

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Janell Anderson Ehrke – LD 38

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 strongly believe that decisions should be made at the level closest to the people they affect. Local school boards know their students, families, workforce needs, and communities better than anyone in Lincoln. School boards should have primary authority over matters such as curriculum implementation, staffing, budgeting priorities, school calendars, facility decisions, and policies that reflect local community values. Local leaders are in the best position to respond to the unique opportunities and challenges facing their districts. The Legislature's role should be to establish broad educational standards, ensure accountability, provide equitable and sustainable funding, protect student safety, and comply with state and federal requirements. The state should focus on supporting local districts rather than creating one-size-fits-all mandates. If elected to be a state senator, I will advocate for policies that empower local school boards, reduce unnecessary state mandates, and ensure communities have the flexibility to make the decisions that are best for their students while maintaining high academic expectations across Nebraska.

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?

I believe school districts should have the ability to plan beyond a single budget cycle. Providing districts with a three- to five-year budgeting framework would allow for better long-term planning, greater financial stability, and more strategic investments. I also believe districts that operate efficiently and choose not to utilize their full taxing authority should be rewarded, creating incentives for responsible fiscal management while continuing to meet the needs of students and taxpayers.

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 the foundation of Nebraska's future. A strong education system prepares students for college, careers, military service, and entrepreneurship while

developing the skilled workforce our communities need to grow. Investing in quality education strengthens our economy, supports local businesses, and helps keep young families and future leaders in rural Nebraska.

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 must do a better job recruiting, recognizing, and retaining educators and support staff. I support performance-based incentives that reward excellence, expanding pathways into the profession, and better marketing the incredible impact teachers, bus drivers, and school employees have on our students and communities. We need to celebrate these careers and make them attractive for the next generation.

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 support reducing unnecessary mandates and believe that when the state requires new programs or services, it should also provide the funding to implement them. Local school districts need the flexibility to make decisions that best meet the needs of their students without the burden of unfunded mandates.

Final Thoughts

Nebraska has some of the best public schools, educators, and communities in the nation. Our focus should be on giving local school boards the flexibility to lead, supporting and rewarding excellent educators, reducing unnecessary mandates, and ensuring students are prepared for college, careers, skilled trades, military service, or entrepreneurship. By investing in strong schools and responsible fiscal management, we can strengthen our communities, grow our workforce, and keep young families in Nebraska.

How can voters contact you?

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