

CANDO Candidate Questionnaire

1) What experience do you have with Batavia Public Schools' gifted services and what knowledge do you have about gifted education in general?

My personal experience with the gifted program in Batavia has been limited. I have one child who excels at math, but was initially excluded from gifted math because his reading scores were not as high. In advanced math (not gifted) he was not challenged and was often bored. This concerned me and after many meetings and discussions with teachers and administrators, we were able to get him moved to the "gifted" math class. Not every family is able to advocate for their child as relentlessly as I did and this is not a battle families should have to fight. Our schools should, by default, challenge children as much as possible.

Beyond my personal experience, I have discussed our district's gifted policies and programs often and have discovered a lot of frustration among both parents and faculty. I personally know of several families who have removed their children from the district either because the gifted program wasn't challenging their child enough or because their child was unnecessarily excluded from our very limited gifted program. It greatly concerns me that we may be losing some of our brightest students and most supportive families from our school district, and sometimes even from our town, because we cannot properly support our gifted students. I believe the same can be said for our special needs families, as well.

2) What is your vision for gifted education in this community?

I am not an expert on education or gifted children, so I do not have a specific solution for addressing the curriculum of gifted students. However, I do believe the school board can provide direction and create policies, so those who are experts in the field (our teachers and administrators) can maximize our resources to support our students. As a parent and citizen, I believe it is to our community's benefit to challenge all children and maximize their learning potential.

Providing a quality gifted program benefits the community in several key ways. First, the parents of gifted students are often very supportive and involved in our schools. They typically place a high value on education and will go out of their way to improve the quality of education for all students at the school. Personally, I believe our district greatly benefits from greater parental involvement and I would encourage all parents to be as involved as possible in their child's education.

Second, a quality gifted programs attracts high achieving children and families to our district. One of the ways we can address concerns many have about high taxes is to attract more taxpayers to fill our vacant homes and lots. If we can fill those homes with families who are committed to the success of our schools and community, we should consider ourselves fortunate. The quality of schools ranks high on families' lists when determining where they wish to raise their children. A quality gifted program plays a significant role in improving how our school ranks when compared to other districts.

Third, gifted children tend to do well on standardized tests. As we all know, there is a lot of emphasis on how a district performs on these test in comparison to other districts. It can impact funding and the desire of families to move in or out of the district. It would seem to be counterproductive to not maximize the number of gifted students our district has and

provide the necessary services for them to maximize their potential.

Fourth and lastly, gifted children act as positive role models for all children in the district. Their success serves as a bar for all children to strive for. We are one community, I view their success, as well as the success of any other student, as a community success. We should take pride in knowing we do all we can to best serve all of our students.

3) What issues do you believe BPS101 needs to address in its academic programs and course offerings so that students can reach their full potential and be college or career ready by the end of their tenure in Batavia schools?

I believe the key is to have programs in place to properly challenge all of our students at their ability level. Students should take classes that maximize their potential. They should be challenged, not overwhelmed or bored. It is important we provide our children with a well rounded education. When leaving our schools, our children should not only have the academic ability to achieve success, but also the life skills necessary to operate independently and efficiently out in the real world. They should have an appreciation for the arts, charity, and athletics, so they can go out and be happy and productive citizens.

What changes would you recommend?

This is where I believe we need to reach out to our families, citizens, colleges and businesses to ensure we're meeting the needs of our children and providing them with the skills our community, businesses, and colleges are looking for in potential students and employees. I am not a candidate for school board with a specific agenda on how to solve our problems. Communicating with all stakeholders and developing my opinions on specific issues based on the research and the feedback I receive is how I plan to serve Batavia. I am confident, if we work together, we can find solutions to the problems our district and community faces.

4) If elected, what criteria will you use to evaluate proposals to maintain or develop the existing gifted services available to students in BPS101?

I think it is important to constantly evaluate the success and failures of all policies and adjust our direction to maximize the benefit to our children, citizens, district, and city. We need to look for ways to improve where the system is underperforming and maximize what we do well. To accomplish this, we need to listen to and involve all stakeholders. We must reach out to students, their parents, teachers, taxpayers, administrators and anyone else who relies on the success of the education we provide. It is important to learn from the success and failures of those who face or have faced the same problems we are experiencing. We all have a vested interest in providing the best education we can. The children we educate today are the leaders, business owners, employees, taxpayer, and voters of tomorrow. I quality we provide today will have a direct impact on our future success.