

## **Brad DeCorte – Pinellas School Board District 5**

**1. Why are you running? If elected, what would be your top goals as a school board member?**

I am running because of all the attacks being directed towards our schools. My goals are (1) to cultivate an environment in which students, parents and staff feel valued; (2) provide comprehensive services for the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students; (3) provide mental health, wellness, and violence prevention training to staff; (4) to provide early childhood education programs staffed by trained professionals.

**2. What can be done to ensure everyone who graduates is either ready for college or a vocation?**

To ensure everyone who graduates is either ready for college or a vocation we will need to ensure that our vocational education is built up and make sure that students and their parents are aware of this feature in Pinellas County Schools. We must be aware that college is not for everyone. For vocational, we must recruit businesses outside of the schools to join in preparing students for life after school. For students heading to college, we must prepare them for life in college. Directing students to higher level classes and include tutoring for students heading to college.

**3. How should the district address underperforming schools?**

For underperforming schools, the district needs to spend more time and money. We need to go into the neighborhoods to find out what the problems are. We need to engage families to make them feel part of the school's family. Money will be needed to engage in after school tutoring or before school programs. We need to work with the neighborhood and the families of the schools to do the work to help them.

**4. Local and state initiatives have been launched to address the need for more teachers in our classrooms. What more do you think needs to be done to recruit and retain teachers in your district?**

Recruiting and retaining teachers is of vital importance. Students need to know that their teacher will be there for them, Money is of course of concern for teachers and staff, but it is not everything. That teachers can afford to live in Pinellas is a concern, but so is the respect of administration. When teachers/staff have things piled on them, they will look for something else to do. They must feel valued by the

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administration and that they feel included in the decision-making process instead of just being told what to do.

### **5. What is your stance on the state's current school choice program?**

I don't have a problem with school choice programs if all schools follow the same requirements. If schools are receiving public money, then the requirements should be the same. Since most students continue to go to public schools, I feel the public money should stay with public schools.

### **6. Does school testing really give an accurate portrayal of the education quality/experience of a school?**

Testing can give an accurate portrayal of the education quality/experience of a school if used properly. Too much testing though doesn't really tell you much about the students. They must have time to actually process what they are learning before being tested on it. We need to cut back on some of the testing. We get testing from e

### **7. Issues surrounding gender, sexuality and race have created controversy between school boards and parents. How much say should parents have in deciding what is and is not included in the public-school curriculum?**

Parents should have some say in deciding what is and is not included in the public-school curriculum, and they do. They can attend SAC meetings to express their opinions or attend school board meetings, but the final decision should be left up to the school boards, administrators, but especially teachers. Parents are usually concerned about their child while the teachers must consider all the students in their class.

### **8. Do you feel students are safe at school? Or does more need to be to protect school campuses?**

Students are safe to a point, but more can be done. This involves providing comprehensive services for the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of students. We must also provide mental health, wellness, and violence prevention training to staff. We need to hire more social workers, school psychologists, and allow counselors to counsel students and not spend so much time testing students. We need to be more proactive and not wait for issues and then react. We have the

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programs: we just need to use them properly. We cannot change from year to year. Proactive before waiting to be Reactive!

**9. Do you feel any changes are needed to your district's budget? Is money being spent in the right places?**

Yes, there are changes to our district's budget. We need to investigate where our money goes. I believe that we purchase items that are not necessary (this includes unnecessary testing materials). We need to investigate re-usable items. I was a classroom teacher and I know there were times when we purchased items that were not needed. I do not know where all the money goes, but I promise to research it once I get on the board. We should be spending money on helping our students and staff.