

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Colby L. Woodson – LD 28

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?

The state should set broad standards, protect student rights, ensure transparency, and create a fair funding framework without piling unfunded mandates onto local districts. Local school boards are better positioned to handle administration, staffing, local budgeting, facilities, curriculum implementation, and working with families based on local needs.

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?

School funding needs to be predictable. I am cautious about proposals that shift a much larger share of K-12 funding from local property taxes to state sales and income taxes without a durable replacement plan. Property tax relief matters, but schools should not become another unstable line item in the state budget. If the state takes on more school funding, those dollars will compete with Medicaid, corrections, courts, roads, higher education, and other core services during every budget shortfall.

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?

PK-12 education is one of the foundations of Nebraska's future. Its role is to give students the basic tools they need to live, work, and participate fully in their communities. That starts with literacy and numeracy: reading carefully, writing clearly, understanding numbers, and applying those skills in real life. Schools also help students understand career pathways, whether that means college, trades, military service, entrepreneurship, or entering the workforce. Education should also prepare students for citizenship by helping them understand how government works, how communities make decisions, and what responsibilities come with self-government. Strong schools produce capable workers, informed citizens, and stable communities.

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?

Nebraska's educational workforce challenge is real, and it looks different across the state. Rural districts have faced these pressures for a long time because of distance, smaller labor pools, and population loss. Urban districts are increasingly feeling the pressure too, especially as housing costs, childcare costs, and job-market competition make it harder to recruit and retain staff. Teacher pay matters, but so do housing costs, working conditions, classroom support, transportation, and unfunded mandates. One practical step is to increase housing supply so teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, and other school employees can afford to live near the communities they serve. Nebraska also needs an honest conversation about what communities expect schools to provide and what it costs to do that well.

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?

The Legislature should be cautious about passing mandates that sound good in a hearing but become an unfunded administrative burden in classrooms and district offices. If the state requires districts to do something, it should ask what it will cost, who will implement it, and whether smaller or rural districts have the capacity to comply. My view is that mandates should be clear, limited, funded where possible, and periodically reviewed.

Final Thoughts

My general view is that Nebraska should approach education with stability, honesty, and a focus on basic competencies. Students need strong reading, math, writing, civic, and career-readiness skills. School boards need enough local flexibility to respond to their communities. Taxpayers deserve transparency about what education costs and what they are getting for that investment. I am especially concerned that school funding not become more unstable as Nebraska debates property tax relief and the state budget.

How can voters contact you?

Email