

USD 232 Board of Education Candidate Questionnaire: September 2023

Name: Stephanie Makalous

Position: 3

1. Please list any previous elected or appointed offices you have held.
Boad of Education, USD232, Member 2019 - current
2. What is your current occupation and where are you currently employed?
Manging Director, KC Treasury Services, CrossFirst Bank
3. Please list the school(s) where you completed your secondary and any post-secondary education.
Liberal High School
Baker University, BS
Webster University, Masters Degree
4. What degree(s) do you hold?
Masters in Business Administration,
Minor in Accounting,
Certified Treasury Professional desigantion
5. How long have you lived in the district? Do you have school-aged children living at home? If so, what school(s) do they attend?
My family has lived in the disrrict for 16 years, I have three daughters that all attend Mill Valley High School
6. Please describe your community involvement and activities.
Current:
USD232 Real World Learning Committee Member
Enterprise Center of Johnson County, Board Member
Luthern Church of Hope, KC - Member and KC Leader

Previous:
Horizon Elementary PTA Secretary,
Girl Scout Troop Leader
Youth Group Leader
State of Kansas, Career and Technical Education committee member
Kansas Action for Children, Board member



7. Why have you chosen to run for the USD 232 Board of Education?

I ran for USD232 BOE four years ago because I have a passion for helping all students be college or career ready when they graduate from high school. We need these students adequately prepared to be great contributors in a dynamic and ever-changing workforce. Since serving on the board the last four years, I have gained a much greater understanding for the various responsibilities that the board is tasked with overseeing. We have great momentum in our district in your efforts to help create an amazing and successful workforce. I want to continue to build on the excellence we see throughout our school system, including the continued expansion of the various Career and Technical Education programs that the district currently offers. This continues to be a true partnership between the school district and our community.

8. What will you do as a board member to ensure you have adequate knowledge and information on which to base your decisions?

Seeking factual information is critical when making decisions. It is a board member's responsibility to know the facts, evaluating the situation, seeking input from community members and listening to all parties and experts on any particular issue. Putting all this information together helps a board member make the best decisions possible.

9. How would you foster collaboration between the board, parents/guardians, school staff, and community members to ensure everyone's input is considered in decision-making processes? When making decisions on the board, I seek out community members, parents, and staff input. I try and ask thoughtful questions along with doing my best at reading and responding to what constituents have emailed and communicated to the board. A board member has to be to come prepared to the meetings and be actively involved in the local community to know what is best for USD232. Being prepared for meetings, knowing what the district needs is critical for collaboration.

10. When funding becomes critical, what do you see as priorities for our school district?

When funding comes into question, it is the board members responsibilities to balance the needs of the district such as staff retention, physical facility needs, and educational curriculum resources that teachers and staff need to educate our future work force.

11. If funding becomes more abundant, what do you see as priorities for our school district?

If funding becomes abundant, I would concentrate on staff retention and curriculum. I would ask the teachers what they need to help our students be successful. Many of our teachers submit requests to the USD232 Education Foundation and their building's PTA

requesting funds for programs they have designed. I would work to help fund as many of these projects as funding would allow.

12. What do you view as opportunities for improvement in USD 232?

I believe there are always opportunities for improvement in everything we do in life. I would ask our community and staff as to what education opportunities they would like to see improved. As the district continues to build out our Career and Technical Learning opportunities, I would like the community to become more proactively engaged in providing real world learning opportunities to our students. I believe that students need to explore as many different types of career pathways possible so as to help them discover what brings them joy and provides them the ability to be self-sufficient after graduating from our district.

13. What do you view as USD 232's main areas of strength?

I believe that USD232 main strength is our culture. We have a culture that is more like a family than most other organizations. We do our best to include everyone and want to help make each and every employee be better than when they arrived in our district. This collaboration brings a welcoming work environment as well as allows teachers to work to meet students needs. When our staff enjoy their working environment, it allows them to be more creative and dynamic in what they do.

14. Is there anything else that you would like to share with our members?

USD232 is an amazing place to work, to educate our students, and to be a part of a community. Over the last four years, I have been proud to be a board member that helped hire a new superintendent, navigated a once in a century pandemic, completed our bond projects, raised wages for our staff, purchased a crisis alert school safety system, welcomed Panasonic's new battery plant, and worked with a consulting company to explore the likely future geographic growth of the district and where we need to adjust and expand our physical facilities. The district is on a positive track to continue to serve its mission which is to prepare all students for their future through excellent, innovative learning opportunities with caring, dedicated, and passionate staff in a safe and secure environment. I hope to continue to build on the excellence of our district for another four years. Lastly, I am beyond grateful for what you all do to support the students in our district. You are the heart and soul of this district and I for one can't say it enough... Thank you!