



## Brent Ross - NSSD 112 School Board Candidate RNA Candidate Forum Responses

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### *1. State your reasons for seeking a position.*

Serving on the Reconfiguration 2.0 team was a great immersion into the challenges of D112; however, I wanted to do more to improve educational outcomes in addition to fixing facility and finance issues. District 112 needs leadership to challenge assumptions, instill accountability for performance improvements, and work more collaboratively with the community.

### *2. Describe the skills, talents and experiences you would contribute to your position.*

I serve clients who need to navigate change and transform their organizations. My experience includes facility maintenance, construction and procurement for schools. This is my fifth year serving on the Highland Park Natural Resources Commission and my second year as the chairman appointed by Mayor Rotering. We work with City Council, the Park District, and other commissions on everything from lighting code modernization to ravine stewardship. Though I strive to be a servant leader, I know how to drive accountability and lead transformation. I can also bring people together, which is why I am endorsed by both the D112 Caucus and CARE.

### *3. Write a brief job description of this position, including the time commitment required.*

An effective NSSD 112 Board member welcomes stakeholder feedback, responds, and then then guides the actions of administrators in service of our students. Among those stakeholders are teachers, parents, taxpayers, municipal government, and others. Balancing conflicting demands between constituencies is one of the greatest challenges. I expect that Board members easily spend between 5-10 hours in most weeks and 20 in some on Board business.

### *4. What are the most important issues facing 112 and how would you address those issues?*

I am concerned that D112 is under-performing peer districts in math and English language arts, even after accounting for demographic differences and dual language. We have a tremendous opportunity to select new leadership and new priorities. I want to improve progress toward college & career readiness, challenge every student, and offer full-day Kindergarten.

We also need to address financial and facility challenges, but that need not come at the cost of maintaining our neighborhood schools. Preserving 7 elementary schools and 3 middle schools schools is possible. My detailed plan involves improvements to purchasing and capital planning for sustainability through 2030. I support a focused referendum for renovation of existing space.

### *5. How would you reach out and engage all members of the community?*

I hope that we can change the tone at Board meetings and do more to engage those who come to the Board to express concerns. The Board should “meet the community where they are” and acknowledge current curriculum concerns before making further changes. To pass a referendum, we need to have more conversations about community values. Those values then have to drive decisions about improvements to indoor air quality, safety, and accessibility.

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