



ELIZABETH CROWLEY

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QUESTION #1

**As PTA leaders we believe that our children's education is a team effort. Describe ways in which you have contributed to this effort, and communicated with district staff, the administration, organizations, government officials, and other stakeholders to share ideas and solve problems for our students and community.
Bonus question: which PTAs do you belong to?**

RESPONSE #1

I believe in two way communication and building connections for success. When I have questions or concerns I have reached out to the appropriate parties including faculty, staff and administration. I approach conversations with an open mind and look for opportunities to contribute to the solution.

As a working parent I would love to volunteer more time with the school, but find that there are limited opportunities available to working parents. I would advocate to remove barriers for volunteers and find safe creative ways for families to get involved with the school. For example, our district is rich in technical expertise, I believe many parents would love to volunteer to help supplement education regarding new technologies for teachers and students to take advantage of.

I feel it is important for school board members to be active and visible in the community. I help collect and hand out food at local food banks to give back to our community. I have helped organize fundraisers for youth sports and for veteran support services.

Before COVID, I used to go to schools to discuss careers in STEAM especially appealing to populations that are underrepresented in these fields. I look forward to being able to get back into classrooms in the future.

Additionally, mentoring youth and young adults in hopes of helping them achieve their goals is important to me.

QUESTION #2

One of Washington State PTA's top legislative issues is: "Supports and Funding for Students with Disabilities and Their Families". Do you think this needs more attention and if so, what would you do to advocate for supports and funding for Special Education?

RESPONSE #2

Many families have approached me with concerns related to special education both qualifying for services and receiving of. We need to review the process to determine how students are qualified to receive services and ensure that it is holistic and equitable and easy for families to navigate.

"Ensure that all students eligible for special education have available to them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living (WAC 392-172A-01005 (2))" <https://www.nsd.org/schools/programs-services/special-education/continuum-of-services>

Many services are only offered at certain schools instead of at all schools, forcing children to change schools based on service or program needs. While on the surface this sounds like it could allow for more specialized programs and be cost effective there have been examples in which it is not actually a financial savings and it creates other issues like causing a divide among peers and making it more difficult logistically for families to access.

All children need opportunities within school for social emotional growth, and maintaining separate environments and limiting 'general education' time takes away that opportunity for some children especially in special education programs.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2018/09/26/special-ed-needs-change-vermont-shows-how/>

As your board member I will advocate for resource availability consistently across schools and enhanced interactions across peer groups and more integrated general education time for special education students.

QUESTION #3

Northshore School District has a Strategic Plan with Four Building Blocks. "Building Block 1: Equitable Access to Personalized and Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning. Teaching and learning is the central function of our school system. We will advocate for standards, practices and programs that engage every student in challenging work, regardless of their current level of performance. And, because 'one size does not fit all,' we will differentiate and scaffold instruction and supports to meet the unique strengths, backgrounds, readiness, and learning styles of each student." What does Building Block 1 mean to you and how would you approach it as a school board director?

RESPONSE #3

Embracing what makes us unique helps to build on our strengths and find opportunities for personal growth. Creating an inclusive environment where we can learn from each other, create meaningful connections and help build each other up will foster positive academic and social emotional growth. Ensuring flexible and diverse approaches to learning empowers children to take charge of their own path to success.

I fully agree that 'one size does not fit all' and I recognize the difficulty to deliver personalized resources equitably across such a large district. However that needs to be the goal; all children need equitable access consistently delivered across schools for academic services, extracurricular activities and support services.

QUESTION #4

Two of Washington State PTA's top legislative issues are: "Increase Access to Nursing, Mental Health, and Social Emotional Learning Staff" and "Prevent and Reduce Gun Violence and Suicide". This coincides with the concerns of many Northshore families as well. The district has mental health supports at every school including staff and curriculum. For example, every elementary school of at least 500 students has a full-time mental health counselor and smaller schools have a half-time counselor. What is the district doing well? What should it be doing to better to support students' mental health and safety?

RESPONSE #4

"Bothell, Ingelmoor, North Creek and Woodinville High Schools are participating in UW Forefront Suicide Training" <https://www.nsd.org/our-district/who-we-are/mental-health/services-we-provide> Currently there is training for teachers and staff to help detect potential early warning signs related to mental health issues and potential violence. This needs to continue to grow across the district and ensure training is current and well comprehended.

I would advocate for a review of how the mental health counselors are leveraged. Are full-time counselors fully utilized? Do we need additional counselors? Or are they underutilized because people are not aware of or comfortable reaching out to them?

Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral To services (SBIRT) is currently only available for Middle School students, we need to have similar tools and services available at all grade levels.

"With schools transitioning to in-person teaching, student screenings will be limited. A request to ensure student participation in SBIRT, this school year..." <https://www.nsd.org/our-district/departments/student-services/sbirt>

We are all getting through this pandemic in our own way and it has impacted all of our stress levels and mental health to some degree. This year, screenings will be more important than ever.

We need to assess all students emotional well-being after this past year in addition to their academic readiness. We need to be adaptable and flexible as we adjust back to in person learning. As we work together to recover from this past year this could present an opportunity. If we proactively leverage counselors to connect with all of our students in conversation we can create comfortable environments for counselors to not just be available but engaged with students. Perhaps individual sessions or in small groups, not for formal counseling, but for an opportunity to have open discussion and build connections and support systems. If regular conversations with a mental health professional in a small way becomes 'normal' we could start to break down the stigma surrounding seeking help for mental health. If the counselors build relationships with students they will be more likely to reach out to them in a time of need.

I have many more ideas on this topic, please reach out to me for further discussion.

QUESTION #5

Funding is basically fixed and so new spending in one area means making cuts somewhere else. Some of the things that Northshore has chosen to spend their money on are: the 7-period day for high school, and staffing for nurses & counselors beyond what the state provides. Where do you think we need to spend more of our resources and where would you cut spending to make it work budget-wise?

RESPONSE #5

Many programs are only available at specific schools or limited in size, I would like to invest in making them more accessible across the district. For example more Innovation Lab type environments, immersion programs, sensory classrooms etc. I believe enhancing recent investments in mental health support will be critical in the coming years (as referenced in previous question).

The district is already receiving considerable funds from taxes, levies and bonds in addition to state and federal funding; NSD is one of better funded districts in the state. I would make the most of existing dollars before trying to raise money for additional spend.

I do not have access to the level of budget details required to fully assess efficiencies of spending. As a board member I would ask for the details behind line items so that I can approve with confidence that taxpayer dollars are being spent in a way to maximize returns and impact. I would also want to benchmark how we spend versus other high performing districts and learn from others how they are leveraging their limited resources most effectively.

Identifying where we can free up dollars without sacrificing important programs or resources is what I will be focused on. Especially to ensure equity of services across the district for all of our students.

QUESTION #6

What is a school board member's role and responsibility under the law and under Policy Governance? How does that role differ from the role of the superintendent or the administration?

RESPONSE #6

The Board sets policy and the Superintendent implements and executes according to plan.

Under NSD's Policy Governance structure there are 4 major types of policies: Goal, Superintendent Parameter, Board Structure and Process and Board/Superintendent Roles. <https://www.nsd.org/our-district/leadership/governance?fbclid=IwAR1wPe6pGYgzeSivCH-O78GG66nxyZnwA0cGABfcVRIRNyEW5s4-oK0vGAg>

The Board is responsible for setting goals for students' academic success and provides oversight of district resources.

The Board and Superintendent collectively agree on the interpretation of the goals and policies set by the Board Policies and the Superintendent Parameter Policies including the appropriate measures of success.

The Superintendent is responsible for managing the district as outlined by the goals and policies set forth collectively by the board and superintendent and is accountable to regularly and consistently monitor and measure progress against these goals and policies.

Some examples of Board responsibilities are to determine funding requirements, budget allocation, proposing levees and bonds and ensuring return on investments. The Board also oversees all curriculum decisions, including implementing new curriculum or adapting existing curriculum and upholding legislation as directed at state and federal levels.

As a member of the board I look forward to teaming across the board, with the superintendent and with administration, committee volunteers, etc to set high expectations to reach our collective goals and ensure the quality and effectiveness of policies for the success of our students.

QUESTION #7

Within our school district, there is a lot of residential building. Overcrowding is a major issue in many of our schools as well as portables and buildings that are old and need maintenance. What are the steps you would suggest the district take to alleviate these issues?

RESPONSE #7

With several new schools opening recently I would like to focus on much needed maintenance and expansion of existing buildings. We need to ensure the safety of the students, faculty and staff by maintaining the health of the physical infrastructure. Portable buildings are intended to be short term solutions, we need to plan for longer term growth. The increased population in our community also means there is less land available for future acquisitions. We need to maximize our square footage and consider building larger permanent structures with multiple stories to accommodate growth.

At a recent school board meeting there was a vote to surplus/sell a warehouse building that was in disrepair and no longer needed by the school. In the meeting it was stated that the proceeds of the sale would go into the general fund and indicated that there is currently no specific plan as to how the money would be allocated. I would strongly recommend that the proceeds go directly toward the backlog of maintenance issues and towards building expansions and upgrades. If there isn't already a risk ranking and prioritization of maintenance requirements it needs to be developed expediently to shore up much needed building issues.



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