

# Questions for Georgetown Independent School District Board of Trustees

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Position Seeking: GISD Board of Trustees, Place 3

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## 1. How do you define the role of a trustee?

Formally, trustees have a very limited role: Hire and fire a superintendent, set board policy and set a budget. Informally, the role of trustee is a very important community role. Trustees represent the District to the community and the community to the District. We have a responsibility to make sure we are providing the very best and safest environments for our students and teachers to fulfill our mission statement of being the “Home of the most inspired students, served by the most empowered leaders”.

## 2. What makes you passionate about education?

I believe that education is one of the cornerstones of a healthy community. I believe that as goes our school district, so will go our community. As a District, we take very seriously the charge to prepare our learners (both children and adults) for a future that is ever changing and make sure they are equipped to go out from GISD and improve the next place they go to further their learning. It is an incredible privilege to get to see this play out day after day, from graduations to accomplishments in the classroom, concert hall, field of competition or beyond our boundaries.

## 3. Elected Trustees are part of what is called the Team 8. This refers to the concept of trustees working with the superintendent to implement policy. What makes you uniquely qualified to help the trustees achieve the district direction from a team perspective?

Having served on the Board for 6 years, I have had the awesome honor to be a part of implementing the strategies and policies that shape our work as a district today. One of the strongest things we have going for our District is a very good culture. I feel that the culture of the District is a reflection of the culture of the Board. We have had chances to attend board trainings and see other boards from across the state and some from out of state that come here for training. If there is one consistency that we have noticed as a predictor of a successful District, it is a strong Board who works with a

Superintendent that also constantly challenges themselves to become better each day. We are very fortunate to have that right now in Georgetown ISD!

**4. How do you build consensus with fellow trustees to help shape the direction of improving GISD?**

Each of the current trustees evaluates our decision making framework through the lens of what is best for the children of our District. Everything we do must serve their needs in some form or fashion. While we might not always agree on some of the semantics, if we can all start with the goal of helping children, that allows us to continue to move the District in a positive direction. One of the defining characteristics of leadership is knowing how to effectively communicate your position and knowing how vigorously you are prepared to defend it. Our board strikes a very good balance on this, especially given the diversity of backgrounds and viewpoints represented. I think this helps us be a very high functioning body in an arena where that is not always the case.

**5. How do you define College, Career and Military readiness?**

CCMR came about originally out of a workshop as a way for us to provide meaningful, objective, time-oriented successes to the community. We suggested the notion that if we are delivering students to the marketplace that are CCMR ready, this will ensure that we are fulfilling the goals of our Learner Profile. As not every student might have the goal of going to college, this only increases the ability of GISD to deliver to them a quality experience that will prepare them for what is next. CCMR is a measurable way to see if we are delivering on that important goal. More on this in a later question...

**6. As Georgetown ISD continues to grow, what do you think is the biggest challenge facing the school district?**

Making sure we continue to provide a very high standard of education from the very best teachers available on the very best and safest campuses with the best supporting programming, world class fine arts and extracurricular opportunities, all while maintaining one of the lowest tax rates in the area. Making sure we are supporting the whole student, providing all that we can for their intellectual, physical and emotional needs and preparing them for life beyond GISD in a rapidly changing world is our charge and we are excited to pursue it every day.

**7. What can GISD do to be the first choice of education for Georgetown residents?**

We believe that public education is the foundation of the community. This is stated as Belief 1 in our strategic plan. It means that we strive in every way to provide the very best educational opportunities, curriculum, teachers and

facilities that reflect the values of the community we serve. That we nurture every child and help them prepare themselves to lead, grow and serve after they leave GISD. We are so fortunate that this culture has been embraced by our community. From many years of community leadership, strong partnerships with the City, Chamber and other local groups who support our mission and vision, we work to deliver on the high expectations that are upon us. This helps us keep our focus in the midst of distractions and serve the community that has entrusted us to lead them.

**8. What is the role of bonds in relation to funding for school districts?**

A school district budget is very important to understand. The budget consists of two buckets, the first being the daily operating expenses such as lights, insurance and salaries (called Maintenance and Operations-M&O) and the second to pay off bond indebtedness (called Interest and Sinking-I&S). In GISD, the M&O tax rate is \$1.08 per \$100 in valuation and the I&S rate is \$0.319 for a combined rate of \$1.399. Using bonds is a very critical way to pay for longer-term or defined term investments such as land, real estate or buses. This is a way to provide for the facilities or capital needs of the District without touching the M&O dollars that fund the operation. In my time on the board, we have passed 2 bonds, in 2015 and again last fall, for use in purchasing land for the future, building new schools and renovating existing buildings in need of overhauls and for other capital projects such as parking lots, roofs, air conditioners and the like. Bonds are critical to our ability to stay up with the growth of the District and are voted on by taxpayers when they become necessary.

**9. What is the role of GISD in closing the skills gap and utilizing community resources?**

GISD is so very fortunate relative to many other Districts in the State and even in our area. We are blessed to have strong community partnerships that provide support in myriad ways. From Georgetown Health Foundation to ROCK to GISD Ed Foundation, we are able to provide many services and resources to students and teachers that we would not have otherwise. From the District standpoint, we have implemented Dual Language programs in our elementaries and have Full Day Pre-K that are very cutting edge. In fact, right now, part of the public education debate at the Legislature is talking about doing the things that we are already doing in GISD. We also have ACC classes, AP classes and an entire host of Career and Technical (CTE) classes available for our students. A good example of this type of strong partnership is our new Cosmetology program, starting this fall for high schoolers that will allow them to get a Cosmetology license at the completion of the program and be workforce ready the day after graduation. This program has been developed collaboratively between the Chamber, local

business Sport Clips and GISD and will be a very valuable option for many students.

**10. How do you define quality public education outcomes?**

Delivering to our GISD Learner Profile. Having a student leave their time with GISD equipped to Think, Create and Innovate, be inquisitive, showing perseverance, having self-knowledge and personal responsibility and modeling respectful relationships will show that we have given them the tools they will need to succeed at whatever comes next. To see the products of GISD go on to great accomplishments in a huge variety of fields and mention that they were given the foundation to do that in Georgetown ISD is a feeling as fulfilling as one could ever hope for.