

Questions for Georgetown Independent School

How do you define the role of a trustee?

We serve as the Board of Directors for a very large, complex and heavily regulated company that consists of \$150MM annual operating budget, a \$500MM capital budget and over 2,000 employees.

Additionally, we serve as the elected representatives of taxpayers, students, parents and staff to ensure that their interests are properly represented to the District.

We should be the visionaries; the enablers to great things; the policy makers.

What makes you passionate about education?

I am trained as an educator, and have taught my whole life. I love to see that moment when a student “gets it”, but I also love the longer term, more gradual evolution and development in students as you walk with them through learning, and life.

I deeply believe our schools are critical to the health of our community. We are a place that can help not only kids, but our adults too, become their best selves. But we must step up to that role, and fully embrace it.

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’s direction from a team perspective?

This is one of the most challenging aspects of the job of Trustee. The rules and laws that govern the actions of school boards intentionally require more consensus than most other governmental bodies. Unless one can build meaningful connections among other Board members, as well as the senior administrators, it is virtually impossible to accomplish any initiative.

Having said that, a Trustee must also stand for what s/he believes is right, even if the others don’t agree. We must advocate for what we think is the best course.

And although we must work with the Superintendent in a team environment, we also must remember that ultimately we (collectively) are his boss.

I believe that to do all this successfully requires confidence and experience at the executive level.

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

I have learned to talk with each of my colleagues individually, before bringing an initiative forward for the group to consider and discuss. By doing so, I've learned it empowers each of them to reflect and speak to their personal views and beliefs before being shaped by the group's thoughts. I've found this engages them, makes us all feel heard and allows for more detailed consensus-building, which we can then transition to the group discussion to fully vet.

I've also learned to 1) listen more and shut up, and 2) speak directly but respectfully when it is time and 3) make a conscious effort to overtly support ideas and comments from my colleagues.

How do you define College, Career and Military readiness?

The State has very specific definitions for this crucial outcome measure (on which GISD performs exceptionally well!).

For me, it is how we measure whether a kid is ready for the three viable and positive outcome pathways when they leave us;

- **Can s/he get a job?, or**
- **Get into college and succeed there? Or**
- **Get into the military and succeed there?**

At the end of the day, this measurement matters more than any other, with the exception of their mental/behavioral/social health.

I believe those two measurements are what truly matter to us as a District:

- **CCMR**
- **Mental/behavioral/social health.**

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

Accurately predicting the evolving needs of the District's customers (students, staff, parents, taxpayers) in terms of both space and learning environment.

We don't just need more classrooms. Every year, we need to adapt to the challenges kids will face when they get out, and how they need to learn and work now to be ready.

I am committed to, as I say it: "no kids in portables, and no empty buildings". Meaning, just-in-time construction of new facilities. That requires careful attention, and the willingness to challenge proposals.

I am equally committed to creating, and evolving, the right and best learning environments. That means we no longer sit in rows of desks facing a blackboard; that approach fails for today's kids. We must adapt our teaching/learning, facilities and tools, constantly, quickly and accurately.

Given the extraordinary impact COVID has had on our schools and community, what specific experience and skills would you bring as a trustee to support the district during this unique time and what is the role of the trustee in the decision-making process?

I am a healthcare executive. I have experience in population health, and access to sophisticated, real-time data related to COVID. I spend time almost every day reviewing the latest information and sharing it with the team. I regularly recommend policy updates and changes to reflect that information.

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

- 1. Expand and deepen access to our excellent Career and Technical Education offerings.**
- 2. Offer a diversity of learning experience.**
- 3. Provide exceptional care for the kids in terms of social/emotional/behavioral health.**
- 4. Improve our State test scores.**
- 5. Maintain our excellent record on graduation rates, CCMR and SAT/ACT scores.**

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

Bonds are a very important part of school funding. They are very fiscally conservative and effective.

By law, bonds can only be used for “stuff”, not operations or staff. So it is critical to constantly review what we can use bond money for, that might enhance and “free up” our operating money (called “Maintenance and Operations” or “M&O”, which is derived purely from property tax, state funding and other minor revenue streams).

We have managed our bonds extremely well, and continue to get A+ ratings from all regulatory and auditing sources. We have been able to fund significant growth and improvement without raising the tax rate because of our approach to balancing bond funds with M&O funds.

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

Our CTE program needs to be closely connected to community businesses. We do a good job of that now, but it could be (and needs to be) better. Our local businesses should help shape that curriculum, do guest instruction, and host internships.

Let the folks actually hiring our graduates shape the program that produces them. GISD then takes their constant input and designs programs that fit the skills that are needed by the community employers.

How do you define quality public education outcomes?

- 1. College, Career and Military Readiness (CCMR). We do exceptionally well on this measurement and it is clearly the best way to evaluate student outcome. Can the graduate:**
 - a. Get a job?**
 - b. Get into and succeed in college?**
 - c. Get into and succeed in the military?**
- 2. Social/Emotional/Behavioral health. Difficult to measure, but we are committed to doing so and I believe we will. Are our kids able to:**
 - a. Handle adversity and hurdles?**
 - b. Work together with others successfully?**
 - c. Find happiness?**
 - d. Build and sustain healthy relationships?**
 - e. Internalize effective work behaviors?**

- 3. Lastly, the community looks for affirmation in terms of the State test scores, and poor State test scores affect the morale of affected students, staff and parents. We need to do better on this measurement.**