

*Northside News*  
School Board Questions  
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**The projected multi-billion state budget gap will likely result in a reduction in state aid to schools. When cuts are necessary, the process pits program against program and school against school. What will be your approach to deciding what budget items to eliminate or trim, and what are your highest priority items to avoid cutting?**

My priority is to keep as many cuts as possible away from the classroom. Our new strategic plan will drive some of the decision-making in budgeting, meaning we would budget to support our plan. I am an advocate at looking at district-wide processes to see where we can save money based on efficiencies and will continue to encourage that programs are evaluated to ensure we are effectively meeting student needs. If programmatic cuts are recommended, data on the programs and students being served is imperative in the decision-making process. We have to ensure we are meeting the needs of children at each school and different schools have different needs. Class size, support services, and educational environment (including safety) are high priorities.

**Many people believe neighborhood schools are an essential component of healthy neighborhoods. If budget cuts require consideration of closing schools, what criteria and process will you use to determine if a school should be closed?**

I agree schools contribute to the strength of neighborhoods. I've come to understand that with needs for parent and community involvement in schools and emphasis on developing relationships in schools, it would be difficult to envision a situation where factors that go into a cost-benefit analysis on school closings would outweigh the relationship benefits associated with neighborhood schools. If closings were presented, evaluation data should include: current/projected enrollment; building condition; alternative space; expenses versus savings; other potential shared uses for the building; "people" factor and demographics. Parents/staff from the affected schools should be involved in the dialogue/solution.

**Decisions made by state government and school district leadership play a major role in the quality of our schools, but so do the actions of parents and taxpayers. What actions do you believe parents and taxpayers can take to sustain and improve our schools?**

Parents and taxpayers should be proud of all schools and focus on the health of the entire school district, not just your neighborhood school. A good school district is central to thriving communities. A district's mission should relate to community goals, which is why our new board governance model has strong community engagement and collaboration components and why we are starting our community-based strategic planning. Community involvement in school demonstrates the importance of school and education. There are opportunities to participate through: volunteering; mentoring; development of business-education partnerships (e.g. Webcrafters at Mendota); resource sharing; business internships; advocacy for funding and other school issues; supporting community groups helping students; expanding learning activities at home; modeling the behavior expected of students. Parents and community members are necessary partners in collaboration for student achievement.