

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Jana Hughes – LD 24

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 school board responsibilities are to hire/evaluate the superintendent, set and approve the school overall budget, and establish the schools policies. The state Nebraska dept of Education sets the academic standards for the core curriculum and can set standards for other curriculum that the local schools can adopt. The State legislature is responsible to provide the majority of funding for all education across the state. In my opinion the state has definitely made strides the last few years in paying more of what they should be responsible for. I think more progress can be made on school funding. I would like to see levies across school districts closer together and honestly would like to see the state pay a bigger percentage.

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?

Oh - don't get me started! I think we can do a better job with TEEOSA in how we fund our schools. I would like to see the tax credits used to buy down school levies. Our Education Finance reform commission I think will have some really good recommendations regarding TEEOSA that will eliminate some extra paperwork and simplify things a bit. I also hope that the finance commission will keep watch on how evaluations rise across the state and suggest the appropriate changes in TEEOSA to keep the state funding at the level it is. In other words as valuations rise - it won't mean that state funding diminishes (which is what has happened historically).

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?

The children are the future of the state. Our responsibility is to create productive adults. That means upon graduation going into the workforce with perhaps a certificate or other training to entering higher education for a 2 year, 4 year or further degree with the skills needed to achieve that degree.

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?

This is a tough one - I think we have made some good strides in this area with the para to teacher pathway and teacher pathway programs for kids in high school. We also eliminated the extra class that a substitute teacher had to take. The problem is we have declining student enrollment so we are facing a shortage in all kinds of careers. If there are barriers that the state has put in place we need to address those. One thing that comes to mind is the bus driver training. I had a friend that went through it and she had to be able to list all the mechanical things going on in the engine, etc. When in reality she would never be outside of 20 miles of the bus barn and if something happened you would call in and get help. Sometimes the state creates our own barriers.

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?

We have to STOP!

Final Thoughts

I think everyone knows my interest in education across Nebraska. I will be running for Education chair. My goal is to get school funding in a place that we can maybe stop focusing so much on property taxes and talk about what do we need to do for our kids! So that all kids across the state are getting what they need for a great education.

How can voters contact you?

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