

School Board Candidate Response to Corvallis/Albany NAACP Questions

Frank Bricker, Albany

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1. *What do you think are the biggest challenges currently facing our public school and what are your plans to address them?*

Our schools reflect our society and the students bring their diversity in all forms from the progressive left to the far right. They bring both their bigotry and racism and their acceptance of others. With the polarization of society and the rapid acceleration of hatred and distrust, the challenge of schools will be to try and create a neutral ground where both sides can function, if not in harmony with each other, at least they can reach a state of co-existence. This may not sound like a lofty goal, but it can be the first step in lessening the tension between our students and create an environment where all students can learn. I have no grand plan to solve this problem, but I know that we cannot solve it from the position of "I am right and you are wrong", so we need to get people of good will from both sides to come together and talk about our community. At the school board level that means talking education for all kids.

2. *What is your definition of equity and what is its importance in education?*

Equity in education does not mean equal. It means looking at each student's needs and abilities and providing instruction that meets their needs and takes into account their backgrounds and that of their families.

3. *Describe the achievement gap in your district and what you think can be done about it. How could the Student Success Act Funds be used to address this gap?*

The achievement gap in Albany tends to have three interrelated patterns: poverty, race and mobility. Although there is a strong correlation between these patterns, many students are able to overcome them. If we narrow the achievement gap, we need first to learn why some students advance and others do not and use that knowledge to work with to work with students and their families. In the short run, the Student Success Act funds could be used to hire math and reading specialists to help those that are behind.

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4. How can schools address the learning needs of students from other cultures and languages?

The schools need to work with families and the community from other cultures and languages so that we can understand what is going on that might hinder a student's learning and then develop curriculum and practices that help students without invalidating the student's and their families culture and language.

5. What is your vision for the future of education in your community? What would be your role as a school board member in realizing this vision?

The wording of our question speaks to my vision of education in Albany because it talks about education in our community, not just in our schools. We need, as a school board, to work with the whole community to remove the barriers that prevent our students from achieving a quality education and encourage our students to succeed.