

## Akron Bugle

Question: What are the top two issues facing the Akron Central School District over the next three years? Please include why they are important and how you plan to address them.

(300 word limit)

The last twelve months have caused us to reevaluate education. From delivery and assessment to a student's mental and social health, it all has been impacted. As the regulations and restrictions ease, students will return to full-time instruction. The superintendent and board have already made full-time instruction the priority. However, once students return, the first issue the district will face is the level of student performance. When an assessment is made of a student's expected levels of understanding, there will be a gap among many. The implementation of programs and additional instructional resource tools will be needed to be put in place to assist helping students back to expected levels. These can be created with the use of federal funds already allotted and mandated to be used for this function. However, this will be a short-term solution to a long-term concern. Federal funds will expire. This leads to the second issue we face, the adaptive use of the resources we receive and currently have. We are a district with a declining enrollment. That will mean less foundation aid in the future. Furthermore, with budgetary questions regarding NYS funding, the issue could be further complicated. Before this last federal bill, NYS was withholding dollars and not fully funding schools. The solution here is for an assessment of our current resources, personnel, and programming. Through creative means and collaborations, we can maximize what we can do with each. Additionally, school advocacy at the state and federal levels needs to continue to help our district. While these past months have been difficult, it has not been for naught. While we have seen weaknesses in the system, we have also identified strengths within our district. We now must apply the lessons of both to the benefit of our students and our community. – Erik Polkowski