

Somers School District 29 Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

Applicant: Cortnie Brooks

1. Why are you seeking to be a school district trustee?

I have a keen interest in collaborating with our community and administrators to ensure our students and teachers have what they need to be successful in our district.

2. What issues are motivating you to apply for trustee?

I would like to see our schools and programs funded so they can function beyond the minimum standards of education. I would also like to be the standard by which other districts measure their capacity to grow and sustain programs.

3. Why should you be appointed as trustee?

I care deeply about our community and have worked for over 10 years as a volunteer in Lakeside. I bring with me years of experience in the sphere of Education as a practitioner and researcher. I would be able to apply this knowledge and experience to the trustee appointment.

4. Please describe your experience and involvement with your school district.

I have volunteered in the school as a in-class aid at LES; I have also substituted for teachers in LES and SMS. Additionally, I have held winter clothing drives for kids in our community. I have also collaborated with teachers and administrators to have my teachers-in-training volunteer in LES classrooms to help teachers with projects and stations. I also served as the VP of the PTA in 2021-22 school year.

5. What do you believe is the proper role of the school board?

To oversee the administrative needs of the district and set forth best practices of personnel and resource allocation.

6. Is there something that your school board should be doing differently to fulfill this role?

While it is collaborative in nature, I think more collaboration and ingenuity is required to increase educational standards and sustain school programs and personnel.

7. What is the role of the school district with regard to parents and the community?

The trustees are an extension of the community and reflect the desires and motivations of the public which includes parents/caregivers, children, and family members. The

school district is accountable for the resources and educational attainment of the children to which they have been entrusted.

8. What do you think are the most important challenges and opportunities facing your school district?

Our district serves a community of people who have few financial resources, we also have many families who work multiple jobs to sustain themselves leaving little room to participate in the education of their children. We cannot rely on our teachers solely to bear the burden of this task, nor can we rely on families to do so singlehandedly when the harsh reality of unstable socioeconomic factors is present in their daily lives.

I believe education is a community practice. Our community is an incredible place, and our schools are the places where the community is experienced. The communal aspect of bearing the burdens of our community falls on the few far too much. This is where we need people who can visualize where we want to be and how to get there while also realizing the faults and failures of our present. Collaboration is key if we want to build a community that educates and empowers its people, where everyone can contribute in whatever way they can with whatever resources are available to them.

9. What do you think are the most important issues facing school districts across the country, and what do you believe is the proper approach to resolving them?

There is an intersection of issues at play in the inequity within our nation's school systems. The [underfunding of schools](#) contributes to low teacher/personnel retention, inadequate on-site infrastructure, and out-of-date resources for educational programs.

Having an approach to education that values individuals outside of their market value is one way of rethinking the problem at hand. Education is a long process and requires the most innovative thinkers to re-evaluate systems in place and propose new methods of teaching, learning, and administration. Education carries immediate and long-term effects on individuals, communities, and nations. As practitioners, researchers, and administrators, we must see the goal ahead of us and make the hard decisions to get there. There is no easy answer, and as I have stated previously, education is a community practice, which necessitates the collaboration of people whose desires and goals are at the forefront of our decision-making.

10. Please include other relevant information about yourself.

Please see my resume for additional details on my qualifications and experiences in international education and teacher training.