

Wise County Conservatives
2025 School Board Candidate Survey

The survey was (to the best of our ability) sent to every candidate in the county. Those who chose to respond are:

Scott Koehler, Decatur ISD Place 1 (opposing Cynthia Alvarez)

Micheal Stone, Decatur ISD Place 2 (opposing Stan Shults)

Jeff Dearing, Northwest ISD Place 3 (opposing Joe Washam)

Joe Washam, Northwest ISD Place 3 (opposing Jeff Dearing)

Payton McAlister, Alvord ISD Place 3 (opposing Garrett Archa)

Question 1: What is the purpose of government?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 (opponent Stan Shults) -Protect the rights of citizens

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - 1. Protect Individual Freedom 2. Protect Property Rights 3. Uphold the Rule of Law 4. Maintain Order and Security 5. National Defense 6. Limited Economic Role 7. Fiscal Responsibility 8. Respect Tradition

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Government intervention should be limited, The people are better equipped to make their own decisions about their daily lives and finances. The role of the government is to support that not to manage it.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - The purpose of government is to serve the people by protecting their freedoms, ensuring justice, and promoting the common good. A strong government safeguards individual rights while creating the conditions for communities to thrive through public safety, education, infrastructure, and opportunity.

Government should empower, not control. It exists to protect our constitutional liberties, provide essential services, and support those in need without overreach. It should be transparent, accountable, and responsive to the people it represents.

At its best, government reflects the will and values of its citizens, working to preserve freedom, expand opportunity, and ensure that every person regardless of background has a fair shot at success. Whether at the local, state, or federal level, the purpose should be to protect liberty and promote the well-being of all.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - To protect the fundamental individual rights of the people.

Question 2: With which major political party do you identify most closely?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Republican

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 – Republican

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3- Republican

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Independent/Varies by Candidate

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 – Republican

Question 3: Why did you decide to run for school board of your district?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - To give back to the community that gave so much to me.

Scott Koehler – DISD Place 1 - I am asking for your vote for re-election to continue my dedicated efforts towards fiscal responsibility, transparency, and academic excellence in our district. My voting history reflects a steadfast commitment to fiscal conservatism, and my comprehensive understanding of policy equips me to effectively govern and ensure accountability within district leadership.

I voted "No" on two of the last three budgets due to a troubling lack of financial details provided to the board. Additionally, I was the only trustee to vote "No" on the \$330 million bond, as it lacked essential state-required long-range planning and provided inadequate details on proposed expenditures.

As a trustee, my foremost duty is to govern our district with integrity and to hold it accountable for the judicious use of public funds, all while adhering strictly to established board policies. A trustee must be passionate, willing to invest time in deeply understanding the Texas Education Code, and must possess a thorough

knowledge of both legal and local board policies governing our district. Without this expertise, a trustee risks making decisions based on subjective feelings rather than sound judgment.

In summary, my extensive knowledge of state and board policies, coupled with my conservative values and Christian principles, profoundly influences my decision-making. I am committed to advocating for our community and ensuring our district thrives.

Your support is vital as we work together for a brighter future. Thank you for considering my re-election.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I'm running for school board because I deeply care about our students, teachers and the community. With my wife and daughter teaching in NISD and my children enrolled or graduated from the district, I'm fully invested in ensuring every child receives a high-quality education and that our district thrives.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I'm running for the Northwest ISD Board of Trustees to empower students, support teachers, and build strong communities. As a combat-wounded Army veteran and parent, I've dedicated my life to serving others, and I want to bring that same commitment to Northwest ISD.

Empowering students means providing the tools and opportunities they need to succeed in school, career, and life. Supporting teachers means investing in educators with the resources, pay, and respect they deserve. Building community means strengthening partnerships between schools, families, and local businesses to support student success.

After my combat injury, former coaches visited me in the hospital. Their support gave me hope and reminded me of the power of a caring community. I want to help create environments that celebrate students when they succeed and lift them up when they struggle.

I'm stepping up to be a voice for families, educators, businesses, and the communities that make up Northwest ISD.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - To help provide an environment that will prepare our students for success in the classroom, on the court, or on the field, and most importantly to prepare our students for future success in life.

Question 4: How have you prepared to be a member of your district's school board?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Thirty years in the business sector, I've helped cultivate a strong financial and operational culture. I would like to bring that mind set to DISD. Our students are our greatest asset in this community, they are our future leaders. We must give them every opportunity available to succeed. This can be achieved by providing the highest quality education. I believe we are on a great path, but financial stability is essential.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - The Texas Education Code and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) clearly outline the essential training requirements for school board members. A detailed list of these requirements can be found here: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/school-boards/school-board-member-training>. I have not only met but significantly exceeded these minimum state standards. I have dedicated extensive hours to studying the Texas Education Code Chapter 11, Subpart D, the Texas Open Meetings Act, and board-approved legal and local policies. Additionally, my commitment to understanding complex topics drives me to actively seek records and documents from the district as needed. I meticulously review the district's audits and conduct quarterly assessments of the detailed expenditures report to gain insights into budget overruns. This proactive approach enables me to identify strategic opportunities to address and reduce the substantial budget deficit, ensuring responsible stewardship of our community's investment.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Parent of two NISD graduates and two current students. My wife is a first grade teacher and my daughter teaches Kindergarten in NISD. Im on the board of the Northwest Education Foundation - Vice President of Finance, 7 years. Byron Nelson Softball Booster Club- Fundraising chair , Board member for Metroport Chamber and owner of my own local business.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I'm a proud member of every PTA in Northwest ISD and previously served as the Advocacy Chair for the Northwest ISD Council of PTAs. During my time in that role, our council was honored with Texas PTA's 2021 Outstanding Advocate for Children of the Year award. I currently serve on several NISD committees, including the Long Range Planning Committee, Board Policy Committee, Advocacy Committee, and the Special

Education Parent Advisory Council. I am also a Northwest ISD Community Ambassador.

Beyond committees, I volunteer with the NISD Angel Tree, the Back-to-School Fair, and the Northwest ISD Education Foundation. I also serve as a mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters on a Title I campus.

I've also been advocating for legislation to fix the "shell game" created by the Tarrant Appraisal District — a move that could raise tax rates not only in Tarrant County, but also in Wise and Denton Counties. In just the past four school years, Northwest ISD has sent over \$50 million in recapture payments back to the state. I've been paying attention to issues in Wise County including infrastructure needs like securing sustainable water.

I continuously push back on unfunded state mandates — whether it's school safety, special education, Pre-K, or other essential services that the state requires but fails to adequately fund. We live in the economic engine of North Texas. Our families and businesses contribute to the state's record surpluses. We deserve high-quality public schools in return.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - With generations of family involved in public education, I understand the role that education plays in the lives of students now and the future.

Question 5: 85% of Wise County vote Republican. What does this mean to you as a decision maker for county schools?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Most republicans are fiscally conservative, I as a public servant must focus our tax dollars on the best interest for our community.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Understanding the strong conservative values in our community is a key factor in my decision-making for county schools. This awareness informs the development of curriculum and the implementation of school policies, ensuring they are aligned with community expectations. Maintaining open communication and actively engaging with parents and all community members is crucial. Ultimately, my priority is to provide a high-quality education for every student, while also being respectful of and responsive to the community's overall needs.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Being fiscally responsible is a priority.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - As a decision maker for county schools, the fact that 85% of Wise County voters consistently vote Republican—and that all three counties within Northwest ISD vote majority Republican—means that communication efforts must align with values that resonate across the political spectrum, especially around fiscal responsibility, transparency, and local control. The failure of all bond propositions in Wise County during the 2021 and 2023 elections, including those for school buildings, buses, and technology, highlights a need for more direct and consistent engagement with Wise County voters. Many may not feel informed or confident about how public education is funded or how bond dollars are used, which can lead to resistance even when critical needs are at stake.

It's also important to communicate how decisions by the Tarrant Appraisal District (TAD) could eventually impact taxpayers in Wise County. As local tax burdens increase due to limited state funding, voters may see higher tax bills without understanding that the state is contributing less. This makes it vital to clearly explain school finance realities and the importance of community support to preserve the quality of education in Northwest ISD.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - An elected official of any kind should represent the views of the people that elected this official. As an elected official I will always have to make decisions based on what I personally believe is the right decision, but should always keep in mind the views of population that voted for me. In this case, I hope to do what is right for the students based on the vote of their parents.

Question 6: The number one purpose of the School Board should be to create an environment for the best possible education for your district's students:

- _ What is your district's ranking in Texas?**
- _ What do you plan to do to improve that ranking?**

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Decatur is ranked 821st in the state. This has to improve. We need to focus on the ABCs' and 123s' of education. I believe public school is where we "teach" our students. Colleges and universities are where we "educate" students.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - The State STAR testing, A-F rating system, has faced ongoing litigation for the past several years.

The Teaching and Learning department is proactively focusing on internal improvements and implementing Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBAs) to provide teachers with timely insights into student strengths and weaknesses. I am optimistic that the strategic goal to vertically align the curriculum across grade levels will yield positive results in student learning and, consequently, overall performance.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 –

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I believe every school district is unique to their community and the students they serve, so rankings can be arbitrary with their ever-changing metrics. As the only school board trustee to regularly attend school board meetings, I do know that our students are continuously successful despite dwindling resources. NHStv won Best Broadcast Excellence at the national Student Television Network Convention. An elementary student in FFA won Champion Jr. Rabbit Showmanship at the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Reserve, and a high schooler won Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Supreme Grand Champion in Ag Mechanics & Reserve Grand Champion at the San Angelo Stock Show. A female wrestler from one of the NISD high schools won state. A high school girls volleyball team won the state championship. Beyond athletics, fine arts continues to receive accolades for winning at UIL and national competitions.

Even though the STAAR isn't released yet, portions are used when evaluating the district 2023-2024 Texas Academic Performance Report. A higher percentage of NISD students scored at the Approaches, Meets, and Masters level than the state and Region 11 in all content areas. Every year, more graduates are earning an Associate's Degree, Industry Based Certifications, or completed On Ramps courses. Dropouts decreased, too.

I will continue actively engaging our community to advocate for increased funding.

I will push for competitive teacher pay to recruit and retain the best educators.

I will try to protect academic and enrichment programs from budget-driven cuts.

I will expand career and college pathways so more students can find success.

I will ensure transparency and trust in how decisions are made.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - There are many factors that go into district ranking, and some of the grading system can be deceiving, but according to Niche.com Alvord ISD ranks 301 out of 883. I do not believe rankings should solely be based off one state required test, but rather be based readiness of life after graduation. College readiness, military opportunities, trade school, or even direct job placement.

Question 7: Character Education is mandated by the state. Schools have adapted Transformative Social and Emotional learning curricula that promote critical race theory and gender ideology. What do you know regarding the curricula being used in your school district as Character Education and will you ensure that the curricula does not promote CRT and gender ideology?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Character is based off of life experience not classroom experience.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Decatur ISD utilizes state-approved curriculum, rigorously reviewed by the SHAC committee and ultimately approved by the Board of Trustees. To be clear, Decatur ISD does not promote Critical Race Theory or gender ideology, and I will not vote in favor of any curriculum that does.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I do not believe in this and would vote against any item brought to the school board on it.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - CRT and gender ideology do not occur in Northwest ISD. Character education matters to minimize bullying and to resolve behavioral disruptions in class. Students need to learn grit, resolve, and critical thinking while being respectful to others.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I am not certain on the exact curricula for Alvord ISD's character education, but there is no place for CRT and Gender Ideology in Public Schools.

Question 8: Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria is occurring all across our country. What do you know of this phenomenon and how will you, as a school board

member, ensure that your district has policies in place to deal with this and make sure that parental rights are protected?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Not a school issue. Personal and private.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, The Board has previously addressed related concerns by developing policy EMP Local, accessible at <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=1260&code=EMB#localTabContent>. This policy establishes district guidance regarding Gender Identity and Fluidity.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I will vote against any measure on this issues that does not serve the best interest of all students and our district.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I am fairly confident that the Texas legislature has set up enough roadblocks to minimize this in Texas. As a parent, I believe in parental rights, so I would want to review the policy.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Parents should have complete transparency. Gender Dysphoria is a mental disorder, and there should be NO encouragement magically changing your you born gender.

Question 9: What is your district's policy on the teaching of human sexuality? Do you agree with that policy and if not, how would you change it?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Health class should be taught, but with limitations determined by the administration.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - The Board has established local policy EHAA, accessible at <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=1260&code=EHAA#localTabContent>, which mandates the convening of the District's School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to recommend curriculum materials for human sexuality instruction. The specific process for adopting these materials can be found at the provided link.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I am unaware of this policy in our district. Parents are in charge of what their children learn.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I have no problem with the current policy, but will review it when elected.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I am not aware of the exact policy.

Question 10: Parents across the country are very concerned about books found in school libraries that have graphic sexual content and are promoting CRT. Do you agree with this concern? How will you, as a school board member, balance 1st amendment rights with protecting our children against pornography in our school libraries and other dangerous ideologies being available to our students without parental consent?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Our purpose as a community is to protect the vulnerable, it has no place in public education.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, I share concerns regarding graphic sexual content and the promotion of CRT in school libraries. Our Board has established policy EFB (Local) — Instructional Resources: Library Materials, available at <https://pol.tasb.org/PolicyOnline/PolicyDetails?key=1260&code=EFB#localTabContent>, which provides district guidance and mechanisms for protecting our students. This policy outlines procedures for parental review of library materials and safeguards against access to inappropriate content, ensuring the protection of our children is our priority.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I do not agree with CRT and our district has a transparency policy in place where Parents know of every book being checked out and the parent has the ability flag books in our system as books their child cannot read.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - This is not a concern in Northwest ISD. My real concern is the adults who falsely claim these books are in teacher's classrooms and school library.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I agree with the concern, and would address any issues of ideologies being pushed without consent of parents.

Question 11: One proposed change to bond elections is that state and local bond election should follow the following guidelines:

- 1) Be required to include the amount of debt currently outstanding, current debt service payments, current per capita debt obligations, the amount of new debt being proposed, estimated debt service for the new debt, and estimated per capita burden being proposed.**
- 2) Any bond election (state or local) would have to pass with at least a 2/3 majority of voters to affirm the bond.**
- 3) The bond issue would have to obtain a yes vote of a minimum of 20% of registered voters.**
- 4) All elections of personnel responsible for adopting a budget and a property tax rate and all elections involving bond indebtedness would be held on the November uniform election date and administered by the County Clerk or the County Elections Administrator.**
- 5) Any government entity should not spend taxpayer dollars in promoting further indebtedness or spending of taxpayer dollars via mass media.**
- 6) Be in opposition to bundling of items on bond election ballots.**

Do you agree or disagree with these proposals? Why or why not?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Yes. When taxes are being used to fund bonds, full disclosure to the taxpayer is essential. It's the only way to build true trust.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - 1. Full Debt Disclosure: Yes, voters have a right to complete financial transparency.

2. 2/3 Majority Vote: Yes, to ensure robust community support for significant debt.

3. 20% Minimum Turnout: Yes, to guarantee community participation.

4. November Elections: Neutral, though November elections typically yield higher voter engagement.

5. No Taxpayer-Funded Promotion: Yes, taxpayer funds should not be used to advocate for increased indebtedness.

6. No Bundling: Yes, each bond project should be considered and voted on independently.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - This is a lot of information to try and answer, I will say that there are only two buckets of monies for schools and they cannot cross over.

One bucket obviously is the bond side. In a fast growing district such as NISD bonds are the only way to build new schools to accommodate new students. We are estimating 1500 a year coming in. They will either go into trailers or new buildings as we can't keep increasing classroom sizes. So, with that said I don't like the one size fits all on bond elections. Meaning what is good for a non growing district vs. a rapid growing district is totally different. Making a standardized options to pick from on a ballot sheet does not meet the needs of different districts. I do like the current version where each thing has to be listed out separately and voted on separately as it gives the voter the right to choose what they feel is important. Meaning football stadium vs a new school. As a school board member none of the above would pertain to me, that would be the state. It is my job to make sure what we are doing is being fiscally responsible for our tax payers and meeting the needs of our students and staff and the rapid growth of our district.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 –

1. Most if not all of that is already available in public record online through the district finance section or the Long Range Planning Committees meeting records.

2 & 3 open the door to compulsory voting

4. No

5. Sharing facts isn't promotion unless someone doesn't want the truth to be known.

6. School bonds are already broken into propositions.

School bonds are the only municipal bonds on ballots with language that state "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE" not water or road bonds.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I do agree for all transparency to be given to the voters. I also know how hard it can be to pass bonds (for good reason) with a majority vote, therefore 2/3 vote would be extremely hard.

Question 12: TASA/TASB has recently come under fire in some communities as an anti- school/community partnership force, particularly in conservative districts. What are potential solutions you see to this problem?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Run your district independently, community knows best approach.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Trustees have strong alternatives to TASB. I've chosen Texans for Excellence in Education (TEE) to fulfilling my state-required recurrent training. <https://www.texansforexcellence.org/> for this purpose.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - We are TASB and we have had no controversy in NISD

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Learn more about those issues and ensure our involvement with those organizations reflect the values and needs of NISD.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I am not totally aware of the specifics on why these organizations have come under fire, but ultimately school administration should be a direct reflect of local voters, and not large state organizations.

Question 13: What is the relationship and function of the SHAC with Board Members?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - There shouldn't be a relationship between any of these organizations, the districts should run independently from any "outside" influence.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in Texas, is an important community-based group, appointed by the School Board, with a majority of its members being local parents. Its primary function is to ensure that the school district's health education and related programs strongly reflect the values and needs of the community. The law mandates that the School Board must consider the SHAC's recommendations when making decisions about health curriculum and instruction. This emphasizes the vital role of this community-led body in shaping the health and well-being of students in a way that aligns with local perspectives.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) in Texas, is an important community-based group, appointed by the School Board, with a majority of its members being local parents. Its primary function is to ensure that the school district's health education and related programs strongly reflect the

values and needs of the community. The law mandates that the School Board must consider the SHAC's recommendations when making decisions about health curriculum and instruction. This emphasizes the vital role of this community-led body in shaping the health and well-being of students in a way that aligns with local perspectives.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I volunteered on the Northwest ISD SHAC committee from 2019-2020. The SHAC serves as an advisory body, offering guidance, recommendations, and support to the Board of Trustees, as outlined in state law and District policy.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I am not certain on the exact relationship between the SHAC and School

Question 14: From your perspective, does the school board represent the parents/tax-payers or does it represent the school administration/superintendent? (Answer not so simple? Feel free to write more commentary in "other" box.)

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Represents the parents/taxpayers

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Represents the parents/taxpayers

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Represents the parents/taxpayers

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Represents the parents/taxpayers, And voters and students.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Represents the parents/taxpayers

Question 15: Larger ISDs in Texas are beginning to offer medical, sexual health, and mental health "services" to students on school campuses. - for free and without the knowledge of the parents. Do you oppose or support these types of services on school campuses? (Answer not so simple? Feel free to write more commentary in "other" box.)

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Schools are there to educate period. The health related issues are personal and private.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - I do not support these services

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Parents have the right to know what is going on with their child and make decisions on what's best for them. As a district we certainly have professionals that can help the parents with those decisions, but the parents are making the decisions.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I need to be provided more specific information on this. Initially I say no, but what are the specifics. Is this student led, is this approved by their board, etc.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I do not support these services

Question 16: Who has the ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the children in your school district get an excellent education?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Parents

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Under Texas law, the school board is the governing body of the independent school district (ISD). They are elected by the community and are legally entrusted with the responsibility for the oversight and management of the public schools within their jurisdiction.

However, the parent supersedes the elected official and has the ultimate responsibility and authority to see their children are provided an excellent education.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - The superintendent is responsible and the board is responsible for ensuring he/she are doing their job.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - At the end of the day, parents and voters hold the ultimate responsibility and authority. They elect the school board trustees, and those trustees are legally accountable for overseeing the district and making sure students get a quality education.

Trustees hire the superintendent, set district goals, approve budgets, and make big policy decisions, but they're doing all of that on behalf of the community. So while the board and district leaders carry out the work, it's the public that sets the direction through their votes, their voice, and their involvement.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - The community

Question 17: The role of the school in a student's life has grown over time. Is there any area of a student's life which is not the responsibility of the school district?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - The sole purpose of our public education system is to teach children basic skills to become active and productive members of the community.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Schools do a lot, but parents/students are mainly responsible for core values, religion, healthcare choices, how they're raised, outside relationships/hobbies, basic needs, in-depth mental health help, and career decisions. Schools can offer support, but these are primarily family/individual responsibilities.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Its not the role of the district to govern a students life, that is the parents responsibility. It's the role of the district to support students and give them avenues to learn and grow.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Things like a child's values, beliefs, and family routines are up to parents and guardians raising them. Schools aren't meant to replace families or communities. They also aren't responsible for what happens outside of school hours and school functions, like behavior at home or online. And while schools can spot issues and offer support, they're not doctors or mental health providers.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - The short answer is no, but at the same time the school district should not be invading on the privacy of parents.

Question 18: Should parents have immediate, easy, online, unrestricted access to everything their child can access? List areas that you feel parents SHOULD or SHOULD NOT have access to.

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Parents need access to all of their students school communication and activities.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes. Parents have a primary right to comprehensive, easily accessible online information about their child's education, including curriculum, grades, rules, and safety. Transparency and active parental involvement are critical for success. Parental access ensures they can effectively guide their child's learning and well-being with their values.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Transparency is vital to a cohesive district. Parents are raising their kids, not the district. Parents should know everything the student is doing and I feel NISD has great programs for transparency.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Yes, unless it violates other students' information or privacy under FERPA.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Yes

Question 19: Do you believe that parents should have the right to choose how their children are educated, whether public school, private school, or homeschool? (Answer not so simple? Feel free to write more commentary in "other" box.)

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - People have choices, I personally believe the best thing you can receive for “free” is a public education

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 – Yes

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 – Yes

Joe Washam NISD Place 3- Yes

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Yes, This is a fundamental right from the creation of our country.

Question 20: Do you oppose or support the use of federal or international standards in Texas, such as Common Core, TEKS Resource System (formerly CSCOPE), United Nations Inclusion, National Sexuality Education Standards, and SIECUS, etc?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - No. Each district should operate independently.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, with the exception of TEKS. While the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) are the state-mandated standards developed and approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE), I believe that even with these state standards, diligent oversight, a cautious approach to implementation, and comprehensive curriculum transparency are essential to ensure they effectively serve our students and align with community values.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 – oppose

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I think TEKS have gone downhill due to the over politicization of the current SBOE. TEKS should be building blocks for students to continue learning, but current TEKS are scattered throughout grades that create loss of learning because it's no longer foundational.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Without digging into each organization, generally local views should be promoted first, then state, and finally federal.

Question 21: Per the US Declaration of Independence and the Texas Bill of Rights: from whom does the power and authority of government originate (see images below)? Do you agree with these assertions?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - The people. Absolutely

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - The power and authority of government originate from the people. Government authority ultimately rests with the people being governed.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 – Yes

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - The power and authority of government originate from the citizens (people). Yes I agree with these assertions.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Yes

Question 22: Do you believe that students should have the right to openly pray, either individually or in groups? Why or why not?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Yes

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, students in U.S. public schools can pray individually or in groups if it's their own idea, doesn't force others to join, and isn't disruptive. School staff can't lead or promote it. This balances students' religious freedom with the rule that public schools can't favor any religion, based on the First Amendment.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - yes as long as it does not infringe on the learning of all students.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I do not see a problem with it as long as it isn't disruptive or interfere with classroom instruction or schoolwork. There has to be some parameters though, so students don't abuse a policy to avoid schoolwork or instruction.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Yes. If it is student led and not teacher led this is simply a constitutional right.

Question 23: Do you believe that school boards have the power to mandate the wearing of masks either for students or staff?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - No

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 – No

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 – No

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - No

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - No

Question 24: Do you believe that school boards have the power to mandate vaccinations for students or staff?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - No

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 – No

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 – No

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - No

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 -No

Question 25: Do you believe that city and school board races should remain non-partisan or do you think voters have a right to know if their candidates identify as Republican, Democrat, or another party?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Non-partisan

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, voters should have a full understanding of elected officials' party affiliations. It's crucial for informed decision-making, accountability, and transparency. Party affiliation offers a quick understanding of general political leanings and helps voters assess how officials might act and align with their own values.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - The student is the number one priority, and they don't care who is republican or democrat. Decisions should be made on what is best for the students. On the other hand I do believe that being fiscally responsible and I do think that parents should know information about the candidates views.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Non-partisan.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I believe voters have the right to know what party or parties their candidate aligns with. The views of the candidates logistically and morally can be, not completely, but mostly associated with party alignment.

Question 26: What are the major areas of improvement that you feel your ISD needs to focus on?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - First and most important is financial stability. To grow and succeed in education your district must be “cash flow positive”. Districts statewide have closed schools due to lack of funding and gross mismanagement. To grow our facilities, we must focus on gaining a surplus. School bonds will not help in a deficit budget, it will only create more deficit. This is why a surplus is essential for passing a bond.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Finance is the primary concern for our district. Currently, our revenue does not cover essential expenditures. A significant portion

of our funds is allocated to employee payroll, leaving insufficient resources for crucial facility maintenance and transportation. As our facilities and equipment age, the need for upgrades becomes increasingly urgent, and the costs far exceed the state funding we receive.

To address these challenges, it is common for districts to seek taxpayer funding through bonds, which can support system replacements and new facilities to accommodate our growing community. However, for this strategy to succeed, the district must earn the community's trust by demonstrating responsible stewardship of taxpayer money. We must commit to transparency in all financial dealings by openly sharing our expenditures.

Additionally, we need to proactively seek opportunities to reduce overhead costs whenever possible. By doing this, we can reassure the community that their investment in the district will lead to meaningful improvements and sustained growth.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Finding new ways of creating monies outside our tax base to keep improving our schools

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Northwest ISD is a great district, but there are key areas where we must continue to improve to meet the needs of all students and families. First, we need to expand access to opportunities—especially in Career & Technical Education, advanced academics, and STEM—for economically disadvantaged students and students in special education. Every student deserves a path to success.

Second, teacher retention and support must remain a top priority. We need to stay competitive with pay, reduce unnecessary burdens, and ensure educators have the resources and respect they deserve.

Third, transparency and community education around school finance and growth planning must be stronger. With complex funding challenges and rapid development, our community needs clear, honest communication about how decisions are made and how they can help.

NISD has a strong foundation, but continued success will require intentional leadership, equity-focused decision-making, and active collaboration with families, educators, and local stakeholders.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Athletics, Secondary education opportunities, and licenses and trade school options.

Question 27: What do you feel your ISD is doing well?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - DISD excels in many areas, but there is always room for improvement. From the first student in the door to the last out the door, each one of them deserves a great education. Stability starts at the top, the new superintendent is a great hire. Superintendent Williams will bring long needed security to that position. I feel with her guidance, we will achieve amazing results.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Academic Goals and Curriculum Alignment. In recent years, the Teaching and Learning department has begun a larger initiative to vertically align curriculum. In educational settings, vertical alignment refers to synchronizing curriculum and instruction across different grade levels, ensuring a cohesive and progressive learning experience where skills and knowledge build upon one another.

Although this task may seem straightforward, it requires significant investment in the appropriate curriculum, comprehensive teacher training of the curriculum, and subsequent assessments. This process takes years to implement and even longer to verify the success of these investments.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Keeping students first.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Northwest ISD is doing a lot of things well, especially when it comes to preparing students for life after graduation. The district offers strong Career & Technical Education (CTE) academies and programs that give students real-world skills and access to industry-based certifications. Through initiatives like OnRamps, students also have the opportunity to earn college credit while still in high school, setting them up for success in whatever path they choose—college, career, or military service. Despite a lack of increased funding from the state, NISD has managed its tight budget responsibly, making the most of limited resources while continuing to deliver quality education. As one of the fastest-growing districts in Texas, NISD has also been proactive in planning for continued enrollment growth. That includes thoughtful, long-range facility planning and responsible use of voter-approved bond funds to build schools

where they're most needed. I've served on the Long Range Planning Committee and have seen firsthand how data, projections, and community input guide these important decisions.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Academic performance and balancing of budget

Question 28: Which of the following is the closest match to what it means to educate a child in the public schools?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Teaching the "three Rs" (that is, to teach students to read well, write well, and perform basic mathematics) (traditional approach)

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Teaching students all knowledge prescribed by the state guidelines (TEKS) (standard approach)

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Teaching the "three Rs" (that is, to teach students to read well, write well, and perform basic mathematics) (traditional approach), To prepare students either for a career or for college (success in life approach)

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Teaching the "three Rs" (that is, to teach students to read well, write well, and perform basic mathematics) (traditional approach), To prepare students either for a career or for college (success in life approach), Teaching students all knowledge prescribed by the state guidelines (TEKS) (standard approach), Teaching children to think critically about current and past events (postmodern approach), Teaching all subjects via the stages of: grammar, logic, and rhetoric (Sayers model classical approach)

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - To prepare students either for a career or for college (success in life approach)

Question 29: Give your thoughts on school choice/school voucher programs, in general, and your rationale.

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - Yes to school choice. No to vouchers. I have the freedom of choice, but I should not burden tax payers with MY choice.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - I firmly believe school choice is a fundamental right with constitutional backing, particularly through the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of parental rights in education (*Pierce v. Society of Sisters*) and the First Amendment's protection of religious freedom, which supports the choice of faith-based schools. This right ensures parents can select educational environments that truly align with their values and their child's specific learning requirements.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - School choice is allowed now, and has always been allowed. Meaning I can move to another place and place my child in any district I chose, or I can enroll them in any private school I wish. I do not agree with the current bills being proposed as they do not fund our district properly. We are a high growth, high property rich district and we have been penalized in the current forms of the bills only raising our basic allotment by about 200 dollars when it has not been raised since 2019. I do agree that parents that are paying property taxes that do not attend public schools should have some relief there, but it can't come at the expense of public education.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - I oppose taxpayer-funded vouchers/ESAs. It is unconscionable to ask parents of children with disabilities to waive their children's rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for an inadequate amount of money that will not ensure proper support in private schools.

If they pass, I will continue to hold legislators accountable for diverting taxpayer money to private schools that do not meet the same standards as public education.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - While I do not totally oppose the voucher programs, I do believe it hurts public schools. I believe there are pros and cons for voucher program. I do also believe it is the right of the parent to have school choice, but at the same time public schools give parents an opportunity for parents to be involved in the decision making of schools through locally elected school board.

Question 30: ESL: should Texas schools be providing classes in other languages (such as Spanish)? Why or why not?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - N/A

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Texas law mandates that school districts provide bilingual education or ESL programs for students identified as English learners (ELs) who meet certain criteria (e.g., 20 or more EL students of the same language background in the same grade level district-wide). This is outlined in the Texas Education Code, Chapter 29, Subchapter B, and related Commissioner's Rules.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - Yes, while we are in America, we do have diverse cultures. Our district has great ESL programs and I will always support them.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - Texas schools should support students whose first language isn't English, but that doesn't mean replacing English instruction. The goal of ESL programs is to help students become fluent in English while making sure they don't fall behind in other subjects.

We've got students in Northwest ISD who come from all kinds of backgrounds, and when we meet them where they are, they do better. Helping a child learn English while still understanding math or science isn't a handout, it's smart education. Every student in Texas needs to graduate fluent in English. How we get them there might look different for each kid, but when we invest in the right support early, we set all students up to succeed.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - Yes, as an opportunity for students to learn dual languages.

Question 31: Homeschooling is on the rise in Texas. Many homeschool families would like the opportunity to participate in public school sports and other activities. Do you agree with this idea or disagree? Give your rationale. What parameters would you place around such participation?

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - I do not agree with participation in public school sports. There are other opportunities for participation in "club" sports .

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 - Yes, this is an important issue that I previously placed on the agenda, though it unfortunately did not receive approval at that time. It's significant that the State has addressed this concern and actively funds the inclusion of homeschooled students in UIL activities through House Bill 3708

(2023), which provides a \$1,500 allotment per participating student to the school district to offset associated costs.

Given the State's recognition and financial support of this concept, I believe the Board should reconsider its position. By continuing to restrict access, we are preventing taxpayers within our district from utilizing extracurricular programs that their tax dollars help fund.

Furthermore, as we anticipate seeking voter approval for future facility bonds and currently face a budget deficit, opening UIL participation to homeschool students could represent a much-needed revenue stream for our district. Aligning our policies with the State's initiative could also foster goodwill and strengthen our relationship with a significant segment of our community.

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I do agree that Homeschool families should have the opportunity to participate as they are paying their share of taxes to the district. Only parameter would be following the code of conduct as any other regular student would have to follow.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3- ISD's already have to option to allow it. I am unsure if NISD does, but I would understand why not since resources and coaches are limited in NISD due to the state's public school funding crisis.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I do not agree. Home school families should not be allowed to participate in public school sports.

Question 32: There is currently a bill in the Texas House to abolish the TEA, transferring their powers, duties, and privileges to the elected SBOE and the state comptroller. Do you support this bill? (Answer not so simple? Feel free to write more commentary in "other" box.)

Michael Stone DISD Place 2 - I am an independent person and feel that some districts might need their influence. I believe your community knows what's best for it's students.

Scott Koehler DISD Place 1 – Yes

Jeff Dearing NISD Place 3 - I do not believe in this as there has to be some accountability in our public education.

Joe Washam NISD Place 3 - No, The TEA needs to be less bureaucratic, more helpful to teachers, and stop growing in size. SBOE is too political and doesn't have the resources necessary to support every school district in Texas, unless more control is given back to local school boards. Regardless, the legislature needs to deregulate schools more so TEA becomes smaller government.

Payton McAlister Alvord ISD Place 3 - I am not educated enough on this specific topic to answer yes or no. There are lots of issues with the TEA, specifically fiscal, but I am not sure of the reasoning for the abolishment.