

1. Could you describe your professional background and experience with education.

As a registered nurse with more than a decade of experience and as a dedicated community advocate, my professional journey has equipped me with a unique blend of skills in healthcare and education. Over the years, I've actively served on several boards, including the Memorial Hospital Board of Natrona County, the Department of Family Services Advisory Council and the City of Casper Council of People with Disabilities, which have all provided valuable experience in leadership, governance, and policy-making. Additionally, I've spent the last four years attending school board meetings and committee meetings, where I've gained in-depth knowledge of the challenges and opportunities within our local education system.

In recent years, I have focused on advocating for parental rights, student safety, and educational reform, particularly through my involvement with organizations like Moms for Liberty. I am also deeply engaged in local education policy, contributing to discussions around school budgets, charter schools, and educational equity.

My current efforts are centered around serving Natrona County by improving school district policies, promoting fiscal responsibility, and ensuring that teachers have the support to focus on academic education while prioritizing students' needs and parental responsibility.

2. Natrona County students have posted middling scores on the state proficiency tests in recent years. Senator Charlie Scott said reading proficiency by third-grade is a key predictor for students' eventual success. He says districts that devote resources to specific students struggling with this benchmark have the best test results. Would you support efforts in that direction on the school board and how would you formulate that directive?

Yes, I fully support efforts to improve third-grade reading proficiency in Natrona County, as it is a critical predictor of long-term student success, as Senator Charlie Scott has emphasized. As someone who has actively attended school board and committee meetings for the past four years, I have seen firsthand the importance of early literacy and understand the challenges our students face based on their performance on state proficiency tests.

To address this, we can take advantage of Wyoming's existing early literacy initiatives, while introducing innovative, targeted strategies to improve outcomes. Here's how I would formulate a directive focused on improving early reading skills:

- Wyoming Early Literacy Program (WELP): which includes early screening and targeted interventions for struggling readers. I would support increased training and support for educators to utilize WELP data effectively to identify students at risk as early as kindergarten.
- Read by Grade 3 Initiative: Strengthen this program within the district by advocating for additional funding for after-school tutoring, summer reading programs, etc.
- Wyoming Reads: I would encourage broader participation in this program, providing books not just to kindergartners but extending similar efforts into first and second grades to continue building literacy enthusiasm at home.

Additionally, I would look at implementing district use of:

- Individualized Literacy Plans: Every student struggling with reading by first grade should receive an individualized literacy improvement plan, created in collaboration with their teacher, reading specialists, and parents. These plans would outline specific goals, interventions, and milestones for improvement, with progress tracked regularly.
- Parental Literacy Workshops: Organize district-wide workshops and online resources to train parents on how to support reading development at home. Parents could learn simple techniques, such as how to read aloud effectively and how to create literacy-rich environments at home.
- Home-Based Reading Goals: Establish a district program that encourages parents to set daily or weekly reading goals with their children. Incentives could be provided, such as family reading nights at local libraries or rewards for students who meet their reading goals.

To ensure the effectiveness of these plans I would also propose a system of quarterly reporting to the school board. Each quarter, the progress of these plans would be tracked and compiled into a comprehensive report given at a committee meeting and summarized in a general meeting.

- 3. Repairs to the Midwest pool are estimated at least \$5 million, according to Trustee Chair Kevin Christopherson. What are your thoughts on that and other capital projects in the district, including the improvements to the Kelly Walsh Athletic Complex?** I believe that addressing capital projects in Natrona County, including the Midwest pool repairs and the Kelly Walsh Athletic Complex improvements, requires a balanced approach that prioritizes equity, safety, and long-term value for our students and community.

The \$5 million estimated for Midwest's pool repairs highlights a broader issue of funding disparities within the district. Midwest serves as a school of choice for many Casper families, and yet, critical facilities like the pool—which promotes health, physical education, and extracurricular activities—are not receiving the same level of financial attention as larger schools. By comparison, Kelly Walsh High School had an estimated total of \$14.7 million invested in its athletic complex and facilities, including a pool, during its major renovation and recently with another allocation for bathrooms. Similarly, Natrona County High School's comprehensive renovation, which included a pool, was part of a larger \$175 million district-wide allocation.

While Midwest may serve a smaller population, equity demands that its students and community benefit from comparable resources and services.

With regard to the improvements at the Kelly Walsh Athletic Complex, it's important to maintain transparency and accountability, particularly when it comes to the original plans for the stadium project. There are concerns about certain elements, like bathrooms and related funding, being overlooked or delayed, despite funding already having been allocated for it in previous stages of development and we need to ensure that those concerns are fully addressed. I believe it's essential that these projects adhere to their intended scope and budget while delivering the promised benefits for students and the community.

Overall, the district must ensure equity in resource allocation across all schools, including Midwest and Edgerton, ensuring that basic facilities and safety standards are met before pursuing more ambitious projects. By doing so, we can ensure that all students receive the support and resources they deserve.

4. **What do you think is the ideal curriculum? Do you have any thoughts on what should be taught in regards to gender identity/biology, climate change, and the role of slavery in the nation's history?** The ideal curriculum should focus on academic rigor, foundational skills, and a fact-based approach that allows for critical thinking and respect for varied viewpoints. In Natrona County, there are already numerous curricula available to schools and teachers to choose from, and teachers are provided with the resources and flexibility to create their own curricula based on district guidelines and state standards. This ensures that instruction can be tailored to meet the learning needs of students, as no single curriculum is effective for teaching all children. This is consistent with educational best practices, recognizing that differentiated instruction is necessary to address individual learning styles.

When it comes to teaching gender identity and biology, it is essential to balance science and parental rights. The biology of sex, including male and female distinctions based on chromosomes and reproductive functions, is a fundamental scientific fact that should be taught in schools. However, gender identity, which involves social and personal expressions of gender, is a more controversial topic. In Wyoming, parents have a strong voice in determining what their children are exposed to regarding sensitive subjects like gender identity. According to Wyoming law, parental opt-in is required for sexual education, and gender identity discussions often fall under this category.

Further, Wyoming's involvement in the Moms for Liberty lawsuit demonstrates the state's commitment to protecting parental rights on this issue. In May 2024, Wyoming's Governor and Attorney General joined Kansas, Utah, and Alaska in suing the federal government over changes to Title IX, which expanded the definition of "sex" to include gender identity. The lawsuit, which also involved organizations like Moms for Liberty and Young America's Foundation, led to a halt of these changes, protecting schools and students from forced compliance with these new federal guidelines. In alignment with this, I believe schools should focus on biology as a science and allow parents to decide how or if gender identity should be addressed in their child's education.

Likewise, the discussion of climate change should be approached in the classroom with a strong focus on scientific inquiry and the cultivation of critical thinking skills. Students should be presented with a broader historical context that includes the natural climate variability Earth has experienced over time. This allows them to engage with the data from multiple perspectives, encouraging a more informed and objective understanding rather than one swayed by potential biases. By doing so, students are better equipped to evaluate the complexities of climate science and form well-rounded conclusions.

When it comes to teaching the role of slavery in American history, it's important to emphasize historical accuracy and context, rather than focusing on modern narratives that may emphasize social justice or retribution outside the scope of education. Slavery was abolished in the United States in 1865 with the ratification of the 13th Amendment, and it has been illegal in the country ever since. Therefore, the goal of teaching slavery should be to understand its historical impact, rather than perpetuating current rhetoric around retribution, which can obscure the larger educational purpose. Students benefit from

learning how the nation confronted its moral failings, how laws like the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments helped to ensure the freedom and rights of former slaves, and how the nation continues to grapple with those historical consequences. A balanced, fact-based approach helps students understand the importance of historical context without delving into modern political ideologies that can sometimes overshadow the educational purpose of history.

- 5. Do you think the district is tackling concerns about bullying and mental health in good faith?** While the Natrona County School District (NCSD) has had a safety plan in place for years, concerns persist about its effectiveness in tackling bullying and mental health issues. The district has not provided clear, data-driven updates on whether its interventions have led to measurable improvements, such as reduced bullying or enhanced student well-being. This lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess if these concerns are being addressed in good faith.

The plan, last presented to the Academic Steering Committee on June 10, 2024, aims to address bullying prevention and mental health interventions, but without evidence of tangible results—such as fewer incidents or improved mental health—questions arise about its impact and whether it adequately meets student needs.

Given the evolving nature of these challenges, the district should regularly update and adjust its strategies based on data and research. Greater transparency, including public reporting and engagement with parents, students, and staff, would demonstrate a genuine commitment to addressing these issues, rather than simply maintaining the appearance of action. Without this, it's hard to gauge whether the district's efforts are truly meeting the community's expectations for student safety and well-being.

- 6. What do you hear from teachers in the community and what concerns might they have that you would bring to the board?** When addressing school concerns, it's essential to recognize that not only teachers but also school nurses and other staff face significant challenges. Teachers often focus on classroom-level issues, such as behavioral and mental health disruptions, and the growing workload that detracts from lesson planning. Meanwhile, school nurses and staff raise concerns about safety, bullying, and a lack of parental involvement.

Teachers and staff in Natrona County, across Wyoming, and nationwide are facing increasing behavioral problems in the school. They often bear the burden of managing these disruptions without adequate external support, and many attribute the lack of parental involvement as a contributing factor. Teachers feel they are responsible not only for educating but also for disciplining and providing emotional support to students. Additionally, teachers are frustrated by the non-instructional tasks that take away from their lesson planning. Administrative duties, compliance reports, and additional responsibilities reduce their ability to focus on student learning.

In Natrona County School District, teacher-board communication is shaped by a compact agreement, similar in some ways to a collective bargaining agreement. While precise numbers on union membership are difficult to confirm, anecdotal reports suggest that less than 20% of teachers are union members. This means most teachers operate under the compact agreement rather than through union representation. Given the low union membership, communication between teachers and the school board is delicate. The

compact can influence communication protocols, and non-union teachers may feel unsure about how to address concerns directly with the board.

To address these concerns, I would support creating Teacher Advisory Committees to provide a formal communication channel for teachers to regularly offer feedback on non-contractual issues like behavioral challenges and resource needs. Additionally, setting up an anonymous feedback portal for all district staff would allow concerns to be submitted without fear of violating agreements. Finally, I have advocated for informal meetings such as town halls, where open forums could facilitate discussions on topics like mental health resources and classroom disruptions, focusing on collective improvements rather than contractual matters.

These approaches would foster better collaboration and ensure teachers feel heard while remaining compliant with district agreements.

7. In your history of schooling, what's an example of a teacher that helped you have a breakthrough, either in terms of understanding content or developing a learning attitude?

Throughout my life, I've been fortunate to have several teachers inspire me in different ways. My parents, for instance, are incredible mentors—they never let me quit and always provided encouragement and support, which had a profound impact on my personal and professional growth.

I also remember an early job where a trainer gave me tough but invaluable advice. They emphasized that I either needed to develop real-world skills or I'd end up relying on those who had them. That sentiment stayed with me, motivating me to keep growing and learning throughout my career.

From elementary school all the way through college, I had several teachers who helped me navigate challenging subjects and develop a learning mindset. While I might not point to one specific breakthrough moment, I can say that all these educators guided me through my studies, helping me build the skills and confidence necessary to succeed. Each of these influences, in their own way, helped shape my lifelong learning.

8. Is there anything else you think the voters should know? I believe voters should know that the Natrona County School District needs strong advocates for parental rights, fiscal responsibility, and student-first policies, which are at the core of my campaign. My experience within the district over the last four years, attending school board and committee meetings, and advocating for students, parents, and teachers has given me unique insight into the challenges we face. I'm committed to ensuring our schools are safe, equitable, and focused on academic excellence.

As a parent, I understand the importance of creating an environment where parents feel heard and involved in their children's education. I've consistently advocated for transparency and equity in funding, particularly for schools like Midwest, which have historically been underfunded. These issues need addressing to ensure every student, no matter where they attend school, has access to the best resources possible.

Teachers, too, are overwhelmed by increasing administrative burdens and behavioral issues in the classroom. It's crucial we give them the support they need by reducing unnecessary tasks and providing additional mental health and behavioral resources. I've worked on policies aimed at reducing these burdens so teachers can focus on what they do best—teaching.

Furthermore, I believe that transparency and accountability are essential in school board governance. I've pushed for regular, direct communication between district staff and the board, ensuring that decisions reflect the voices of those on the front lines of education. By fostering more input through initiatives like Teacher Advisory Committees and anonymous feedback systems, we can ensure that concerns are addressed without the fear of repercussions.

In summary, the district needs bold, informed leadership to tackle the issues facing our schools. I'm committed to serving the community and being a part of that leadership, focusing on students, parental rights, and fiscal responsibility, while ensuring our teachers and staff receive the support they deserve.