

Election 2018 Q&A

LCSD1 Board of Trustees (4 open seats)

Bertel Budd, Daniel Marces and Noah McAtee did not provide answers to our questions.



**PHILLIP
REGESKI**



**ROSE ANN
RINNE**



**TARA
RUSSELL**



**RICH
WIEDERSPAHN**

Q: Why are you running for the LCSD1 Board of Trustees?

It is important to have an engineer on the board to address building and land issues. I own an engineering firm in Cheyenne, and I am a registered engineer in Wyoming.

It is through education that an individual can have the greatest impact on their future. I learned what a difference an educator can make in a child's life when my father died; it was teachers who encouraged me to succeed. They became my mentors. I have served as president of the Parent Advisory Committee, as well as 16 district committees and boards. I have a unique understanding of LCSD1 operations, issues and challenges.

I am running for school board to further create a positive impact in the lives of students within LCSD1. As a current substitute teacher, I have firsthand knowledge of daily operations in some of our schools, several of the needs of both students and staff, as well as areas of improvement. I am the mother of two school-aged boys, both attending schools in our district. A parent perspective is paramount in having a diverse board.

I am running for the LCSD1 Board of Trustees because I have a passion for education and a deep respect for the school district. I believe that my education and experience have prepared me to be a productive member of the board. I know what it is like to be a member of a team, and I am a good listener. This vacancy is an opportunity to make a difference in my community.

Q: What will be your top priorities as a school board member?

To keep the school facilities in good order and maintained correctly.

Promoting clear and concise communication about programs, curriculum, policy and procedures to our stakeholders. Building parent and community support for our schools. Ensuring administrative leadership is communicating and facilitating ways for our teachers and staff to be successful. Educating stakeholders about state and federal school accountability, so that they have an informed understanding of what the reports mean. Also, what plans are in place to help schools meet or exceed expectations.

One of my top priorities as a trustee will be to create encouraging and enriching environments for students and teachers. Teachers need more time spent creatively engaging and building positive relationships with students. Kids thrive and grow when they feel safe, heard and respected. Smaller-group instruction is proven to be the most effective for student learning. Positive connections between teachers and students are the best ingredients for success.

Priority 1: Working with the superintendent and board members to address state funding issues that may impact the district. Priority 2: Addressing the issue of "instructional time" as it relates to student achievement. Are students receiving enough time in front of a teacher in a classroom setting? Priority 3: Work with the board and Laramie County Community College to provide more opportunities for students who want to enter the trades that will allow them to go directly to work upon graduation.

Q: How should the district handle the current overcrowding in the schools?

By adjusting the teachers' schedules to have more classes within their current working hours. And minimize the time that teachers are required to do things other than teach students (administrative duties).

The state funds new schools, and prioritizes additional, replacement or remodeling of schools, leaving the district with no choice but to add modulars, shift boundaries or bus students. All three solutions have their own set of problems: safety, moving students from neighborhood schools and transportation cost. There is no standard answer.

I think it's important to address overcrowding with more long-term goals, not a quick fix that we'll end up outgrowing again in a few short years. Collaborate and work toward stable and durable solutions. With our district flourishing and our funding flailing, it's time to get innovative.

The ideal solution is to build more schools. The Legislature needs to find new ways to build schools. Given the current budget issues at the state level, this remains a major concern. Portables, or modular buildings, which are currently being used out of necessity, are a solution of last resort.

Q: What should the district do to help students toward their chosen paths following graduation, be it college, career or military?

Make sure the students and their parents have a clear understanding of the opportunities that are available to help them on their chosen paths after graduation. My experience with East High (where my child is a junior) is that the district has very good programs for the students in preparing for their futures.

Continue to encourage students and parents to discuss and explore career opportunities earlier in elementary and junior high, so that students and parents can make informed choices when they are selecting classes and pathways in high school. We should continue to work with the University of Wyoming, junior colleges, career and technical education programs and associations, and our military and business sectors to ensure post-secondary career readiness. This could be done with job fairs, program mentors, internships, etc.

LCSD1 already has some great options implemented to help students who know what their path will be after high school graduation. There is always room for improvement. Hosting college and career fairs can offer opportunities for students to access a sampling of many different options. Offering more hands-on technical and vocational programs for students that are not college bound. Team up with local businesses and community leaders to provide students more liberties for learning.

The district should provide a clear path with a variety of options for students. I like the dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities at LCCC for our students. The district has a memorandum of understanding with LCCC that allows students to take advanced classes or vocational training for those who want to enter the trades. We should enhance these opportunities, so more students can graduate from high school with an associate degree or specific job training.

Q: In light of the state's fiscal situation, how should the district prepare for possible future budget cuts?

By adjusting the teachers' schedules to have more classes within their current working hours, and minimizing the time that teachers are required to do things other than teach students (administrative duties). Let's use our current resources more efficiently.

I would put a team together with all of the stakeholders represented to consider and develop budget priorities. I would reach out to all faculty, staff, administration and education associations to submit their recommendations for ways to improve the efficiency of the district. I would look at community support, too.

It would be judicious to take a mindful look at our district's finances with sensible eyes now and begin to make conscientious and deliberate decisions for the future. Break everything down; money in, money out. How can we adequately adapt our budget with the least effect on students?

The district should work with building administrators and staff to identify efficiency opportunities and implement as necessary. Opportunities at the district level should also be identified that can be cut. It is also a good idea to listen to the community for their suggestions in this area.

Q: How do you feel about statewide and district-wide testing in public schools?

I believe that district-wide testing is the only testing that should be required.

We must have some way of identifying our strengths and weaknesses. I feel more confident with teachers having formal and informal assessments to measure proficiency. Curriculums align with state standards. Behavior is currently being assessed separately. WY-TOPP has replaced PAWS, and is more rigorous and in line with state standards.

Testing can be beneficial to track the growth of students, but it's not always merited. Some students learn exceptionally in their classrooms but may suffer anxieties when testing. Rigorous assessment schedules are not only stressful for teachers and students, they also deduct valuable time away from instruction and learning.

Statewide and district-wide testing can be useful tools if meaningful data is revealed by the tests. Most statewide tests are summative tests that have limited value for instructional purposes. District-wide tests (formative tests) can reveal information that can be used by classroom teachers to modify instruction and improve student performance.