

Questions for Georgetown Independent School District Board of Trustees

Name: Jennifer Wood

Position Seeking: Candidate, GISD School Board Trustee, Place 3

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

A school board trustee is an elected community representative that has a desire to advance student achievement. They hire and assess the superintendent, assist with developing policies, and adopt the district's budget. Additionally, I believe they should advocate for educational policies on local, state, and national levels.

2. What makes you passionate about education?

I am the mother of three young children who are just beginning their scholastic journey and I am committed to their success. Education is empowerment. A positive school appearance serves to spark creativity, independent thinking, and friendships and allows for a continued lifelong joy of learning. Education makes a stronger and more robust citizens and communities.

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?

As the mother of two children with disabilities, the education of my children depends on my ability to work with educators, specialists, teachers, school staff, and my own children. These experiences have highlighted the importance of evaluating both what is and what is not working, strong communication skills, and a desire to work toward consensus. I value each board member's talents and think that diverse viewpoints inspire more robust discussion, forward-thinking policies, and innovative offerings to suit the needs of our growing public school system.

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

Each Trustee comes to the Board with a unique set of experiences; therefore, collaboration is necessary. The goal of a consensus is majority support, but it is not unanimity. To facilitate a majority agreement, individuals should be able to

talk and listen to one another respectfully. Each member should be able to state and defend their viewpoints. Open communication is important and I feel that I do that well.

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

Specifically, it is the implementation of varied programs to allow for future success of students following high school graduation. Some specific examples of these programs include Early College High School, T-STEM, Texas GEAR UP, Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and Career/Technology Education (CTE) courses. When viewed holistically, it is the belief that our graduates to feel competent and confident in whatever path they choose and to be caring adults and engaged citizens. To do this we need to achieve literacy in reading, writing, financial responsibility, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

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

One of the strategies that has been adopted for growth management has been the development of new and larger schools. A higher student population base can potentially mean the loss of a sense of inclusion/engagement. I believe there is a need to increase access to Licensed Specialists in School Psychology (LSSP), school counselors, behavior specialists, classroom aides, and other allied health professionals to allow for safe, healthy, supportive learning for improved social-emotional development of all our students.

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

GISD School Trustees have a role to play in educating Georgetown citizens on both progress and challenges. I am a proponent of increased Board interaction with the community. Possibilities include regular constituent meetings, polling, focus groups, study circles, and a more informative Trustee webpage. Transparency and accessibility promotes trust in our educational endeavors.

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

Bonds are used for construction or improvement of facilities, land purchase, or equipment. This is in contrast to the District tax rate which pays salaries and daily operations.

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

I believe that closing educational gaps begins at our foundation. One way to do this is a centralized Early Childhood Center for district supported Pre-Kindergarten (PreK) students and offer a tuition-based PreK for those students who do not meet the eligibility requirements. There are several organizations in Georgetown that partner with GISD whose talents could be utilized.

10. How do you define quality public education outcomes?

Learning outcomes can be assessed with both self-reported and test-based measures. For example, a yearly portfolio can illustrate improvements over time. I'm also a proponent of student survey. With some figures estimating that students comprise approximately 94% of a school's population, perhaps it's time we ask them what they think?