



NORTHERN LEBANON

SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Fredericksburg PA 17026 ♦ (717) 865-2117 ♦ www.norleb.org

To Prospective Board Candidates:

On behalf of the Northern Lebanon School District (“NLSD”) Board of Directors, thank you for your interest in filling the now vacant board seat. Your interest in this important position and concern for our school district and community is invaluable and very much appreciated.

The selection of the next Board Director will be made by majority vote of the Board at the next Regular Meeting on Monday, November 7, 2022 (please note the change of date of this meeting to the second Monday of November in order to accommodate the November 8 Elections). At the November 7 meeting, all prospective candidates will be given an equal opportunity to provide a verbal statement of interest and answer a few questions from the Board. The Board President will then receive nominations from sitting Board Directors. All prospective candidates receiving a “second” from another Board Director will then be named as a candidate to fill the vacant seat. The Board will then conduct a vote of all nominated candidates. Any candidate receiving a majority vote of the Board (*i.e.*, five votes) will be seated as the new Board Director, to be sworn in immediately, with all rights and responsibilities of a full Board Director, for the remainder of the Board Meeting and for a term of office expiring in December, 2023. In the event that no candidate receives a majority vote at any point in this process, the candidate receiving the fewest votes will be eliminated from the process and a vote of remaining candidates will be conducted until a majority vote of the final two candidates is reached.

Based on prior experience in filling vacant Board seats within the District, and in order to best assist both you and the Board in the process, we have prepared a list of written questions to be answered in advance of the Board’s selection. These questions are not intended to trip you up or embarrass you, but are intended to provide you with an opportunity to give meaningful feedback and to help the Board with making a final determination. Please provide your written responses to the attached questions to the NLSD Board Secretary, Pat Martin (pmartin@norleb.k12.pa.us) no later than 3:00 P.M. on Tuesday, November 1, 2022, which is the date of the Board’s next scheduled Committee Meeting. Please feel free to answer directly on this document or provide your responses on separate sheets.



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**** Please note that in order to comply with the Board's Sunshine Law requirements these questions, and each prospective candidate's responses, will be published with the November 7, 2022, Regular Meeting Agenda.**

Again, thank you sincerely for your interest in this important position. We look forward to getting to know each of you in this process. Please do not hesitate to contact me, the Board Secretary, or any Board Director if you have questions.

Barry A. Naum, NLSB Board President

bnaum@norleb.k12.pa.us

24 October 2022



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Questions for Prospective Northern Lebanon School District Board Candidates

1. Please describe your current and past professional work experience and any experiences that have in serving on boards, whether governmental, non-profit, or for profit? If there is no relevant board experience, please describe any work you have done in a volunteer leadership capacity.

9 years in finance, 2 years as a Medical Esthetician, CIDESCO diplomat, 3 years in real estate, 4 years on board of hoa serving as secretary and treasurer from 2015-2019.

2. Please describe your background and experience with public education. How will your background and experiences contribute to your service as Northern Lebanon School District Director.

I have my own personal experience as a child going through public school, homeschooling and private schools. Last year was the first year as a parent navigating the public school system at the brick and mortar level as well as the cyber charter schools. Knowing what each have to offer the students will help advise what NL needs to do to compete with the level of education the cyber and charter schools and flexibility they provide. I saw first hand how some students flourished depending on the school of choice, and how some fell behind in their education and social development through no fault of their own. I saw parents fighting for their children's right to a public education and demand we all do better for the sake of our children.

There is a fight in the heart of every parent in this community for their children. Some just do not know how to fix what seems so broken and un-attainable. Throughout the last year, I have developed relationships and friendships with many families wanting a better educational experience for their kids. When issues arose, myself and a team of moms stood up and voiced our



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concerns. The community has opened up about what is going on with their kids within the schools in this district. We tried to be a liaison when necessary with the board and superintendent to rectify an issue before it became a major headline. I desire to continue to have an open line of communication between the community and the board. The board cannot make changes if they do not know the ins and outs of what is transpiring within the schools. It is unfair to put all the issues on the board that this district faces. However, as a board member I need to really hear the community and will continue to have the respectful open lines of communication with them and work together with fellow board members to achieve what needs to be done for the betterment of this district.

3. What personal or professional connections do you currently have, or have you had, with the Northern Lebanon School District (e.g., employment, contracting, alumni, parent of students, etc.)?

I am a parent and tax payer with children in the Northern Lebanon School District.

4. Please describe your understanding of the role and authority of the public school board.

To make decisions that best represent the educational and social needs of the community. To enact policy and procedures within the law, for the schools, staff and students within the district. (the specifics are outlined on board website which I have reviewed) To review and authorize school tax increase or decreases for the purposes of educational development and needs within the district. To work with the dept of education on implementing legal state legislation into our schools. To navigate the specific needs of each school and implement changes that bring the highest quality of education and social development to our students.



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5. What do you see as the positive aspects of the Northern Lebanon School District?

The NL school board and superintendent have been responsive to parents with concerns that are brought forward. There are fantastic teachers and administrators that just want to teach students without the extra political and union pressures. On major issues like CRT/SEL the board has heard the parents and taken a firm stand.

6. What would you describe as your primary issues of focus or concern with the Northern Lebanon School District? What priorities do you think the district should focus on in the coming years?

My main focus is to ensure parents are fully aware of what is going on in schools, have full unfiltered, and easy to understand access to their child's syllabus and an easy process to bring concerns to the board should all other "chain of commands" fail to achieve a positive result. I also want to see NL step up and be a leader in cyber school options for students that need it. The current cyber options and what was available to students during 2020/2021 just does not meet the needs of the students. Having a child go through a year of cyber charter and now private school, I know what parents are having to measure NL's options by. At the end of the day, every child is entitled to a public education and with changing times, we need to be looking forward to other educational methods not just the brick and mortar classroom options for families wanting their child in the public school system.

Secondly, too many people have lost faith in the public school system. We need to bring that confidence back and bring Northern Lebanon from one of the lowest ranking school districts in PA to top 10. Investing in the type of education offered and the quality of it is a huge opportunity to meet the ever changing needs of this community.



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7. What are your personal goals for serving on the Northern Lebanon School District Board?

My personal goal is to be a liaison between the community and the district. Throughout the nightmare of last year we were able to keep an open line of communication going between the community and the school board as we navigated uncharted waters. I want to be a voice that asks the hard questions parents have and be able to provide clear concise answers. I want the community to start seeing the board members as members of the community not a separate panel of people dictating policy completely out of touch with the everyday struggles of this community.

Personally I would like to see a top notch cyber option be implemented as an option for children in Northern Lebanon. I also want to see new policy, procedures and training implemented when it comes to the bullying within our schools and how it is being handled.

8. The Pennsylvania School Board Association lists the following as Principles for Governance and Leadership: Advocate Earnestly; Lead Responsibly; Govern Effectively; Plan Thoughtfully; Evaluate Continuously; Communicate Clearly; and Act Ethically (descriptions available at <https://www.psba.org/about/governance/principles/>). Which of these principles would you say are particular strengths of yours? Which may be particular weaknesses? Which principles would you say are particular strengths and weaknesses of the Northern Lebanon School Board? Please provide examples.

My desire is to advocate earnestly for every student, parent and tax payer in this district. I think I have proven that by standing up and speaking out for a large group of the community



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last year. Throughout the unknown, we as spokespeople for the community tried to communicate clearly and effectively with all board members to enact change. Above all, regardless of what we are told or dictated to do, my values and occupation dictate that I must act ethically when making decisions. As we all know, sometimes the “right” decision is not necessarily the ethical one. I am not going to state weaknesses here. I am not requesting to serve on this board with the attitude that I have everything it takes or have all the answers. This is going to be a learning process. However, I am one that will ask the questions and am eager to learn. By willing to be open to the inner workings of the education system as a whole I believe is where the success will come from.

From a parent’s view, the greatest weakness to the school district right now as a whole is the appearance of not being able to stand up for this community and its rights when push comes to shove. This community knew the forcing of masking was unconstitutional regardless of one’s personal beliefs. We told the board we stood behind them to challenge this, told the board the dept of ed was out of line to threaten the superintendent and the board members. We still went and got outside unbiased legal advise to try and help this board because the community felt the board was being held to a “legal group consensus” of districts based on the solicitors bias and who else they represented. And yet we had to go through the grueling process of political and law banter and legal timelines only to end up where we said we should have been all along. A parent’s right to choose what is best for their child. The majority members and solicitor in my opinion did not do the ethical thing. They did the right thing instead. They let someone else fight the battle. And who suffered, our kids. Especially those with speech impediments and issues communicating. Faith in this school board needs to be restored. This was un-chartered territory for everyone from the top of the system down to the bottom, but this community is very forgiving. We cannot make the same mistake again. We have to do better.



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9. What significant challenges do you envision on the horizon for public education in general, and for the Northern Lebanon School District specifically?

One challenge I see for all school districts is their ability to enact policy and change that represents the desires of their respective communities. Often times districts use solicitors that represent other school boards and their legal opinions are written as it would be for every district, a blanket legal opinion. In my opinion, no law firm is going to advise a board they could do something that could potentially contradict their stand with their other clients even if there is the legal possibility and ethically should be done. It would open the doors for other districts to follow suite and create internal issues. School districts need solicitors who know the law, operate within the law, and challenge it when morally and ethically necessary if the board directs them to do so. I believe districts should be able to select their representation if possible and replace them if necessary.(I do not know the ins and outs of doing so) The community does not want to see their hard earned money going to individuals who have their own agenda and are playing the legal system on our dime and at the expense of our children's education.

I also see challenges from politicians in Harrisburg as they play their political game and use branches of government such as the dept of health and dept of education to enact their policies without going through the proper legal channels. Or worse yet, exploiting the legal process itself to violate our children's rights, rights us as parents have, and the staff and administrators within the schools have. By the time it is figured out it is our children, our administrators and teachers that suffer.



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There is a long laundry list of challenges this district is facing and will face. However, I am a firm believer that as long as the board is operating in the best interests of the children, values the community input and listens to its needs, we can have a school district making strides to have public education the first choice for families in this district. We can restore faith in a broken system when people see empathetic caring board members striving to do whatever is necessary to make this district great again, even off the football fields and wrestling mats.

10. What do you believe are the absolute essentials of a high-quality education?

Teachers who are able to teach and adapt teaching styles if certain children need it. A syllabus that challenges and engages the students. A no student left behind approach, which does not mean passing every student to push them through the system. Each student should be meeting benchmarks and if not, finding the way to reach these students so they comprehend what is being taught. An environment for students to come to that is safe and encouraging. An array of options for extra curricular activities for students to participate it both during the school day and after that incorporate the community. And lastly, if possible, multiple methods of delivering the educational experience to children (cyber, trades etc).

11. Please state your belief of the value of the following in public education:

Athletics and extracurricular activities- **Must have**

Fine and performing arts- **Must have**

Applied and technical arts- **Must have**



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Taxing and capital investment- when necessary- I'm a firm believer in the money should be following the student. Public schools shouldn't take for granted the tax payer money from this district. They need to compete with higher educational standards and offer something more than the bare minimum while continuing to raise taxes. The community should be seeing a benefit from our investment in the schools our children attend here. I also take issue with our seniors paying the same rate if any in school taxes.

Cyber/Charter Schools- this must be a viable option, however public schools need to step up if they want to compete with the quality of education they provide. There is a reason parents opt for these methods of schooling and brick and mortar school districts should be able to offer the same if not better options for students to learn with all the resources available to them while keeping the money in this district.

School choice- students should be going to public school in the district they reside in if the school is able to meet the student's needs, and if the school is attaining the standards set forth by the dept of education. Unique circumstances arise and should be addressed on a case by case basis.