



CHRIS ROBERDEAU

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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

Collaboration is a key tenet to leadership, and I value getting input from all stakeholders. Everyone, including the teachers and the community should have a seat at the table so their voices can be heard.

Over the years, when I have had concerns or questions, and wanted more understanding I always reached out to the teachers, principals, or superintendent. The teachers and principals have been very responsive and able to address my questions. Over the last year, I have also reached out to the School Board to try and get answers and an understanding of why we couldn't go back to school like other Districts were. Unfortunately it appeared that they did not want to receive input from the community as we were either ignored or responses were very dismissive. That is why I am running for the School Board - to bring the community voice back to the conversation.

In Northshore schools specifically, I have participated in Watch DOGS and Career Day as well as volunteered numerous times to support athletic and academic activities like DECA. Through my volunteer work with non-profit engineering societies, I have supported many educational activities. As Treasurer, I made sure we budgeted and provided funding for activities such as science fairs and offering tuition or grants to enable students to participate in activities they would not normally be able to afford. I also organized an annual Engineering Fair to help students learn more about engineering and worked with multiple school districts across the Puget Sound region, including Northshore, and The Boys and Girls Club to help as many kids participate as possible. Providing access to educational opportunities has always been a passion of mine.

As your next Board member, I look forward to collaborating with ALL stakeholders, especially students who are the beneficiaries of our efforts, to improve the trajectory for ALL NSD students. I am convinced that this should be the best district in the State for students to launch their careers and I am committed to making that happen.

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

Yes. First, we need to turn this into a District-level priority with the Board making it one of their goals (our current Strategic Plan does not currently address this need). What is happening across our various schools is uncoordinated, giving some schools more support than others. This is not equitable for our students. By making this a District-level priority, benchmarked and monitored by the School Board, we ensure that all schools are getting the attention they need and ALL students are supported.

Second, we'll implement a District level MTSS (Multi-Tiered Support System). Once again, being at the District level ensures equitable availability across the District. It also ensures funding and support is directed where it is really needed so we stop leaving some schools without support.

After this last year, students with IEPs and those in need of other services were denied or received limited access. This put them far behind where they should have progressed to. I have discussed this issue with a number of parents and we must remedy this growing gap. We need an immediate plan for how we are going to get those students back to their plan, and as a Board, we must monitor and ensure we stay on or ahead of plan. Other Districts found ways to provide those services through the pandemic. It is our responsibility to not let Northshore students who need these services be left behind their peers.

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

This is exactly my stance with education and what I call equitable education. Every student will have different barriers and struggles and we need to have a variety of resources and supports available to address these. Teachers need to be given the resources (beyond a high level annual training that is not grade specific) to help identify these needs so they can use these resources appropriately to make sure every student succeeds and thrives.

As I look at OSPI data, it is clear to me that Low Income students in Northshore are very far behind the others. One of my first priorities is to identify the exact causes of this discrepancy and take action to close the gap. And by action I don't mean create a committee that talks about it for 4 years (as is the case with the literacy issue). I mean actually make decisions and demand actions that are happening immediately and in the current school year. Every month that goes by without taking action will only allow that gap to grow.

My objective is to close the gap so low income students are not left behind the other students. And I will not lower the expectations to do this. We can raise the standards for all students, and by providing the extra resources where needed, we can bring everyone up to those new standards.

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

This also needs to be a District level goal. We need an MTSS put in place organized at the District level so we provide equitable treatment across all the schools. Some schools have elements of these, but not all schools. In addition, we need to increase our number of counselors and school psychologists. I find the numbers we have to be too low. However, we cannot underestimate the value of parental involvement and teaming with parents for early intervention. We are entrusted with the care of the youth, but we are not the family unit. We need to be careful to not encroach on family responsibilities and instead partner with them as we develop our next generation. Putting in place the appropriate structure is critical to maintaining that balance and trust. As an active parent and future Board member, I can bring balance and perspective to ensure this is done well.

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

It comes down to setting priorities. This is how I have always managed organizational budgets. We focus first on what is needed to support our kids and their learning, because it is time we start putting our kids first. The length of the school day as well as adequate staff are priorities. Classroom space must also be a priority. We did not have enough classroom space before the pandemic, and it constrained us in being able to get back to in-person school. Yet we spend money on other facilities. A turf field at the elementary schools is nice, but expensive and not a necessity. A District swimming pool is also nice, but doesn't help with classroom space.

Setting the budgets comes down to what are the needs for the kids. What do they and the teachers need in order to recover educationally and give our students the top-notch education they deserve. When those needs are addressed, then we can focus on the wants.

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

In order for any organization to be successful, it needs accountability. The School Board is responsible for setting the strategy and expectations. The Superintendent works for the School Board to lead the day-to-day activities of their administration to accomplish those strategies and expectations. It is the School Board's role to hold the Superintendent accountable. If they are not achieving the defined strategy, or bring a plan forward that is not aligned with the strategy, it is the responsibility of the Board to disapprove and provide guidance and direction. The current School Board approves everything brought to them, whether it meets their desires or not. There are no challenges or dissenting voices. The current School Board appears to serve at the discretion of the Superintendent. That is the reverse of what the structure is supposed to be and it needs to end.

As your School Board representative, a key input to the strategy and expectations is our Northshore community. I will be your elected representative, so I am supposed to serve your interests. I expect regular and frequent input from you. I will use your input to guide the strategy and expectations. I will engage with you, not defer all interactions to the Superintendent or the Board President.

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

As a district, we have not made the appropriate budgetary priorities. Classroom space was a problem well before the pandemic and will only get worse with the amount of residential building happening. Classroom space needs must be a priority in the budget before all the wants.

One way I have seen other School Districts approach this is to build additions to current schools. Construction schedules are set so they don't interfere with daily activities. And the additions are cheaper than new schools, so several schools can be worked on at the same time. This will allow us to get more from our budget.

I do not see the current Board treating this as a priority. How are our students supposed to learn if we are not providing them the best environment in which to learn? A new school building every few years can help, but is too slow. We need to set our classroom space as a priority and fund it appropriately, and use the money smartly to get the most out of what we have.



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