to have cell phones with them during school hours.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

With all that is entailed in modern family scheduling, it makes sense, with parent written permission, for a student to be allowed to have a phone with them on school grounds. That said, phones should not be allowed out or to be on during classes. They should only be used before or after school hours or with direct teacher or administrator permission during an emergency.

2. It is important for all students that American history be taught accurately and completely, including events we are not proud of.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

The key words here are "accurately and completely", and not just US history. I would also add in context of the other events of the time. The challenge is to do this in an objective and open manner without a political agenda.

3. It is important to help students understand the current day implications of historic events and behaviors.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Yes, but again, in an objective manner without a political agenda.

4. A primary concern of every school district should be to address any academic achievement gap between students and schools regardless of economic, racial, or cultural differences.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

I would change this to facilitate every student regardless of economic, racial, or cultural differences to their greatest potential. Educational institutions should not be just about getting everyone to some statistical average.

Every student should have an equal opportunity to achieve their absolute best. This could be well above the current average.

From the lowest performers to our honor students, we should strive to create a facilitating environment that lets every student excel to the best of their innate abilities and we certainly should not limit these goals based on some preconceived perception of their abilities.

5. The amount of emphasis and funds devoted to extra-curricular my school district is about right.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

The answer to this question is much more nuanced than a quick answer can address. These activities have great value on many levels, but state mandated and other curriculum goals must take priority. Budgeting is a balancing act often trying to fund the impossible with limited funds.

6. It is important that there be racial diversity among the staff of a school.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Regardless of race, we should hire the most qualified candidates available.

7. Schools should operate with the funds they have rather than continually seeking more funds from taxes.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Districts like Kirtland are in a very awkward place due to the State funding models. We get very little back from the State and are almost entirely reliant on local property tax funding. Budgeting and balancing the needs of the district and the taxpayer is truly one of the thankless responsibilities of the board and administration. As a taxpayer myself, I certainly do not want new taxes. This said, we can only cut so much and still meet mandates and contractual obligations, let alone our district goals and thus we can't make blanket budget statements. We must continually monitor, forecast and try to balance all the needs on a year-by-year basis.

8. It is well-documented that students of color receive more and harsher discipline than white students. However, this is typically justified and not a result of unconscious bias.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

I am uncomfortable making generalizations across an entire profession. That said, all students should be treated equally regardless of economic, racial, or cultural differences. Rules and consequences should be clearly understood by all and policies should be consistently followed.

9. History, DEI and SEL curricula in school is too racially divisive the way it is taught.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

I wonder how many people in the general population know what these acronyms mean. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) are trade terms that have unfortunately become politicized. Even when looking at the source definitions, one's understanding and implementation of their core is highly subject to personal bias and can often be corrupted by outside agendas. All this said, this is true of many things. I believe in the concepts behind the core of these terms and that we should strive to objectively create learning environments based on inclusion, equity and opportunity for all and with an understanding that our students come from a starting point with diverse environments, histories, families and different levels of emotional experience and development.

10. In general, too many school boards have ceded too much authority and influence to superintendents and administrators, rather than making decisions for themselves.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Boards and administrations need to operate as teams in the best interest of their students and communities. While boards certainly have the right and obligation to direct policies within the law and to monitor their implementation, they shouldn't micromanage the school's day to day operations.

11. My school district probably has some level of systemic racism, though it may often be unintentional.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

This is a loaded question/statement. I believe, regardless of economic, racial, or cultural differences, we all have social, cultural and experiential biases. The challenge is for all of us to objectively and with positive intent strive to rise above them for the personal and common good.

12. While there may be some barriers for students to attain high achievement, these barriers are not unique to students of color, they apply to all students.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Again, a bit loaded. Statistically there are social economic differences. These are not equal across populations, even on a community level. Regardless of race, a hungry child will have a harder time focusing on learning. A parent who has attained a lower level of education themselves may struggle to help their child achieve. These may have root causes in history or disparate opportunities, but the child exists in the present. Our job is to give all children an equal opportunity regardless of background. The challenge is finding the lines between school, home and community responsibilities. Currently, schools are not adequately funded to truly address these barriers.

13. Banning or restricting books from schools is an appropriate means of protecting our children from being exposed to immoral content.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

I do not support the mass banning of books and certainly not based on political agendas. This said, some books may require parental and/or educator guidance. There may also be a place for making some access based on age or developmental appropriateness.

14. Parents must take the initiative to get involved in the schools and in the education of their children, it is not up to the schools to spend time and energy trying to get parents involved.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Even though we all, parents and educators, have way too much on our plates, we all have the responsibility to be involved in the education of our children. This requires initiative on both the school's and parent's part. We should be working as a team. This said, schools need to make a genuine effort to facilitate the involvement of parents and caregivers.

15. Bullying has existed for generations. It is up to parents to address it when it occurs, the school cannot fix it.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Comments:

Again, this must be addressed on a team level; students, parents, educators, administrators, community and the greater society. This said, a school should not tolerate bullying. It is completely appropriate for us to establish policies and expectations that bullying will not be tolerated.