

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Bill Bowes – LD 14

1. **Local Control** - With so many decisions from the legislature impacting local boards, NASB is interested in your view of local control. Regarding education, what decisions do you feel are best made at the school board level vs. the State level?

I am a strong proponent of local control. Decisions are best made at the level closest to the voters – the people who bear the impact of those decisions. As a City Department Head (Fire Chief) in Papillion for 17 years, I have seen how the issues that faced our City Council members were discussed, debated, and decided upon – all with the perspective of serving the citizens of our community. These same council members are the friends and neighbors of the people they represent and are therefore the most responsive elected officials to the voters.

2. **School Funding** - Every year the legislature makes decisions about the way schools are funded, making predictability of funding a challenge. What changes and/or adjustments, if any, do you think the Legislature should address?

There is a great deal of uncertainty in school funding right now. While I do not have any specific changes in mind, I am excited about the opportunity to work with the NASB, NSEA, other legislators and any other impacted groups in finding a formula that can be applied consistently and fairly, bringing more stability to school funding.

3. **Role of Education in the State** - What role do you think PK-12 Education plays in the future success of the State and your community?

Education is the foundation of any success our state, communities, and our country will have. Every child should be provided a high-quality education that will enable them to succeed in any career/occupation they ultimately choose. There's an old saying, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." That's what education is, preparing our children for their future.

4. **Educational Workforce** - Educational workforce continues to be a challenge across the State from teachers to bus drivers. What would be your plan to address this challenge?

As a former teacher, I had to leave the profession due to pay. I thoroughly enjoyed teaching and coaching but found that it would have been impossible to raise a family on the income I was making. Therefore, the first issue is one of pay, and I will include

benefits in this part of the discussion. It is incumbent on School Boards to negotiate contracts with all school district employees that offer competitive wages and benefits. Other factors that impact whether or not people would consider a job or career in education include working conditions, the culture of the organization, career advancement opportunities, and qualifications of the job. A student's teacher is the greatest marketing person for a career in education. This played a role in my becoming a teacher. I greatly admired my high school math teachers, which is what I became. Marketing educational careers for high school students is a common-sense place to start. This is what we did while I was in the fire service. We introduced high school students to firefighting and emergency medical services through Explorer programs, cadet volunteer opportunities, and career academies.

5. **Mandates** - School districts continue to be challenged by the increasing unfunded mandates put upon them by the State and Federal government. What is your response to mandates and the State's role in them?

I am opposed to unfunded mandates coming from any level. While I understand the State's role in setting standards for education, the State must be willing to work with School Boards in the application of standards and mandates.

Final Thoughts

We all want Nebraska to be known for quality education. Not only will this set our children and grandchildren up for success, but it will be an important recruiting tool as we attract more businesses and people to the state. Working together, the Legislature, School Boards, School Superintendents, and teachers can keep our schools performing at a high level. Thank you for the opportunity to complete this survey.

How can voters contact you?

By phone at 402-657-3763 or email bowesforlegislature2026@gmail.com