

**GOVERNOR'S TRANSITION TEAM**  
***DRAFT***      **FOR THE DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**      ***DRAFT***

**LISTING OF OPTIMAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS, AND SOME QUESTIONS WHICH MAY HELP TO DIG OUT SOME OF THIS INFORMATION:**

To help jog your thinking on this matter, we have collected a list of Optimal Qualifications for a school board member upon which almost everyone can agree.

**TAKE CAREFUL NOTE:** these are **optimal** qualifications, for board members to be the best that they can be; these are **not minimum qualifications**. No candidate will measure high on all of them, and none are really easy to assess. *We have also included some sample questions with which to probe a candidate on these qualities.*

**OPTIMAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR SELECTING/ENDORISING CANDIDATES FOR THE DETROIT BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**LISTED IN SIX BROAD CATEGORIES with sample questions:**

**A. EXPERIENCE**

- 1. Has a demonstrated dedication to the social, academic and character development of young people, and a thorough provable understanding of childhood development.**

*What experience do you have which would demonstrate your abilities, involvement in, or dedication to the social, academic and character development of children?*

- 2. Has the education and/or practical experience needed to understand the financial possibilities and limitations of a large organization or school system.**

*What education and practical experience do you have which would qualify you to handle or oversee the budget and expenditures of the school district?*

- 3. Has a demonstrated ability to work as a consensus builder and team player.**

*What experience do you have which would demonstrate your ability to work as a consensus builder and team player?*

- 4. Has demonstrated leadership qualities, based upon past experience and achievements.**

*What experience and past achievements do you have which would demonstrate your ability to stand and think on your own two feet and to lead others?*

## **B. ETHICS**

- 1. Has a demonstrated willingness to elevate the ethical code of the district well above usual political and public office standards, to abide by that code, and to hold his/her fellow board members to those elevated standards.**

*Share your personal and political views regarding your willingness to elevate the ethical code of the district well above usual political and public office standards, to abide by that code, and to hold fellow board members to those elevated standards?*

- 2. Has a clear understanding of the proper Board role in the award of district contracts.**

*What do you see as the role of the board in the award of district contracts?*

- 3. Has a clear understanding of the ethical pitfalls of soliciting or accepting political contributions and personal favors from district vendors.**

*What relationship do you see between campaign contributions and board member ethics? What methods are you using to solicit contributions? What are your feelings regarding contributions from vendors and contractors?*

- 4. Has no misconduct record which would discredit the Board.**

*What should happen to board members who engage in unethical behavior and bring dishonor to the board or cause parents and citizens to be concerned about their fitness to represent them?*

**C. ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 1. Has a clear understanding that nearly all Board work should be done by crafting written policies and not by hands-on intervention.**

*In general, what is the proper role of a board member as compared to that of the superintendent?*

- 2. Has the time and is ready to put aside personal career opportunities and family time to attend to school district needs.**

*How much time are you able and willing to devote to the work of the school board?*

- 3. Has a demonstrated willingness to be trained in best practices for school board members.**

*How much time are you able and willing to devote to becoming trained in the proper role of a board member?*

- 4. Has a clear understanding of the best practices for selecting a district superintendent & for reviewing her/his performance.**

*How should the board go about selecting a superintendent and reviewing his/her performance?*

## **D. ADVOCACY**

- 1. Is willing to serve on the board for more than one term.**

*To what extent are you committed to serving more than one term on the board?*

- 2. Has a demonstrated commitment to public education vs. a preference for private education. If he/she has children, has been committed to educating them within the public schools.**

*What experience demonstrates your commitment to public education vs. private schooling? If you have children, what arrangements have you made for their education and why did you make those choices?*

- 3. Has a demonstrated concern for civic leadership and community improvement, such as, has served on the boards of directors of non-profit, parenting coalition, or other community service organizations. These past contacts and work will provide a significant springboard for future advocacy.**

*What experience demonstrates your concern for civic leadership and community betterment? To what extent would this work provide a springboard for effective advocacy as a school board member?*

- 4. Clearly knows what a Board member must do to engage the community in support of the schools and parents in the successful education of their children.**

*What must a school board member do to engage the community in support of the schools and parents in the successful education of their children?*

- 5. Has a clear vision of where the district should be and of the costs and processes for getting it there.**

*What is your vision of where the district should be; what are the costs; and what can a school board member do to get it there?*

**E. FOCUS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

**1. Has a clear understanding of:**

- a. the proper role of the Board in evolving a vision and strategic plan for the district.**

*What is the role of the board in evolving a vision and strategic plan for the district?*

- b. how to improve the school learning climate, student attendance, and discipline in order to elevate student achievement.**

*What things must be done to improve school learning climate, student attendance, and discipline in order to elevate student achievement?*

- c. the limits of paper-and-pencil testing as a sure measure of student achievement.**

*How does a school board member determine whether or not significant progress is being made in student achievement?*

**F. PROPER ROLES OF THE BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT**

**1. Has a clear understanding of the proper roles for the Board and Superintendent for:**

- a. assuring the safety of students and staff.**

*What is the proper role of the board in assuring the safety of students and staff?*

- b. selecting teachers, principals and division directors.**

*What role should the board play in selecting teachers, principals and division leaders?*

**c. how to respond to a parent's complaint of unfair student treatment.**

*How should a board member respond to a parent's complaint about the unfair treatment of their child?*

**d. the collective bargaining process.**

*To what extent should board members become involved in the collective bargaining process?*

**e. textbook selection and curricula development.**

*To what extent should board members become involved in the selection of text books and in development of the curricula?*

**f. right-sizing and capital improvement of schools.**

*What is the board's role in right-sizing schools and providing for their renovation and maintenance?*