

Aaron A. Dunn

1. Please tell us a bit about yourself, including what motivates you to run for school board?

I have been a family physician in Mineral Point for 15 years. I live in town with my wife and three school-aged children. Seeking my second term on the school board, I am motivated to keep Mineral Point a safe and excellent place to learn. Specifically, I am eager to see the district through the end of the coronavirus pandemic and the elementary school construction project.



2. What qualities/behaviors should a school board member exhibit?

A school board member should be a respectful listener, goal oriented, and one who considers all sides of the issue. It is important to be mindful of the financial impact and all stakeholders affected by each school board decision.

3. How do you see your role as a Board member as benefitting the overall education of students in Mineral Point?

A school board member helps craft a vision for the school district, create short-term and long-term goals, and develop a strategy for action and follow-up. Decisions regarding finances and personnel should be made with the overall vision in mind.

4. What procedures and processes are most important to making the school board run effectively?

Due to the rules of the Open Meetings laws, it is important to have a well-crafted and thoughtful agenda for each meeting. The board should meet regularly to discuss its vision and budgetary goals for the district. I like allowing each board member to weigh in on each issue before a vote is taken.

5. Please describe what you feel a successful superintendent and school board relationship should look like to move the district forward?

The school board's role is to provide direction and oversight to the superintendent. Ideally, we would collaborate on developing a vision and strategy for the district, then allow the superintendent to work with his or her staff to implement that strategy. The board then provides follow-up and holds the superintendent accountable for achieving previously agreed upon goals within budget.

6. What do you think the Board's role is in advocacy? What education-related priority would you lobby the Governor and Legislature to include in the next state budget?

I believe that local representatives want to know how their schools feel about school-related issues, but a school board should be thoughtful about which issues are most important for Mineral Point. I would support a state school funding formula that is fair to rural school districts and reduces pressure on the local taxpayer.

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7. What type of education and training do you feel should be required of board members so that they are able to fulfill their roles as leaders and important decision-makers in the district?

I believe that each board member should spend at least a few hours each year learning about key issues in education and how to work better on a school board. This can include taking classes, webinars, or reading the monthly newsletter provided by the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB). As many board members as possible should attend the annual WASB convention, which could also serve as a team-building event.

8. What is a need that must be a priority for our district to address? And why do you see this as a need to be prioritized?

The first priority is to ensure that the district safely navigates the coronavirus pandemic in a way that delivers Mineral Point's excellent education while preserving the health of the staff and students. The second priority is ensure that the elementary school construction project is completed fully, on time, and within budget.

9. Describe your decision making process. How do you gather and evaluate information?

I start by considering all stakeholders affected by each decision, whether it be staff, students, families, or taxpayers. This includes reading all email feedback, comments on social media, and fielding all phone calls. Surveys are often helpful for larger decisions. I often consult with peers who serve on boards at neighboring schools. It's also important to hear recommendations from our administrators.

10. The pandemic has been challenging for everyone -- students, families, staff, and the community. What do you think is something the district has done well during the last year, and what do you think is something that could be improved upon?

The pandemic has been such an unpredictable, unforgiving experience for all of us, which made it difficult to make long-term plans for the school year. I truly believe that the district made the best decisions it could with the information it had at the time. The quality of virtual education has improved over the year, but can always be better. The end of the year will be an important opportunity to reflect on what we may have lost -- academically, emotionally, socially -- and make a plan to recover what we can.

11. What is the most important issue in this election and how would you address it?

The most important issue of the moment is successfully navigating the pandemic while maintaining a high level of academic achievement and safety for all. I am committed to keeping our students safe while ensuring them as 'normal' an educational experience as possible. With a vaccinated community and teaching staff, it will be even safer for kids to be in the classroom. I am confident that the resilient students and families, the valiant team of administrators, and the dedicated staff of the Mineral Point School District will emerge from this crisis stronger than ever!