

9 QUESTIONS FROM



Meet the Candidate: Travis Keyes

1. Why are you running? If elected, what would be your top goals as school board member?

I am running to ensure that every student in Polk County Public Schools has the same opportunity to receive a quality education. As a parent of two children in Polk County Public Schools I have seen firsthand the need to increase access to a larger variety of educational programs. My top goals are equal access to educational opportunities across the county, be champion parental choice, continue to provide a safe environment for all students, and ensure fiscal accountability and transparency.

2. What can be done to ensure everyone who graduates is either ready for college or a vocation?

Continuing to address the issue of student truancy and increasing partnerships with industry experts to increase the effectiveness of our career academies.

3. How should the district address underperforming schools?

Each school's administration sets the tone for the culture on their campus. Currently the Superintendent would address the performance of an underperforming school with that school's administration makes changes as deemed necessary. As school grades continue to trend upward, I believe this policy is effective.

4. Local and state initiatives have been launched to address the need for more teachers in our classrooms. What more do you think needs to be done to recruit and retain teachers in your district?

We need to do a better job of telling our story and why Polk County is a great place to work/live. By offering competitive pay and benefits we seek to attract the best educators. This also involves looking at salary compression for veteran teachers and finding avenues to increase compensation for them. The shortage of qualified educators should be addressed at the post-secondary level, as fewer individuals are seeking careers in education.

5. What is your stance on the state's current school choice program?

I am and will continue to be an advocate for school choice. The decision on how and where to education the student should always lie in the hands of the parent/guardian.

6. Does school testing really give an accurate portrayal of the education quality/experience of a school?

Collecting data delivered via testing results and analyzing for trends can prove effective if done properly. Another metric would be to measure the number of industry certifications issued through the CTE offerings.

7. Issues surrounding gender, sexuality and race have created controversy between school boards and parents. How much say should parents have in deciding what is and is not included in the public school curriculum?

As previously stated, choice should always be in the hands of the parent. If parents are not satisfied with offerings related to programs or curriculum, they should be given the opportunity to choose which path best suits their child/children.

8. Do you feel students are safe at school? Or does more need to be done to protect school campuses?

Nothing is more important than the safety of our students! We have done a great job in Polk County to ensure this continues to be a top priority by partnering with Polk County Sheriff's Office, while also investigating areas of concern (i.e. the recent addition of cameras to busses to combat traffic violations) and implementing solutions

9. Do you feel any changes are needed to your district's budget? Is money being spent in the right places?

As growth continues to be an issue in our area the district's budget should always be given the required amount of attention. Continuing to utilize local community leaders via a budget review committee would ensure transparency and potentially find areas within the budget that could be reallocated and used more effectively. My focus would be on modernization of the district's assets, program offerings, and teacher/staff compensation.