

Chandler USD Governing Board Candidate Questionnaire

Joel Wirth

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

I have lived within the CUSD boundaries for 20+ years.

I have worked in school finance for two school districts for 40 years.

I am a retired CPA and retired CFO of the Chandler Unified School District

My civic engagement includes the following: Past Chairman of the Arizona Trust, Past President of ASBO (Arizona School Business Officials), currently on the Board of the San Tan Credit Union and Trustees (Board) of my church, Chandler United Methodist.

Additional Info: I helped start and chaired the most effective Education Lobby in Arizona; the lobby has increased school funding by more than a billion dollars.

QUESTIONS:

1. I have worked in school finance for approximately 40 years, the majority of those years as Chief Financial Officer for the Chandler Unified School District. I am also a Certified Public Accountant. I also taught Public School Finance for students at NAU (Northern Arizona University) for a few years, as an Adjunct Professor.
2. Currently, the greatest challenge facing CUSD is dealing with all of the issues surrounding COVID19. Once I am on the Board, I will be privy to all of the issues and statistics related to this subject. We must keep the safety of students and staff our main priority in dealing with COVID19.
Closely following the COVID19 issue is preparing for the future impact of student decline. This issue will impact programs, staff raises and teacher/pupil ratio. We need to start the process of determining how to deal with this issue NOW!
I have learned to listen to the relevant experts on all subjects, formulate and ask my questions and then make my decisions.
3. I believe the current process (Super Q) involving CEA in pertinent issues is very effective. I would engage CEA by suggesting they share all of their concerns and issues with all board members.
4. I believe that there are many very intelligent people in our community. I personally like committees of decision makers that will provide good ideas to implement now and in the future. Inviting CUSD, CEA and surrounding city and town councils in making decisions that affect all entities ensures compromise and agreement that results in buy-in and compliance.
5. We need to do everything possible to keep the budget healthy, knowing that student decline is imminent. As a very young business manager in Chandler (when we had four schools), I learned that the inability to properly pay staff created an environment of frustration and anger that I

have never forgotten! I would take it as my serious responsibility to make sure that the marketing and human resources professionals of the district have the resources they need to attract and retain the most talented educational professionals to teach our children.

6. The biggest line items in the budget are salaries and teacher/pupil ratio. It is impossible to balance the budget without making cuts in those two areas UNLESS the district has a large contingency fund, which fortunately, we do at the current time. The challenge will be how much of the contingency we use each year before the district begins to grow again. *One other option is to explore ways to generate additional funding (revenue).
7. YES, I support the Invest in Education Act! Arizona continues to fund education below almost all other states. That is unacceptable due to the fact that there is a teacher shortage, and Arizona is going to have to compete for the most talented teachers.
8. Yes, I do support CUSD's equity and inclusion program. According to the Niche Report, Chandler receives an "A" for Diversity. This grade is based on racial and economic diversity and survey responses on school culture and diversity from students and parents. Niche is a unique blend of data scientists, engineers, parents and students. Niche rigorously analyzes dozens of public data sets and over 100 million reviews and survey responses to help one understand what a place is really like. With that said, it is time to prepare for future budget related issues impacted by student decline. IT IS TOO LATE TO DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE WHEN DECLINE IS HERE. We must be out in front of this huge issue by starting to work on it NOW!
9. I came from the finance side of education. I will need to learn and understand all of the issues related to this topic before I can answer these questions. In the short run, I will trust our education staff's decisions. As I learn more, I will engage accordingly.
10. I believe that it is important to hear from CEA on any issue of concern. As for the "professional agreement," I support Dr. Casteel's belief that if we have to put in writing how we should treat each other, well, we have already failed. I believe that our staff is family and needs to be treated accordingly. I believe the current policy works, but can always be reviewed for updates.
11. Because I am not privy to all of the issues and related statistics, I would rely on our Administrative staff to make this decision. As I listen and learn I will engage when I believe I have heard of possible solutions. At this point, I don't think there is a clear decision as to what to do. The main consideration must always be the safety of our students and staff.

For more details on my Educational Beliefs, see attachment.