

# PENN

## PARENTS' EDUCATIONAL NETWORK of NUTLEY



To: All Candidates for Board of Education

From: Parents' Educational Network of Nutley (PENN)

Re: Request for Information

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As you may know, PENN is an organization of parents which has formed to provide a means by which the interests and concerns of parents and citizens in the Township can be communicated to the school district and the Board of Education. Many parents and citizens are concerned about the direction of the school system and would like more information about the entire process. The objective of PENN is to maximize parental and family awareness and participation regarding matters involving the school district. Nutley PENN provides a forum by which its members can easily obtain information regarding the school board and candidates. The PENN membership can then vote for those candidates who are best prepared to address their concerns. Post-election, PENN also intends to create a regular dialogue with Board members and school administrators regarding the issues concerning their membership. We have created a website to provide our membership with news information regarding the school district: [www.nutleypenn.org](http://www.nutleypenn.org).

In furtherance of our objective, we will be including information about the candidates seeking election on our website to help educate PENN members and encourage involvement by members of PENN and the community in the election process. We would like to include information regarding your candidacy on our website.

Our membership has identified a number of key issues and concerns and would like to hear from the candidates on those issues. We would like to post your responses to the questions below on our website. Kindly forward your responses at your earliest convenience.

- 1) Potential Conflicts: Are you or any member of your household members of the local teacher's union or any teacher's union in the State of New Jersey? *No*. If so, please advise how this may impact your position as a board member. *N/A* Also, please state whether you have a familial relationship with anyone working for the Nutley school district. *No*.
- 2) Adherence to Code of Ethics: The New Jersey School Ethics Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:12-23) requires board of education members to adhere to a Code of Ethics. Please see "NJ School Ethics" link on this website. Please confirm that you have reviewed the Code of Ethics and indicate whether you are confident that you can fulfill the stated ethical requirements. Also, please explain why you think this act is important. *During my 15 year*

*tenure serving the Nutley BOE I supported and abided by the NJ School Ethics Act. I am confident that I will be able to fulfill the stated ethical requirements because of my own personal integrity and belief that the conduct of the Board sets the standard for the district it serves.*

- 3) Planning for the School District's Future: What do you foresee as the biggest challenges facing the school district in the next year? During the next five years? *The potential decrease in State aid is an immediate concern. It will affect our ability to develop new curriculum and adopt technological advancements. This is a short and long term concern. The impact increased property tax has on the passage of the school budget is an immediate concern with long reaching consequences. Public opinion about the integrity of the current Board is devaluing a critical relationship which must be addressed immediately. The tenure of the Superintendent which could cause a disruptive change in administration needs to be vetted so we can plan for the future.*
  
- 4) Role of Board Members: Please provide some ideas as to how members of the Board of Education should interact with members of the administration, teachers and teachers union in order to maximize the effectiveness of the educational system in Nutley? *I believe in chain of command and the line separating governance from daily operations. It is the role of the Superintendent to interact directly with the administration and teachers and bring issues, changes, upgrades to the Board to act upon. Organizationally, the committee structure promotes the most effective communications within the Board structure. Smaller more effective groups meet with the administration to recommend policy changes. It is a specific committee that interfaces with the teacher's union bringing recommendations to be decided upon to the full Board.*
  
- 5) Role of BOE: Describe what you feel are the attributes of a successful board of education and how you can, as a potential board member, contribute to the Board of Education's future success. *An effective board of education is comprised of individuals with strong interpersonal skills with diverse experience who share a common goal to work together as a team to provide the best possible education for their children. Keeping children first and maintaining high standards of conduct is critical. As a potential board member, I will be able to contribute to the future success of this Board with proven interpersonal skills, successful negotiating experience and business competency. I have no hidden agendas, no conflicts of interest.*
  
- 6) Educational Standards/Curriculum/Test Scores: Please state your position on the current educational standards in Nutley. In responding to this question, please advise whether the existing curriculum sufficiently addresses any shortcomings noted by recent test scores and other data regarding the school system. If there are any changes you would recommend to the curriculum or any school policy which would improve the educational standards of the district, please discuss. Please describe the role of the board in addressing any concerns that it may have with test scores. Finally, state whether the impact of recent test scores have a positive or negative effect on the administration, teachers and/or students. *No matter how effective our current educational standards or existing curriculum, we owe it to our children to always strive to do better. We cannot be satisfied with being as good as we have always been which our current test scores appear to suggest. We should be better than ever year after year. Raising the bar is more than a cliché. In education it has real meaning and real value and "raising the bar" should be our school mantra. It is my opinion that technology should hold a stronger position in our*

*curriculum, however, this would be a topic of conversation for a committee of the board to explore with the Superintendent and curriculum coordinator. The role of the board in addressing any concerns of our educational system must be handled through the school professionals. Without a formal survey, it would be difficult for anyone to state the impact of recent test scores. That said, I am hopeful that we would view any and all test results as an opportunity to measure how we're doing and determine what we need to do to do better.*

- 7) Interest in Public Service: Please state why do you want to serve on the Nutley Board of Education and how, as one voice of nine, you feel that you can bring measurable change to the board? *I always enjoyed the role of public servant, having served the Township Fire Dept. and the Board of Education for many years. There is no greater reward than seeing what you nurtured during your tenure be improved upon by those who follow. However, recently, this is not what I see. I do not recommend going back. I do believe we need to look at what was working and redirect our efforts to build on those values. As a member of the board I will bring leadership, honesty and the ability to be candid and forthright. We need to remove ourselves from the day to day activities of the district and return that job to the Superintendent. The priority of the board needs to be policy setting and educational advancements. I believe I can earn the respect of this board and help bring change that motivates our administrators, teachers, parents and students.*
- 8) Candidates' Priorities: As a new board trustee what is the first thing you would work to change/improve within the school system? *We need to give the district back to the Superintendent, teachers and maintenance staff. I suggest we begin to achieve this goal by hiring a professional business administrator. I would reinstate a committee structure that once again includes the personnel and academic committees. I would recommend every board member review the State Code of Ethics and focus on a fresh start.*
- 9) Qualifications of Candidates: What personal experiences will contribute to your qualification as a Board of Education member? *The experiences that will contribute to my qualifications as a Board member include public servant, private businessman, board trustee, son, brother, uncle, husband, parent, grandparent, student, volunteer, citizen, taxpayer, friend and neighbor.*