

# 204 Candidate Questionnaire

Name **Catey Genc**

For how long have you lived in our school district?

**I have lived in the district for 16 years, however I have had children actually in school for 11 years.**

What is your vested interest behind your desire to serve as a school board member?

**I have been very involved in the district since my oldest son started 11 years ago. I have served on and run 4 different PTA boards and am currently president of IPPC. I am truly invested in the students, staff and administration of this wonderful district. I feel like it is time that I take that passion to a different aspect of the district in collaboration with the other board members while also listening to the district community.**

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1. What are the practices of an effective school board?

**Effective school boards follow the main objectives of a school board and collaborate in a respectful and productive manner. The main objectives of a school board are to establish direction, goals and priorities for the school district. School boards also determine policy and budget. I believe that it is through listening and observing that the school board can not only clarify the district purpose, but also connect with the community. It is important to maintain an ongoing conversation with the community so the school board can effectively advocate for district improvements. I also think effective school boards keep the community informed about the district's performance. The ability to delegate authority to our superintendent is very important as well. The staff of district 204 are very capable and the board is not responsible for micromanaging them. An effective board understands that. I think that an effective school board should always take responsibility for itself as well. I think that the training new school board members receive helps to ensure that the board continues to run effectively.**

2. What is the role of an individual school board member?

**The role of an individual school board member is to work collaboratively and effectively with the other school board members. There are a lot of tough choices that have to be made by school boards in the interest of improving the schools while protecting the district's financial resources. An individual school board member is one voice and one vote, however those personal perceptions and ideas are so important to help influence the direction of the board. Board members represent the entire community and as such we all need to work together in a respectful manner to ensure all ideas are heard and discussed.**

3. During contract negotiations, does the role of an individual board member change? If yes, please explain the difference.

**It is my understanding that the school board sets parameters to be discussed and negotiated with the organizations. I do not think that the role of the individual school board members does change. It is a collaboration of all seven members of the board working to be representative of the district.**

4. What are the greatest challenges you see our district facing now and during the next four years?

**I think that one of the challenges the district is facing now is the large number of students dealing with mental health issues. As a public school system we are responsible for every student's needs. That has become SEL and mental health assistance for students and staff if needed. The district is doing so much good work in regard to this issue, but due to funding issues there are a lot of limitations on what can be done. Funding is another challenge that the district faces right now and will continue to. We are not a fully funded district which causes a lot of school improvement projects and ideas to be put on hold or scrapped. Class sizes are still a challenge in some schools and while that is being dealt with as much as possible, it is still a work in progress. I think that it is so important to make sure every student feels included and safe being exactly who they are. The challenge is figuring out different ways to do that at every school.**

5. As a board member you will be regularly charged with making decisions that will impact 27,400 students, 3,100 non-certified, certified, and administrative staff members and this very large community as a whole. From whom will you seek counsel to help you formulate informed opinions that will lead to you making quality decisions?

**I do have my own thoughts and opinions, but I am very open to hearing other perspectives. As president of IPPC I am used to hearing very diverse perspectives. I deal with every school PTA currently so I have the perspectives of 33 different parent leaders. I take all of those into account when I make decisions. I welcome different perspectives and insights from parents, staff and administration. I also look forward to hearing from the people the decision will affect the most. I think that every decision should be thoughtfully discussed and researched when necessary. I can then take those insights to the school board to include in our discussion.**

6. What is your role as a board member in supporting the [District 204 Equity Belief Statement](#)?

**I am supportive of the way the Equity Belief Statement is currently phrased. As a school board member in a very diverse district I believe that all kids should be welcomed and have their individual needs met. I also believe that all staff and district families should feel welcomed, safe and heard as well. There is currently an achievement gap issue in the district. I think continually evaluating ways to help bridge that gap is important. Every student should be able to have the help they need to get their work done and achieve their full potential.**

7. How do you respond to a neighbor who tells you that a focus on education equity could take resources away from some students while overserving others?

**I would say that the entire idea of education equity is to allocate resources to students that need them. If a student is in need of help, in whatever form that may be, they should absolutely be able to receive it. As a public school district we are responsible for educating all students and that is not happening if a student is not receiving the help they need. I would like to say that the idea of education equity isn't about taking anything away from a student that needs it. It is about making sure every child that needs assistance is receiving it. If a child is excelling and no longer needs the assistance they are receiving then it makes**

sense to allocate the resources elsewhere at that point. I think that students' needs are ever changing and so re-evaluating periodically is necessary.

8. What will you do as a board member to make sure that ALL students and staff feel welcomed, supported, and safe in our schools?

**I do believe that as a board member in our public school district it is our responsibility to make sure all students are educated. I think that discussion of policies is always occurring to help students and staff feel safe and supported at school. I also think that the board attending school events and meetings is a great way to continue to show support for our staff and students. I also believe that the superintendent and the schools themselves will have their own ideas of how to help students and staff feel welcomed, supported and safe. The board is always available to hear ideas and concerns which will start a discussion between all seven of us.**

9. As a board member, what role do you play in the day to day management of the district?

**I don't play a role in the day to day management of the district as a board member. As a school board we set district goals and missions which are evaluated periodically. The day to day management of the district is handled by the superintendent with the help of administration and staff. The school board does not micromanage.**