



The following questions were emailed to candidates on February 10. Responses received by the deadline of February 20 are included in our evaluation. No edits were made to any responses.

Jessica Buttimer (District 41)

Do you believe your school's current Health Education curriculum should include age-appropriate sex education? What do you see as the strengths and/or areas needing improvement in this curriculum?

As a school board member, I am passionate about ensuring the safety and well-being of our students. That's why I believe that comprehensive and inclusive health education, including age-appropriate sex education, is so important.

It's important that our sex education curriculums provide accurate information and promote healthy behaviors, but we can do even better. We need to make sure that all students, including those in the LGBTQ+ community, have access to an inclusive and culturally sensitive curriculum. By providing our students with accurate and culturally sensitive information about sexual health, we are empowering them to make informed decisions that keep them safe.

We also need to take into consideration the age appropriateness of the content we're presenting. Our students are at different stages in their lives, and we need to make sure that the information we're providing is relevant and helpful for each individual

The DuPage Regional Office of Education is currently evaluating the National Sex Ed Curriculum to ensure that our sex education curricula provide the information and resources that our students need. This evaluation will also ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and culturally sensitive, and that the content is appropriate for each age group. This is an important vetting step in which educational leaders from many area districts are involved. I look forward to reviewing and evaluating their recommendations when they become available.

What is your position on the renewal of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program? Do you favor state tax credits or vouchers for use by families to send children to private schools? If so, how do you feel this will affect public schools?

While I understand the appeal of giving families more options for their children's education, I have concerns about state tax credits or vouchers for private schools. Private education systems do not have the same academic reporting requirements as public schools, which calls into question the efficacy of these programs. Public schools are held accountable for the education they provide, and they are required to meet rigorous academic standards and reporting requirements.

Public schools are the cornerstone of our education system, and we need to make sure that they have the resources they need to provide all students with an excellent education. Public schools serve all students, regardless of their background or circumstances, and it's important that we don't undermine their ability to

provide a quality education to every student. Diverting resources away from public schools to support private schools undermines the public's investment in education and puts our students' futures at risk.

What, if any, is the role of the Board in the selection of materials for school libraries and curriculum development?

As a school board member, it is our responsibility to play a governance role in setting policy, clarifying the district's purpose, connecting with the community, delegating authority, and monitoring performance. My role in the selection of materials for school libraries and curriculum development is one of governance and oversight. While I play a role in setting policies and ensuring that the district's mission and values are reflected in the selection of materials and curriculum, the day-to-day work of choosing appropriate and effective materials is left to our highly qualified educational experts.

Our D41 board commissioned a strategic plan process that involved parents, taxpayers, staff at all levels, and community partners. Board members gave input throughout the process and the result was the adoption of the 2022-2027 strategic plan, which sets our Vision, Mission, Values, Foundational Pillars, and Goals. The strategic plan lays out our commitment to growth focused learning, safe & inclusive environments, social emotional learning, early learning programs, and future ready skills & innovation. This strategic plan guides all aspects of our district's operations, including the selection of materials for school libraries and curriculum development.

My role as a board member is to ensure that these policies and processes are followed, and that our district's mission and values are reflected in the materials we choose and the curriculum we develop. This includes regular curricular review, which involves input from administrators and staff at all levels, and often involves piloting new curricula at every grade level. I also play a role in monitoring academic performance and using data to make informed decisions.

When it comes to the selection of materials for school libraries and curriculum development, my role is to review proposals from the administration, ask clarifying questions, and vote to approve or not. I trust that the recommendations brought to the board are the result of collaboration with representative staff, based on rigorous evidence, vetted through comprehensive pilots, and made with the best interests of our students in mind.

As a board member, I value the expertise and experience of our educational professionals, who are best equipped to drive the success of our students. While I provide oversight and support, I believe in empowering these professionals to pursue their passions and make use of the latest developments in neuroscience and evidence-based practices. In this way, we can continue to provide the highest-quality education for all our students and help them reach their full potential.