

General Election - HPS School Board

Candidate Questions

Sharon Behl Brooks

What are your top three priorities for the HPS Board of Education?

I share the mission of fellow board members: "to assure all students acquire the knowledge, skills, and behaviors essential to be successful individuals and responsible citizens." Attracting the best teachers and staff to join in that mission is key. Being good stewards of the resources of our community takes awareness of our current economic profile. Encouraging our neighbors to continue to celebrate education will offer a model for our young people.

Early childhood education programs lay crucial groundwork for students throughout their K-12 journey. As a member of the HPS School Board, how would you suggest improving our children's early educational experiences?

Our community is rich in free and inexpensive opportunities for families to learn together. A recent professional workshop leader from out of state explored the options available here and filled her entire PowerPoint screen. Because family members are our first teachers, it says a lot about a community when it supports families. Wages, employment flexibility, childcare, and transportation seem to rise to the top of most surveys when young parents plan for the future. We have the human resources in the private and public sector to design a model for our community to respond.

With budgets being tight, what strategies do you suggest to reduce spending while ensuring that the quality of education remains high for all students?

Bringing together key people with the willingness to prioritize both short-term and long term goals helps to create and maintain a vision of excellence. Looking honestly at the economic health of our state and community then needs to match our community's expectations.



What other potential areas for collaboration between the HPS School Board and local organizations would you endorse?

Many of the members of the current Board, myself included, are active in local organizations that support education. The efforts of the Hastings Community Foundation, the Community Impact Network, and the United Way illustrate the kind of responsiveness that works when challenges present themselves. The Born Learning Trail is one great example.

What relevant experiences or education do you have that would make you a strong fit for this position?

As a member of the Hastings College faculty, I had the privilege of working with the team on the Chamber's Business, Industry, and Education (BIE) Committee to welcome new educators and distribute discount cards to local businesses to honor students.. Before I retired, I encouraged the coverage of local government in my journalism courses and accompanied students to dozens of meetings of local government. I closely observed the dynamics of leadership and procedures for accomplishing goals on behalf of the community. As a Board member for the past eight years, I worked with colleagues to analyze and pass eight budgets, select a superintendent, work through the challenges of the COVID pandemic and recommend passage of a bond issue for renovation.