



QUESTIONNAIRE & RESPONSES

FIRST NAME: LAST NAME:

SEEKING TO BE ELECTED TO:

- 1. What is your professional experience?** I have worked in public policy for 30 years. After a few years as the dreaded community activist, I was recruited by Palm Beach Community College to be their first lobbyist. I went on to represent clients in local government, agriculture, natural resources, and higher education. I was appointed by Govs. Bush and Scott to three state high ed boards: Higher Education Facilities Finance Authority (HEFFA), State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities (SBICU), and the Daytona State College Board of Trustees. I also served on numerous county and nonprofit boards, and was recently appointed to Volusia County's Environmental and Natural Resources Advisory Committee (ENRAC).
- 2. Do you have experience operating and managing a budget? What was the size and scope?** While I have not personally managed any budget that comes close to that of VCS, I frequently dealt with fiscal policy. That began in my work with PBCC, where I had to navigate state funding, understand categorical and DCD, compete with the State University System, and read the budget notations that directed limitations on funding sources. I further spent ten years on the Palm Beach County Facilities Finance Authority, and five years on the HEFFA board, one year of which I chaired. In each of those roles, we had to evaluate both the merits of each school's facilities request, and the institution's ability to repay the debt.
Government budgets bear little resemblance to those in the private sector, and are influenced and/or controlled by other levels of government. It has been a number of years since I had to deal with those issues, so I'm rusty, but I still understand the concepts and will just need to be updated.
Finally, it is worth noting that any first year finance student -- or housewife, for that matter -- knows not to commit temporary funds to pay for permanent positions. The board is at fault for knowing of this practice for two years, but never requiring a plan from the administration that would show how that mismanagement would be resolved. The district hit the wall, and the principals, teachers, and students are paying the price for the board's neglect.
- 3. While in office, what will be your top priorities?**
 - (1) Classroom discipline. Current approach is restorative justice, which is pages of steps of conversation without consequences. Teachers can't teach, and students can't learn, in chaos. The result is low proficiency rates, even of graduating seniors. Discipline referrals are discouraged or tossed by administrators because they are linked to school grades and funding. When a referral is sent and the student is returned to class without consequences, it teaches the entire class to disrespect the teacher.
 - (2) Establish/expand referral network of providers who are qualified and equipped to properly address social and mental health needs. The district's mission is education, and staff is neither appropriately trained, nor is it the district's mission, to resolve these issues. Our ESE teachers in particular are in drastic need of assistance, and policy changes.
 - (3) Reduce bureaucracy. The district has added more administrative staff while they are cutting teachers and programs. Teachers are burdened with endless reporting requirements, including for discipline referrals. The state tests are sufficient; the district has added a dozen or more, which should be eliminated.
- 4. What influenced you to run for office?** I started college at 40, after owning two small businesses. Without a solid K-12 education, I would never have been able to be as successful as I was. Education is the great equalizer. It begins with a K-12 foundation.
Because of that deep belief, I always wanted to be a teacher. I was a member of Future Teachers in high school, and I volunteered at an elementary school before my children were born. Life went in other directions but when I retired and moved back to Volusia County, I applied to be a teacher. I wasn't contacted, despite having a master's degree, so I subbed in three middle schools -- Hinson, Campbell, and Holly Hill.
That experience convinced me that I don't belong in a classroom, but that my professional understanding of public policy could help change the conditions I experienced. Current conditions reflect current policies. We keep what works, and we change what doesn't. I know how to do that.
- 5. What is your view on the overall function of a School Board?** There is a fine line between being an active board member, and micromanaging the administration. It's the board's job to
 - (1) Draft and implement a useful strategic plan. The current one was purchased from a company that spits out generic language that any district can use, and just fill in some blanks. It includes no metrics for evaluation or progress, and provides no guidance for the administration.

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(2) Review and revise policies. The current board has nibbled around the edges but in general, no policies are addressed unless pushed by either the superintendent or the public. As an example, the human resources policies stress politically popular priorities, but should be rewritten to prioritize qualifications and excellence.

(3) Ensure that policies are implemented. In my experience with local governments, I learned that staff knows they will outlive the elected body, so they slow-walk or ignore policies that increase or change their workload, or that they personally don't like. The board needs to ensure implementation and follow-through by the superintendent.

(4) Be the face of the school board with the business community. The superintendent works for the board. Board members should be out in the district, interacting and establishing relationships with business, nonprofit, and other community leaders.

6. **How should/can the school board and local business community**

work together? Attend events. Get to know business owners. Learn what they need from the workforce. Bring them in for discussions with students, and bring students to their businesses. Invite businesses to participate in school events. Return phone calls. Respond to inquiries.

I routinely hear from every quarter that district staff is unresponsive. That is not acceptable, but it is not the board's place to address that issue. Board members need to give direction to the superintendent and others who answer to them directly, and allow the superintendent to run the district. Having said that, open and responsive communication between board members and the public helps to avoid misunderstandings, and encourages useful input on both sides.

7. **Who do you look to for advice and consult when making decisions that will affect the public?** As a lobbyist, I learned that I don't have to know every detail about every issue, but I need to know who does. I look to a wide range of stakeholders:

Business leaders

Higher Ed

Parents

Social services

Mental health providers

Juvenile justice

Legislators and other elected officials

Teacher's union

In other words, anyone who knows more than I do about a subject, or may have a point of view that differs from mine. We learn from each other that way, which can result in better quality public policy.