

WHOSE SIDE ARE THEY ON?

Finding Out What
Your Local School
Board Candidates
Really Believe



“Any country grounded in Judaeo-Christian values can’t be overthrown until those roots are cut...In the new order, Socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture via infiltration of schools, universities, churches, and the media by transforming the consciousness of society.”

ANTONIO GRAMSCI
founder of the Italian
Communist Party¹

THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS IN AMERICA

The rise of cancel culture. An increasingly secular young generation. Rapid growth in young people rejecting their biological sex.

Headlines and academic surveys show that these aren’t exceptions. Massive numbers of young people are rejecting the values and beliefs upon which American freedom rests. Children are conforming to these destructive ideologies through immersive indoctrination and grooming within America’s classrooms...by taxpayer-employed administrators and third-party volunteer staff, under the oversight of elected school board members.

The problems that threaten our nation today are largely the result of years of misplaced priorities in our public schools. Our children are not developing a passion for truth, for becoming life-long learners, or being equipped to be independent thinkers. Our children are not learning how to become citizens who appreciate, cultivate, and defend the values and principles our nation was founded upon. Much of this responsibility rests with parents who have entrusted authority to school boards—positions largely overlooked by the general public, but **captured** by Leftist organizations and special interest groups who have exercised their influence over our children for far too long.

The well-funded LGBTQ activist organization Human Rights Campaign (HRC) provides an abundance of resources to indoctrinate our children—as young as Pre-K—according to transgender ideology. Their lesson plan for a children’s book discussion for ages 5-10 instructs teachers to define the word transgender for the students: “When your gender identity (how you feel) is different than what doctors/midwives assigned to you when you were born (girl/boy, she/he pronouns or sex assigned at birth).”

Planned Parenthood, which performs over 41% of abortions in America, is also the nation’s largest provider of sex education. Here is how a former sex educator describes what she was trained to teach by Planned Parenthood: “Sexual intimacy is redefined from being special, for marriage or for having babies, to being crass, seeking pleasure over meaningful relationships, accepting STDs as a way of life, and terminating the lives of babies so we can worship our sexual rights without hindrance.”

The National Education Association (NEA), which publicly supports abortion, includes pro-LGBT books in their recommended reading material for students.

Critical Race Theory—a teaching which divides people into ‘oppressed’ and ‘oppressor’ groups based on race—is infiltrating even innocuous subjects. Even math is under attack. A program backed by the Bill Gates Foundation called “A Pathway to Equitable Math Instruction,” instructs teachers about “Dismantling Racism in Mathematics Instruction.” Stated examples of what this material purports to be “white supremacy” in math include:


- Focus on getting the right answer
- Students required to show their work
- Treating mistakes as problems by equating them with wrongness

When teaching ‘math in the real world’, teachers are instructed to “limit or eliminate references to money”, since this could be used to uphold a capitalist or imperialist understanding of the world.

There are more examples. These organizations are well-funded, influential, and they aim to convert school children to a radical worldview of secular Marxism and postmodernism, thereby shaping the rest of the culture.

WHAT ELECTED BODY IS IN A STRATEGIC POSITION TO STOP THIS INFILTRATION?

The local School Board of Trustees. They could be called the gatekeepers of our schools, largely responsible for the specific content they allow to enter and influence our children. They are also the most accessible to the voters, especially that small portion of voters who actually turn out to vote in school board elections. It often takes only a handful of engaged, informed voters to elect principled candidates who will fulfill their oath of office, protect our children and preserve the future of our country.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue shirt and a yellow safety vest, holds a large red octagonal stop sign with the word "STOP" in white. He is standing outdoors, possibly near a school. To his right, a young girl with blonde hair, wearing a white shirt and a pink backpack, is looking down. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and what appears to be a school setting.

The School Board is
THE ONLY GROUP
that can stop
Planned Parenthood,
the 1619 Project,
the Human Rights
Campaign and other
leftist organizations
from indoctrinating
your child.

“Every member of the State ought diligently to read and to study the constitution of his country, and teach the rising generation to be free.”

JOHN JAY

First Chief Justice of the Supreme Court⁹



HOW SCHOOL BOARDS CONTRIBUTE TO THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS

Similar to a company which employs a board of directors to oversee its policy and operational decision-makers, every school district has an elected Board of Trustees—often referred to as the school board—that sets policy for the schools under its jurisdiction. Their oversight extends to hiring and firing the school superintendent, spending your tax money, and determining what children will and will not be taught. Ideally, this is done with input from the parents. In some cases, parents are simply not involved. In others, the school board actively overrides the wishes of parents.

While states have varying education standards which schools are required to follow, much of the oversight and decisions regarding specific curriculum choices fall under the review of the school board. Third party curriculum providers, such as several organizations mentioned earlier in this book, can take advantage of board members' good intentions and present their education materials in a favorable light, often hiding the more radical elements.

For example, school boards are often urged (and in some cases, mandated by the state) to adopt curricula that conforms to the standards of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE). This means children may be taught ideas such as:

- Homosexual behavior is a normal and healthy expression of sexuality
- Gender isn't binary. It's not either/or. In many cases it's both/and.
- Abortion is an equally valid option to parenting and adoption

Comprehensive Sexuality Education is sometimes labeled "consent education." It directly contradicts abstinence education by implicitly teaching that any sexual activity is okay as long as both parties consent. Here's how the leftist Guttmacher Institute describes it: "Teaching about consent is key to pushing back against abstinence-only messages and is an important part of comprehensive sex education. When schools teach students about how to say no to sex, they are also acknowledging young people's ability to say yes." This directly contradicts the values and beliefs many parents teach their children, yet it is disguised by reasonable-sounding descriptions such as "consent education".

How many school board candidates are committed to giving their district's current curriculum greater scrutiny?

While thirty states and the District of Columbia require sex education to be taught in schools, with some mandating certain topics that must be covered, such as instruction about HIV and LGBT experiences, others leave most decisions up to the local school districts. Even in states with mandated standards, local school boards still choose which specific curriculum to use that meets those standards, and parents may be invited to review proposed curriculum. It should be noted that core materials, as well as supplemental resources, can vary in how graphic they choose to be. **This is why involvement in state legislative, State Board of Education, and school board elections is crucial to what is shaping the hearts and minds of the next generation.**

Here are just a few examples of what occurs when a school board fails in its gatekeeper role:

- Austin ISD in Texas allowed a drag queen who had been convicted of prostitution to read LGBTQ books to 10-year-olds in the school library.
- In 2015, despite the pleas of many parents, the Fairfax County School District in Virginia voted to adopt regulations which require schools to allow students to access bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers based on their gender identity, rather than biological sex. (This means a boy can use the girls' facilities.) In 2018, the school board voted 10-2 to replace the term 'biological sex' with the term 'sex assigned at birth' in sex ed curriculum.
- **4,500 classrooms** nationwide are incorporating elements of the **1619 Project** in their teaching, which asserts that **America's founding is rooted in slavery and racism**. This project does not merely state that slavery was a part of America's history from the beginning. Rather, it actually asserts that our very founding is rooted in it, and that the **founding principles in the Declaration of Independence were a lie** when they were written. This echoes the opinion of Black Lives Matter, which believes, "White supremacy has been etched into the foundation of our government since the beginning."

You may be thinking, “This would never happen in *my* school district!” However, this assumes that school board members can always be trusted to be incorruptible (a benefit-of-the-doubt rarely attributed to politicians for higher office) and presumes that erroneous or inappropriate materials will always be detected and removed. Leftist ideology infiltrates in the form of both whole curriculum and supplemental materials such as books, discussion questions, and videos. When is the last time you took a look at the books in your school library, or asserted your parental right to view the curriculum?

In 2018, a group called ‘Stand for Fort Worth’ conducted a search of the district’s library catalog using the keyword ‘transgender’ and found 98 different records of books with content regarding LGBTQ issues, even in elementary schools. One particular book that includes graphic sexual language was available to middle school children as young as 11 years old.

This is only part of the problem. In addition to the promotion of bad content, **crucial information is omitted** from American history, science, and other subjects. For example, how many schools include Booker T. Washington as a prominent, positive figure in black history, and his inspiring autobiography, *Up from Slavery*?



THE WAY FORWARD—SOLVING THE EDUCATIONAL CRISIS



Though the state influences education through policy and funding, the elected body with the most direct impact to students is the local school board. The name of this board, its members, and elections, as well as the election schedule, vary from state-to-state, and district-to-district.

While these elections see **very low voter turnout**—often 10% or less—they may powerfully impact America’s future more than any other, and on two major fronts:

1. Setting policy which shapes the minds of the next generation.
2. Providing a political springboard for higher-office seekers.

“*School Board members are the ‘farm team’ of candidates who progress from the schoolhouse, to the statehouse, to the U.S. House.*”

KEN MERCER

Texas State Board of Education Member, 2007-2021

Conservatives who commit to vote and stay engaged in these high-impact elections can begin to change the trajectory of their local schools back towards the kind of institutions that our founding fathers envisioned for teaching truth and advancing the foundations of civilized society.

“*A Bible and a newspaper in every house, a good school in every district—all studied and appreciated as they merit—are the principal support of virtue, morality, and civil liberty.*”

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

And it can be done! But this takes perseverance, and strategy. First, good candidates must be recruited. Often, a single conservative will be elected to the school board, only to find themselves out-voted and unable to effect change by themselves. Often, more than one school board seat will be up for reelection at the same time. If at least two conservative candidates are elected to the board, they can support each other.

Still, the most influential supporters should be the parents. Exercising the right to review what your children are being taught and attending school board meetings can stop bad decisions. If, despite the wishes of parents, the school board decides to implement radical leftist curriculum or policies, they are publicly exposed, and potentially vulnerable in the next election cycle.

For prospective candidates, organizations such as the Leadership Institute and Patriot Academy provide training regarding how to run an effective campaign.²³

Everyone is needed. Many parents whose children are educated outside the public school system aren't involved in school board elections. However, the children of today become the scientists, journalists, and politicians of tomorrow. And 90% of them will have graduated from public schools.

“As a homeschooler I never thought about or realized how important school board votes were. I never thought about how they are the future generation. ‘I don’t have a dog in that fight’ was more my motto but now I see I really do. Because that is where the majority of our future leaders will be coming from.”

ELISABETH PERKINS
iVoterGuide subscriber

HOW CAN YOU EVALUATE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES?

With over 16,000 school districts in the United States, obviously iVoterGuide can only research and publish guides on a select number of them. (Though we would cover all of them if we could!) The task of sleuthing out your local candidate's views likely falls to you, and we would like to help guide your queries with some tips.

Most candidate forums, websites, and interviews can be frustratingly vague, not dealing with the issues of ideology that will determine what students are taught to believe about their American heritage. Candidates can emphasize making sure curriculum, classrooms, and sports facilities are up-to-date, but many make no mention of the values and worldviews children are absorbing. Differences between the candidates appear to be shallow, and they all seem to care about the children.

So you must go deeper. *But how?*

Ask questions. If possible, meet with candidates individually in person, give them a call, or email them. The great thing about local elections is that candidates are much more accessible than higher-level elections, and are often happy to talk to you. You may even live in the same neighborhood!

That brings up another point. It is easy to oppose someone's ideologies when you don't see them every day. But what if you disagree with a candidate or board member whose daughter attends the same dance class as yours? Suppose you see them at church every Sunday? While difficult, it's a good opportunity to be honest and up front about your disagreements, while maintaining neighborly civility. Character matters—for candidates, and voters.



WHAT EVERY VOTER MUST KNOW



What questions can you ask current and potential school board candidates?

On one hand, you can ask open-ended questions to let the candidate speak freely and expound on their views, giving you more insight into their convictions. And on the other end of the spectrum, you can ask very specific questions that will nail down the candidate's ideology—but avoid tipping your hand about your own views so that you get the honest truth rather than what the candidate thinks you want to hear.

iVoterGuide has created a school board election survey for our Texas exploratory initiative. A few examples:

Questions regarding the candidate's general worldview:

- What is the function of the local school board?
- What is your definition of education?
- What would you consider to be attributes of an educated person/individual?
- Do you agree that Judeo-Christian values established a framework of morality that is necessary for our system of limited government?

Questions related to parental authority:

- Should teachers use alternative names and pronouns without parental permission?
- When students are taught courses such as Comprehensive Sex Ed (CSE) or Social Emotional Learning (SEL), do you support opt-in (as opposed to opt-out) with written parental permission?*
- Should any healthcare diagnosis or treatment, whether mental, reproductive, or otherwise, be given to a child without first receiving written consent from the parent?

Questions regarding curriculum:

- Who should have the authority to set curriculum and determine resources used in those curricula?
- What subjects should be prioritized in relation to the role of a K-12 public school?
- Do you support the teaching of the 1619 Project emphasizing slavery and racism as the foundation of American history?

A candidate's campaign and personal social media pages can be useful sources of information as well. Keep in mind, they are trying to appeal to a majority of the people in their district, so their statements are often broad, general, and appear to be non-controversial.

You may not be on your own in your investigation. Many local groups exist which are comprised of parents who care about these elections and are concerned for their kids' education. Some conduct candidate interviews and research, and publish their findings. The information collected by such groups is often used by our research team when deciding on a candidate's rating.

What is the candidate's voting record?

School Board elections are non-partisan. This does not mean the candidates have no political affiliation; it simply means the election is not conducted with partisan primaries followed by a general election between the Republican and Democrat winners. There is usually only one* election and only a handful of votes determine the winner.

Although most school board elections are non-partisan, a candidate's personal voting record is usually public information. The means of accessing this information varies from state-to-state and from county-to-county. It may be as simple as downloading a registered voter file from the website of your county's Voter Registrar or

**If your state has standards regarding parental opt-in or opt-out, a candidate may simply refer to the state's regulations. It can be helpful to press them for their personal opinion, however, so you can determine how highly they value parental input in general.*

Elections office, but submitting an Open Records or Public Information Request may be required. Be sure to review your state's laws pertaining to use of registered voter data. If you have used iVoterGuide before, you will know that being a Republican doesn't guarantee that the candidate is very conservative, and a Democrat can be rated at various degrees on the ideological scale. However, the two party's differences are substantial, so knowing how a candidate votes often provides general insight into their policy views.

Who has endorsed this candidate?

A candidate's website and social media may announce that they have been endorsed by certain people or organizations. Some notes to keep in mind about endorsements:

- Teachers unions can be counted as liberal endorsements. This does **not** mean teachers are liberal. It simply means the leadership, purpose, and policies of the union are liberal, since they often prevent or delay the firing of an underperforming teacher, promote 'woke' teaching, and generally work for the interests of the teachers, not necessarily the interests of the children. An example is of this is the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).
- If a state legislator has endorsed a candidate, you can search our website to see if iVoterGuide has ever researched his/her election, and use our rating to discover their political ideology.
- If they have been endorsed by local public figures such as city council members or pastors, consider contacting them to ask their reasons for endorsing this particular candidate. They may be surprised at the questions they failed to ask the candidate before endorsing him/her.



What is the candidate's donation history?

Money is the bloodhound for sniffing out political motivations. Two campaign contribution categories provide insight on a candidate's political views.

First, donations that other candidates, officeholders, and organizations have received *FROM* a candidate indicate the candidate's political alignment. The [Federal Election Commission](#) website and your state's agency that manages campaign finance reporting are good starting points for researching donations *FROM* the candidate.

Second, donations that individuals, other candidates, officeholders, and organizations have made *TO* the candidate provide visibility on who influences or is aligned with the candidate's agenda. For school board candidates, required campaign finance filings may be obtained either from the school district administration, county elections office, or the state agency responsible

for campaign finance transparency. This varies from state-to-state, and even district-to-district, so check with the school administration as a starting point.

Bottom line: follow the money and you will often discover motivations, even for local school board candidates.

Since iVoterGuide went nationwide in 2012, we have increasingly gone deeper, covering more down ballot races in additional states. Our goal for 2024 is to provide voter guides for the presidency down to the state legislature in all 50 states. Providing you easily accessible information on higher-office elections will free up your time to focus on these crucial elections in your local community so you can be an informed, confident, voter.

TIME TO TAKE ACTION



Here is an example of a community that took the initiative to change the trajectory of their school board:

In 1992, Rick Scarborough, former pastor of First Baptist Church in Pearland, Texas, attended his daughter's high school AIDs prevention lesson and was appalled at the graphic nature of the presentation, and the moral relativist ideology being promoted. He informed his congregation about what was taking place in their school, and they were motivated to action. Several decided to run for office, and within two years, the majority of the school board was comprised of church members. They hired a new principal who preferred abstinence-based sex education for the students.

Looking at the state of our country today, you may be tempted to despair, or adopt a cynical attitude. But maybe you are being called to be the Rick Scarborough in your community.

Returning our nation to sound governance and reason does not happen overnight, and the level of progress is different in each state. **Every child saved is a victory.** Every child spared from the poisoning of her young mind and the violation of her innocence is a victory. Every child who is encouraged to pursue the American dream instead of being trapped in an identity of victimhood is a victory. Every child who graduates with

an appreciation of this country's founding principles and determined to fight for them is a victory. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 4:2, "It is required of stewards that they be found faithful." The Lord has placed us as stewards of our nation, our communities, and our younger generation. **Let us be found faithful.**

“Duty is ours; results are God’s.”

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

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Public charter school boards are often appointed rather than elected. There are exceptions in some states, however.

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Pages 17-20 list key phrases often used in Comprehensive Sex Education (CSE) which are misleading and can actually include inappropriate content. Some examples are ‘Consent Education’, ‘Safe and Healthy Relationships’, and ‘Medically Accurate.’

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