

2026 Candidates Forum Questionnaire
Avery County Board of Education
Randy Singleton

Core Questions About Priorities & Vision

Why are you running for the Avery County Board of Education?

I am running for the Board of Education because I would like to be a voice for the students and parents in our community. I believe the children of Avery County should be our top priority and given equal opportunities to grow and succeed inside our school system. I believe it is important that parents are involved in their children's education and in the decisions that affect them.

What experiences — professional, volunteer or personal — uniquely qualify you to serve on the Board?

I have lived in Avery County all of my life and I love our community. I have served on the Board of Education for the past four years. I have attended conferences in Greensboro and Raleigh to further my understanding of how to best support students, teachers and families within our school system. I am used to working together with other individuals as a team and I am a good listener and respect the opinions of others.

What are your top three priorities for Avery County Schools over the next four years?

First, I would love to see each school in the district meet academic standards. Second, I would like to see unity across our school system, with staff, students, families and the community working together toward shared goals. And thirdly, I would like to see each school in our district promote a positive and supportive work environment where teachers feel valued.

What is your long-term vision for the future of public education in Avery County?

I would love to see each school meeting academic standards and achieving high growth for all students. I would also like to have a brand-new Avery middle school, located near the high school, for our 7th and 8th grade students.

Policy & Operational Questions

How should the Board address teacher as well as school bus driver staffing and retention challenges, including compensation and professional support?

We need to advocate for competitive compensation and benefits. We also need to help provide a positive work environment where employees feel valued and heard.

What is your position on the current academic performance of Avery County Schools?

I am aware that we have some low performing schools in our district, but I am positive that we have the right administrators in place to help students achieve academic success. Covid and Hurricane Helene have caused academic challenges; however, I believe if we give our administrators the resources, support, and tools they need, we can ensure continued growth and student success.

How would you bridge performance gaps across school districts, advocating for students in underperforming schools with a remedial boost, while also continuing to best serve the competitive schools' students?

The Board should assess student needs and ensure resources are allocated based on those needs. Schools should work together encouraging the best practices between higher performing and lower performing schools.

How would you advocate for struggling students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds?

I would advocate for struggling and disadvantaged students by directing resources based on student need. I would work to ensure high quality instruction, tutoring, and mental health supports. We currently have school counselors in our school system to help support students in need. However, our elementary and middle school counselors are having to split time between schools. I would love for us to be able to have a full-time counselor at each school to help students who are struggling. I would also like to see the use of tutors at each school to help students succeed.

Adverse weather is a reality that impacts mountain schools with remote learning days currently used for make-up. What are some pros and cons of this method that can be addressed?

Pros: reduces makeup days, more flexibility for teachers and staff, helps students finish testing in the fall before Christmas break

Cons: not all students have reliable internet access, some students may struggle to stay focused without in person learning, it can be harder on teachers to come up with remote lesson plans, students may struggle completing the work because they have questions

How would you promote, test and support standards of excellence and accountability among teaching staff?

I would promote, test and support standards of excellence and accountability among teaching staff by stating specific goals and expectations and ensuring each teacher receives fair evaluations.

How would you approach transparency and communication between the Board and community (parents, educators, taxpayers)?

I would encourage the community to attend monthly board meetings. I feel the Board of Education and the community needs to be open and honest with each other in order to build trust.

How should the Board balance the budget while meeting the needs of students, teachers, and families?

We as the Board should balance the budget while meeting the needs of students, teachers, and families by ensuring our resources align with district goals and priorities. We should focus on what has the greatest impact on learning, support for teachers and choices that reflect the

values of our community. Costs continue to increase each year therefore having a balanced budget is top priority to save taxpayer money.

What role should the Board have in setting curriculum standards or guidelines?

I believe the board of education should define the educational goals and priorities of the district. The board of education should approve the framework while allowing teachers to develop their specific instructional methods.

School Climate & Community Engagement

What is your approach to ensuring a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment for all students? Do you support specific policies related to bullying prevention, mental health support or school climate programs? How could you help Avery County Schools promote a culture that values and teaches respect, consent and safety every day?

I support board policies currently in place. Avery County Board of Education acknowledges the dignity and worth of all students and employees and strives to create a safe, orderly, caring and inviting school environment to facilitate student learning and achievement. (See board policy 1710/4020/7230 Discrimination and Harassment Prohibited by Federal Law). To help prevent bullying, Avery County Schools has adopted policy 1735/4329/7311 Bullying and Harassing Behavior Prohibited. I can help promote a culture that values and teaches respect, consent and safety every day by supporting teachers and staff and making sure these policies are followed.

How would you foster mental health across schools among students and staff, including using a trauma-informed approach toward wellness?

I would ensure that school counselors are available to both students and staff. I would also encourage administrators to create a safe and supportive environment to help both students and staff feel valued and appreciated.

How would you increase language learning resources not only for the benefit of Latino students but to help with bilingualism among native English-speaking students so they can engage with their Latino classmates and community around them?

I would like to see certified ESL teachers in every school. I would encourage bilingual visuals and materials for the classrooms as well as fostering a two way learning environment where both English speaking and non-English speaking students work and learn together.

How would you promote inclusivity, respect and equity among all students with regard to their different socioeconomic, cultural, racial or religious origins? How would you make sure the students of Avery County grow with a complete, modern, multicultural education that simultaneously honors the local culture of Avery County?

I believe every student should be treated with respect and kindness no matter their religion, race, social status, or cultural background. I believe by offering curriculum, classroom discussions and school activities that reflect diverse cultures and backgrounds while also honoring our local culture we can make sure that the students of Avery County feel represented and valued.

How should the school system engage parents and community stakeholders in decision making?

The school system encourages parents and community members to attend monthly board meetings, public forums, participate in surveys, be active in your school's PTO, ask questions and provide input.

How would you address concerns from community members who feel under-informed or unheard on education issues?

The community is invited to attend all monthly board meetings. We encourage the community to ask questions and provide input. Public records are available upon request.

Local & Practical Concerns

Often, school bus routes become more limited because of adverse weather. How would you promote accessibility at school, since students have varying levels of public road accessibility, especially following adverse winter?

It is a struggle for buses to run on all roads during bad weather because DOT policy is to clear the main roads first, then secondary roads and lastly gravel roads after all paved roads are cleared. DOT does not salt gravel roads. I believe our school transportation employees do a great job. They have hard decisions to make, and they always keep student safety top priority.

What do you see as Avery County's most pressing education challenge right now? What ideas do you propose to address the challenge?

I believe our most pressing education challenge right now is our low performing schools. I believe we need to focus on the needs of our low performing schools and get them the help and resources they need to be able to attain academic excellence.

In what ways should the Board support or expand vocational, technical or college-readiness opportunities for students?

I believe we should continue to support the partnerships we currently have in place with Mayland Community College and Lees McRae College as well as providing Career and Technical Education (CTE) at the high school level for those who do not intend to pursue a four-year degree.

How should the Board respond to changes in enrollment, demographics, or funding levels?

I believe as enrollment changes the board should evaluate how class sizes, staffing and facilities are affected, making decisions that best support the students and staff. As demographics change, I believe the board should evaluate student needs and ensure that each student feels valued and has support to help them succeed. When funding levels change, the board should communicate openly with staff and the community about financial decisions in order to build trust.

Personal/Values Questions

How do you define success for students in Avery County Schools, and what metrics most matter to you?

I define success for students not just by test scores and grades, but by their excitement to attend school each day. I define success as growth that students and others can recognize. Success means seeing progress in each individual student, celebrating their achievements and supporting them as they reach their full potential.

What would you do differently from current Board members if elected?

I am a current board member, and I believe we are doing our best but there is always room for improvement.

How will you ensure your decisions are student-centered while also considering taxpayer interests?

We must ensure our students and their academics are our top priority while also being good stewards of taxpayer money.