

# Great Falls Education Association

## School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Name Jason Brantley

Date 14 April 2017

1. Please describe your personal experience and involvement with the Great Falls Public Schools or any other public school system in the past five years that lead you to believe that you will be a successful school board member. I have been fortunate to have been elected to the GFPS School Board three years ago. In this capacity, I have been very involved in issues facing our public schools. I am also fortunate that my wife was a teacher in GFPS as well. All of these factors make me passionate about providing educational opportunities for all children in our district. I hope that I can continue to serve the citizens of Great Falls for another term on the board.
2. What is your view of public education's purpose? Charters? Vouchers? I believe that public education is the great equalizer. As such, I believe that it needs to be strengthened. In my opinion vouchers and charter schools are programs that may benefit some, but most often end up a detriment to the health of the public schools system. Vouchers are really only a viable option for the more affluent members of the community. Financially disadvantaged families are most likely not able to use them as there are other costs that they are unable to bear. For these reasons I do not plan to pursue those options in our district.
3. What is your understanding of the local school board's role in the educational process? The school board is responsible for providing oversight to our public school system. We are the stewards of the public trust, ensuring that public monies are used wisely and fairly across our district. We are also responsible for determining which programs are offered in our schools. We also have the duty to ask the public for increased funding when fiscal conditions dictate a need for additional funding. It is a great responsibility but it comes with the great reward of seeing our students reach their potential.
4. What will be your top three (3) objectives, if elected to the school board? First, I am very excited to see our facility upgrades through to completion. I want to continue to work with our team to determine how we will use the bond funding to modernize our district. Second, I want to push to increase our career and technical programs. We have had great success, but there are more areas of CTE that we can provide. We need to identify and develop these programs in order to better serve our community. Third, I am excited to see the creation of the junior ROTC program at Great Falls High. I am hopeful that we can continue to grow this program and provide another educational opportunity for the students of GFPS.

5. Do you have any specific changes you want to make in school district policies, programs, or the various curricula being offered? If so, what changes do you want to make and why? I believe that our school enrollment isn't currently as efficient as it could be. One of the benefits of the bond initiative as the creation of two new schools will force us to look closely at the enrollment of all of our schools in the elementary district. We will be able to eliminate areas of inefficiency, and better apportion our students across the district.
  
6. Have you ever had the opportunity to belong to a union? When I was hired as a pilot for Northwest Airlines I had the pleasure of belonging to the Airline Pilots Association, ALPA.  
Did you join the union? I was a proud member of the union and I believe that unions are a vital part of our nation, and our district.  
Why or why not? I was happy to join ALPA as I knew that they would work hard to ensure that we were treated fairly by our employer, and that they would provide assistance to me when needed. I was unfortunately furloughed, and ALPA took care of my family by covering our health insurance during the layoff. I appreciated that immensely, and will always be a believer in unions.
  
7. If offered, would you accept our endorsement? I would be honored to have the endorsement of GFEA. I am proud to say that the district, the school board, and GFEA have a great relationship. I look forward to continuing that relationship in order to improve education in Great Falls Public Schools.