



# SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

## NEDRA ROBINSON

*Candidate for Crowley ISD, Place 1*

**Please provide any personal background information you would like to share with the employees of CISD.**

I have a passion for education that was sparked during my early childhood when I would play teacher with my siblings and friends. That passion for education led me to become a tutor in 2000 while working on my bachelor's degree. A few years after I graduated, I decided to pursue a teaching career through alternative certification, and my first teaching job shaped my educational career. My teaching background is middle school math (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade). I was appointed as our campus's math department chair in my second year of teaching; I became Teacher of the Year in my third year and Lead Content Math Teacher-Math Coach in my fifth year. In these roles, I conducted classroom observations and provided feedback to improve teacher effectiveness, I facilitated campus level professional development, staff meetings, as well as leading campus and district-wide math training on professional development days.

I ran for school board in 2017 because it allowed me to combine both my passion for education and policy. Aside from having a love for education, I'm also interested in social issues that impact our greater society and educational system. I have bachelor's in sociology and master's in public administration both from the University of Texas at Arlington. I left teaching to focus on education policy and reform. I had the opportunity to work for a Texas state representative as his deputy district director and ran his Fort Worth office. Currently, I am finalizing my dissertation in educational leadership through Tarleton State University, which will be my only degree in education. I returned to education shortly after I was elected, and I'm currently a Data Analyst on an elementary campus. My job entails identifying data trends to help teachers meet the needs of students, assisting teachers in examining data to identify instructional strengths and weaknesses, and identifying areas of student need. I facilitate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), data meetings, and serve as a member of the instructional leadership team.

In addition to being an educator and elected official, I'm also the parent of two Crowley ISD (CISD) students. My son is a sophomore at North Crowley and completing his business certificate through Tarrant County College (TCC), and my daughter is in the dual language program at Deer Creek Elementary. Like most parents and educators, I've had to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic with my children, virtual learning, learning loss, teacher shortages, and everything in between. My hat goes off to those who are still in the classroom day-to-day. Your work is not only essential to the district, but to our greater society. We are deeply indebted to you.

**What qualifications do you have that would make you an effective trustee?**

When I was elected to CISD's board in May 2017, we were a "C" rated district, searching for a new superintendent, three of our campuses were designated Improvement Required (IR), and the previous board commissioned a curriculum audit to determine the district's needs in an effort to foster student success. I had to hit the ground running in learning where CISD had been and envisioning where we wanted to go.

The qualities that I possess are:

- a. Visionary – I'm a "big picture" person by nature
- b. Accountability – I like to know how students performing and what the data implies
- c. Advocacy – I want to know who benefits and who is impacted by the decisions that are made



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### **How have you been involved in the district in recent years? (e.g. attended district meetings, served on committees, volunteered)**

My primary involvement has been serving on CISD's board for the last six years. In addition to my service, I attend various campus and district events. I'm also a cross-country/track mom, basketball mom, and honor choir mom. So, when I'm not wearing my trustee hat, I have the privilege of being mom to my greatest joys.

### **What three issues do you think are the most important facing CISD? Please explain.**

The three greatest issues facing CISD are student discipline, teacher shortage, and increased enrollment.

- Student Discipline
  - Crowley has great schools, administrators, teachers, staff, and students. Unfortunately, when students misbehave and the inappropriate behavior is not curtailed, it negatively impacts other students' ability to learn, teachers' ability to provide effective instruction, and it creates a blight on the district.
  - We are conducting root cause analyses, developing systems, and hiring additional staff to address behavioral issues on campuses.
- Teacher Shortage
  - Staffing challenges impacts everyone. I serve on a campus that has a vacancy at nearly every grade level, and this isn't isolated to my campus, district, or CISD. In May 2022, Commissioner Morath stated that 69% of new teachers were alternatively certified. During a board meeting pertaining to recruitment and retention, I recommended that we not limit our search to colleges of education because the number of people enrolling in colleges to become teachers is declining.
  - As a district, I believe we should enhance our partnerships with area colleges and develop a robust Grow Your Own program to help paraprofessionals become certified teachers. Additionally, we (nation, state, district) need to address issues such as student discipline, low pay, burnout, etc. that are causing teachers to leave the profession. We also have to realize that the days of the 20+ year veteran teachers are over. Thus, we need to create a steady pipeline of new teachers while building capacity in current teachers to become instructional coaches, counselors, and administrators.
- Increased Enrollment
  - The city of Crowley and Southwest Fort Worth are growing exponentially. More than half of are campuses are at or near capacity. While growth is exciting, it impacts the teacher to student ratio, the number of opportunities available to students, and program placement. We are working on solutions that will allow CISD to positively manage the growth as well as benefit all stakeholders.

### **Do you have any specific changes you want to see in the district's curriculum?**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most parents were able to assist their students with reading, but not math. Although we're a "B" district, our 2022 state math data revealed that students were not meeting their projected target. As a former secondary math teacher, the elementary math curriculum excites me because it provides students with a strong numeracy foundation to be successful in math in later years. Within the last year or two, we've purchased new literacy and math curriculum, and we've seen early signs of success. I would like us to continue monitoring student progress before making adjustments to the district's curriculum.

**If you get elected as a school board member, how will you support teachers in regard to student behaviors, classroom management, and campus safety?**



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**If you get elected as a school board member, how will you support teachers in regard to student behaviors, classroom management, and campus safety?**

My heart has always been for teachers because they are on the frontlines daily. I've worked on two turnaround campuses where we've implemented systems to assist teachers with classroom management, decrease student misbehavior, and increase student performance. None of that occurred without strong leadership, community partnerships, and parents as key stakeholders in education.

As a board member, I will maintain my commitment to ensuring that students and staff are physically and emotionally safe. As a board, we've approved upgrades to our security cameras, developed our own police department, appointed a district behavioral and community specialist, we've reviewed behaviors that caused students to be assigned OSS or ISS, and we're discussing how we can make additional enhancements to campuses in terms of personnel and security features.

**Please discuss any other issue you feel is relevant to your campaign for the CISD School Board.**

I believe in the power of education to transform the lives of our students and their family. During this next term, I would continue to focus on the positive trajectory of Crowley ISD and our efforts to become the premier district in Tarrant County and the state. Additionally, I want to address the mental well-being of our students, staff, and our families. As a school employee, our families, teachers, and students are experiencing varying issues following the COVID-19 pandemic, and these issues manifest in a variety of ways in the classroom from teacher/student anxiety, bullying, and frequent mobility. My goal is to ensure that every student, teacher, administrator, and parent who enters one of our campuses feels safe, supported, respected, and has a sense of belonging.

Moreover, public schools, non-profits, governmental entities, legislators, etc. can no longer afford to work in silos to produce the highest quality education for students. Public education requires all stakeholders working collaboratively in the best interests of students and society. We can no longer afford to place the onus solely on the shoulders of our teachers and school administrators to ensure the best outcomes for our students.