



Owatonna Education Association School Board Candidate Screening Questions

Please return this survey to Owatonna Education Association via email to oeapresident761@gmail.com or by mail to 1455 SE 18th St, Owatonna, MN 55060.

Candidate name:

Elizabeth Hedlund

1. Why did you decide to run for school board?	<i>As a current board member, I am eager to continue to work with Superintendent Champa as I have seen her do great work with our staff and schools.</i>
2. What would be your greatest strengths as a school board member?	<i>My strengths include organization, focus, goal setting with follow through, keeping students' success at the center of attention while also encouraging ongoing partnerships with parents.</i>
3. What do you see as the biggest issue facing the district?	<i>Financial challenges top the list of issues that the district is currently facing. Recent legislative changes are negatively impacting our funding.</i>
4. How do you feel district funds are best allocated?	<i>As much as possible, district funds should be directed toward the classroom, retaining high quality teachers, while also keeping our school buildings as safe as possible.</i>
5. How do you see your role in securing fair and timely settlements for employee groups?	<i>In the last several years, board members have had very little, if any, involvement in the negotiations and settlements, only approving the final presentation. Moving forward, I would like to see board members more involved in these meetings with a better understanding of how settlements are achieved.</i>
6. How much control do you feel teachers should have over decisions that affect their classroom? How do you view your role in the conversation of curriculum decisions?	<i>Teachers should bring their unique leadership style to the classroom and build relationships with their students while understanding that classrooms essentially belong to the taxpayers. Because of this, classrooms also need to remain neutral with a focus on excellent quality education for all of our students. In that regard, the school board should be aware and have general oversight of curriculum while allowing our administrators to choose curriculum, assist teachers, and ensure that students have the tools they need to learn well.</i>
7. Do you agree that Minnesotan students deserve an honest and accurate education about race that enables them to learn from the mistakes of our past so they can create a better future for all Minnesotans? Why or why not?	<i>We learn from our past mistakes and victories. Therefore, history should be taught accurately, including the racial disparities that existed. Sociological theories can be taught age appropriately, ensuring the balance between opposing viewpoints. In our world today with many sensitive topics and various opinions, teachers need to be careful to teach curriculum and not share personal opinions on sensitive topics.</i>

8. What can our district do to make schools more welcoming and safe for all students and staff, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender expression, or ability?	<i>Our teachers and staff are doing great work in welcoming all students, but no system is perfect. In that light, we should continue to survey students and parents and take seriously the concerns brought by parents to administration throughout the school year, looking for patterns and processes that need change. I suspect that our students requiring special education are most in need of improved processes and numbers of staff. This becomes a delicate balance as state funding is lacking, special education costs are high, and we have growing numbers of students with needs.</i>
9. What do you see as your role in representing our district at the state legislature? The community?	<i>The board should work with the superintendent to keep informed of legislative decisions and the impact on the district. Ideally, school board members should have the understanding and ability to positively impact those decisions if possible. Board members should be visible in the community attending events and supporting our students in activities and athletics, while also supporting healthy community relationships between the district and local businesses.</i>
10. What is your opinion on school choice, charter schools and private school vouchers/tax credits?	<i>Ultimately, we desire what is best for each child. Each child's personality, temperament, abilities, and development need to be considered. I believe parents should have the ability to decide what is the best form of education for their own children, whether it be in person or online, public, private, charter, or homeschool options. Giving parents the financial means to make the best decision for their children will set the children up for greater success. If this ever occurred in Minnesota, I believe that most parents would still choose Owatonna Public Schools due to the great work that is being done in our schools!</i>
11. What is your vision for our school district?	<i>My vision for our district is to be in the "best of the best" of Minnesota schools with high standards and expectations and ultimately successful students moving from graduation into life capable, confident and set for lifelong learning.</i>
12. If we endorse you, what type of support are you looking for?	<i>I would appreciate encouragement and affirmation for my desire to take our district to the next level of success.</i>