

# Questions for Georgetown Independent School District Board of Trustees

Name: Brian Ortego

Position Seeking: Georgetown ISD, Board Trustee, Place 2

Campaign Website: none

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

I define the role of a School Board Trustee as one of seven individually elected representatives of residents in Georgetown ISD, who is accountable to district residents for academic performance of students and district operations. Trustees collaborate with the superintendent holds the chief executive officer accountable for student academic performance and management of school operations. Trustees adopt a shared vision and provide oversight and strategic leadership on fiscal performance, ensures adequate facilities for the needs of students and staff, and formulates and approves policy and procedures relating to district and campus level decision-making for the benefit of all students, parents, and community members.

## 2. What makes you passionate about education?

I am passionate about education because our schools are the foundation of our community and I believe it's important to preserve and improve the quality of our schools to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed through the provision of essential resources, necessary instructional supports, and an effective and rigorous curriculum. As a parent of three children who attended school in Georgetown from K-12, I have been actively involved in Georgetown ISD for the past seventeen years, serving as a volunteer and booster during school functions and on various committees and school programs. As a GISD School Board Trustee, I will work toward creating a more open government that engages more with the community on facilities and curriculum design as we grow, in order to ensure that all students are provided an appropriate and exemplary education.

**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?**

I am uniquely qualified to be a Trustee and a member of the Team of 8 that determines and achieves the district direction because of my personal life experiences, education, and thirty years of management experience and success in business operations and construction project management that has provided me with the knowledge and skills to work collaboratively with a team to build the consensus necessary to accomplish strategic goals and fiscal performance in a moral and ethical manner for the benefit of the organization.

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

If elected, I will work to build consensus with my fellow Trustees necessary to shape and improve GISD by learning, listening, and asking questions in the established and measured process. I recognize and value a diversity of opinion and the exploration of different options that are presented and evaluated by the Team of 8 through discussion and deliberation.

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

I define College, Career, and Military Readiness as accomplished when we in GISD have identified and implemented the academic programs that enables students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be prepared academically upon graduating high school and having the life readiness skills necessary to pursue higher education in college, technical school, entry level career, and/or to enlist for military service.

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

As Georgetown ISD continues to grow and diversify, I think that our biggest challenge facing our school district is being able to manage our resources, operations, and the continuing demand for new facilities and staffing in such an intentional and efficient manner that we can meet and exceed our academic performance goals on each campus and district-wide, in order to ensure positive educational outcomes for every student. We can't continue to get bogged down in the process and be seen as needing improvement in academic performance. Our primary focus has to be on academic achievement and accountability to the residents of our district. I believe that Georgetown ISD has to retain its belief and goal for neighborhoods schools to be the cohesive force and foundation that ensures quality of life for families and smart growth for our community along with

the creation of magnet schools and programs that serve students district-wide in pursuing customized educational options.

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

For Georgetown ISD to be the first choice of education for Georgetown residents, we have to ensure student success and safety, provide innovative programs and opportunities for our diverse student body, challenge every student at every level, and support instructional and special education needs for every student in a reasonable and appropriate manner that is needed to create leaders and problem solvers. We must reverse the continued loss of current and new students in GISD to private and charter schools because we are unable or unwilling to meet their unique needs. Despite rapid population growth in Georgetown ISD over the past decade, our student enrollment has underperformed the projections of our Demographer in recent years, affecting our state revenue in a negative manner by increasing the property wealth per student and increasing the amount of Chap. 41 Recapture to \$18 million last year. Improving academic performance in every school and increasing availability of innovative programs will benefit all students and make GISD schools the best choice locally, as well as work to reduce our financial challenges going forward with measured growth.

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

The role of bonds in relation to how we are able to fund construction and improvements for new and existing school facilities needed in GISD is based on a number of factors including the Interest & Sinking portion of our tax rate, the current balance bond debt resulting from long-term debt issued for voter-approved bond propositions for the purpose of building new facilities, allowed improvements to existing facilities, and certain other capital assets like school buses and technology, and the bonding capacity that allows Texas ISDs to issue new bond debt, based on voter approval in bond elections, and the bond rating from credit-rating agencies like Standard & Poor's and Moody's. Trustees and the Superintendent work with financial consultants and bond advisors to manage our debt portfolio in accordance with our strategic debt management plan and board policy to provide the best information for Trustees to make decisions on for the I&S tax rate adopting, bonding capacity for new debt, refunding and paying down existing bond debt, and bond issuances to get the best terms and interest rates possible. Based on amortization schedules for the bond portfolio and the property appraisal value increases or decreases along with new properties added to the tax rolls, Trustees can adopt a higher tax rate to increase debt service or bonding capacity or adopt a lower the I&S tax rate if the tax revenue is deemed excessive.

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

GISD first has the role and responsibility to close achievement gap in our student population and accountability in ensuring College, Career and Military readiness. GISD also can play an important role by partnering with business and industry within the district to offer innovative programs in areas like STEM and CTE that will benefit both students and the community in meeting the workforce demands of our area and offers opportunities and increases the quality of life for students, families, and our community at large.

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

I define a quality public education outcome as accomplished when graduates of our high schools meets and exceeds the required performance goals for student academic achievement, based on required assessments including academic and life readiness, in accordance with the needs and ability of each student, and is prepared for life and the pursuit of further education or to begin a career.