

NASB State Board Candidate Questionnaire 2026



Rick Holdcroft – LD 36

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?

School boards should have primary authority over issues that reflect local values and community priorities, including curriculum implementation, instructional materials, school calendars, extracurricular activities, hiring and evaluating superintendents, and policies that address the unique needs of their students. The state should establish clear academic standards, graduation requirements, school accountability measures, student assessment systems, and funding formulas that provide a fair opportunity for every child. Overall, education is strongest when the state sets broad expectations and safeguards, while local school boards retain the flexibility to determine how those goals are achieved.

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?

The Legislature should prioritize stable, predictable, and fiscally responsible school funding that allows districts to plan while protecting taxpayers. The state should adopt a funding approach that is transparent, consistent, and based on objective factors such as student enrollment and educational needs, rather than shifting political priorities. At the same time, increased funding should be accompanied by strong accountability. Schools should demonstrate that taxpayer dollars are being spent effectively and focused on improving student achievement.

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 most important investments we make in the future of our state and our communities. A strong education system prepares students not only for college, but also for skilled trades, military service, entrepreneurship, and productive careers. It should equip every graduate with the knowledge, skills, and character necessary to become responsible citizens, support themselves and their families, and contribute to Nebraska's economy.

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?

The solution to Nebraska's education workforce challenges is not simply to spend more money, but to create an environment where talented people want to work and stay while allowing local districts flexibility to meet their unique needs. First, the Legislature should reduce unnecessary regulations and unfunded mandates that add to educators' workloads and distract from teaching. Second, Nebraska should strengthen the pipeline into education and other school support roles by expanding partnerships with colleges, community colleges, and career and technical education programs. Finally, addressing high property taxes and ensuring predictable state funding allows school districts to plan for long-term staffing needs.

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 state's role should be to establish clear academic standards, ensure accountability, and protect the health and safety of students—not to micromanage local school districts. Before imposing any new mandate, the Legislature should evaluate its cost, determine whether it is truly necessary, and identify a funding source if compliance is required. I support reviewing existing mandates to eliminate unnecessary regulations, reduce administrative burdens, and return greater flexibility to local districts.

Final Thoughts

Nebraska has a strong tradition of educational excellence, and we should build on that foundation by keeping students, parents, and local communities at the center of education policy. Our focus should remain on providing every student with a high-quality education grounded in academic achievement, personal responsibility, and respect for the values of their families and communities. Ultimately, Nebraska's success depends on preparing students to become productive citizens, skilled workers, military service members, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. By emphasizing local control, fiscal responsibility, academic excellence, and parental involvement, we can ensure our education system continues to serve students well while supporting the long-term prosperity of our state.

How can voters contact you?

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