

Answered by Daniel Alexander Medina.

What do you see as the major issues facing D4 and how would you propose addressing them?

One of the current major issues facing the ASD4 is the issue of transparency and open communication. The community feel that the board does not communicate effectively to its constituents. This causes a transparency issue because the community is not informed as to how and why the decisions that are being made came to be. This in matters of finance, curriculum, teacher and staff relations. Although on the topic of teachers, the community only hears negative remarks regarding teachers and staff. This issue is a big one when it comes to building a good working relationship with staff members. Respect begets respect! Members of the current board will tell you that the staff are integral members of our system and then turn around and call them Lazy and other names. There is no trust and respect. This does not fair well for good morale and that trickles down. If you don't think that it affects the environment that our children are in, daily, you are mistaken and it truly does and no matter how much the teacher attempt to "work through it," and they should not have to be placed in a position to "work through it," poor morale affects everybody involved.

Do you believe that teachers should have a greater input/voice in district decisions that impact their work and their students?

Yes, I do believe they should have a greater voice in some of the decisions. I also think that we need to include parents when making decisions. Primarily, parents need to be informed when curriculum changes are being proposed. Parents have a right to have an input into what their children are being exposed to and learning. This includes when legislation comes from Springfield. That means our board must be proactive in keeping informed and keeping the community informed. Holding special legislative informational sessions for the public to gain knowledge of the actions coming out of Springfield when it relates to education. This along with meet-and -greet are the ways that people out there get to meet the people in here! They become more trusting and comfortable, and we get the community to become one again with the school and not against the school!

How does diversity, equity, and inclusion play a role in your vision for the community?

This is a driving force for decisions in my opinion. As a district, we do a fairly good job of looking at the district, as a whole, and do certain things well as a District. But with a lot of things, we are not equal. This can be heard by parents who are constantly comparing the inequities of the Westside schools to the Eastside or Northside. The lack of diversity on the board is very apparent and does not accurately represent the diversity within the community. The Latino/Hispanic community may not feel included or welcomed because they do not know or haven't been told of the access to a language line to make their voice heard at a board meeting, or the ability to get up to a microphone and ask a question in Spanish because a member of the board does speak their language and can not only translate but engage with them in their native tongue at that very moment. This is the inclusion the community is looking for. Not the dismissive behavior that has gone on for a year now with the "blue card system" and the

unanswered emails that parents across the district have been informing us about in as recent as this past week! This ties back to the other two questions; we need to include all the vested parties and start informing the community better of the decisions and the decision-making process. The “How’s and whys” are especially important when one school gets something over another, especially when it appears as disproportionate as it has in recent times.