

**Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce  
Candidate Questionnaire**

**Spring Election 2025 – Board of Education, Oshkosh Area School District**

Please provide some personal background information.

- Jacob Wolf
- Fiber optic technician
- Oshkosh recreation basketball coach 1st and 2nd grade  
Oshkosh fastclub softball coach

1. What do you believe is your primary responsibility as a board member? What will be your most important objective if you are elected to the board?

My primary responsibility is to provide complete transparency on decisions being made by the board, and also providing a voice for our community.

2. There are distinct differences between each of the three candidates who are seeking positions on the Board of Education. Please outline what distinguishes your candidacy and qualifications from those of your opponents.

As a Blue-collar dad, the skill set I have acquired throughout my life and career will provide a fresh perspective and innovative solutions to the challenges the OASD is facing. I work in the fiber optics industry, a fast paced field that demands quick thinking, problem solving and practical decision making . These skills will allow me to approach complex issues with efficiency, logic and adaptability, qualities I am committed to applying in our schools and community.

3. The Department of Public Instruction produces annual school and district report cards that indicate overall student achievement and engagement. While the Oshkosh Area School District received an overall score of 69.7, which puts the district in the “Meets Expectations” category, there are still opportunities for improvement when compared to the rest of the state in Advanced and Proficiency ratings such as English Language Arts & Mathematics. As a member of the Board of Education, what will you do to ensure improved scores in these two areas?

Oshkosh has been performing in the “meets expectation” category for far too long. I also believe with the recent revised academic standards and assessment changes, the slight year to year increase in our report card may not be completely accurate. Oshkosh is an amazing community with wonderful teachers and students. To improve these metrics we need to focus on helping our teachers be equipped with everything they need to help engage our students, as well as provide families with the knowledge of the programs offered to aid in student success.

4. OASD is committed to ensuring all students graduate College, Career and Community Ready (CCCR). What qualities do you feel a student graduating College, Career and

Community Ready possesses? Do you feel that OASD is currently succeeding in creating CCCR graduates? If not, what areas need improvement, and how would you help facilitate that as a member of the Board of Education?

The education system is not one size fits all. Every student is different, with different needs and abilities. Standardized testing will not always give an accurate gauge to how well a student is progressing to be a successful leader in our community. As a member of the board I would make sure we are providing classes and extracurriculars that will help engage and excite our students.

5. Long-Range Planning – OASD has made significant facility improvements recently, and current examples are the opening of the new Vel Phillips Middle School in 2023 and the Menominee Elementary School in 2024. This year, OASD is asking voters to approve a \$197.8 million capital referendum to build a consolidated middle school on the Shapiro site while closing South Park and Perry Tipler Middle schools, reducing from three to two westside middle schools. In addition, along with renovations at Oakwood, Traeger and Franklin Elementary schools, Roosevelt and Shapiro elementary schools will be closed in efforts to consolidate westside elementary schools from seven to five, along with a new auditorium at Oshkosh North High School, converting Perry Tipler Middle school into a pre-kindergarten center and recreation department, and air conditioning improvements at various other elementary schools. What is your position on this referendum that will appear on the April 1 ballot? Please provide reasons for your position.

Being a coach In the community, I have been in many of these schools. Yes there is a need for improving our facilities. However, the way the current board has handled the current and past referendums leaves a lot to be desired. With the oversight on the south park sight zoning, and lack of transparency on the 0% tax increase, we need to do better.

6. Tech Education - the old Industrial Arts programs - has been slowly disappearing for many years for various reasons. Please describe your thoughts as to the need for these programs. Describe how much emphasis/weight you personally would put on this in your decision-making process as well as from a policy, expectations, and accountability stance.

As a blue-collar dad, I see the necessity of these programs. Not only are these great skills to have for future home owners and adults to be more self-sufficient, but for any of our students who would like to enter into the trades. These are valuable skills that can prepare our students for their futures.

7. What reforms, if any, would you support to fund public school operations? What is your view of school choice?

When looking at declining enrolment in the OASD and why families are choosing parochial, private or home schooling over public schools is an important topic. We have to look at why these families are choosing alternative schooling. Student safety as well as academic achievement are two main reasons. I would focus on bringing back the

fundamentals of reading, writing, and STEM. Student safety is also a concern that needs to be addressed.

8. WDPI studies report concerning trends within the current education workforce, including declining teacher retention rates on new teachers within their first five years, education program enrollment still below levels seen in 2008-09, and only 67% of possible new teachers entering the public education system along with high numbers of unfilled K-12 education positions. As a member of the Board of Education, what will you do to ensure improved retention rates among educators?

Teachers are one of our most valuable resources, they influence generations and help create future leaders. New regulations, curriculum, and lack of assistance is making it hard for our educators. More and more school districts are focusing on big flashy new buildings and technology, instead of focusing on things that really matter like our educators, and what they need to help our students succeed. While I understand we have schools in need of repair, renovation, or additions we should bring our teachers in to help make decisions on what they need to be successful educators, and know that their voices matter in the decision making.

1. The Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce is working with local businesses and the school district on programming to help create employable students through Youth Apprenticeships and School2Work Programs. Some surrounding communities have created alternative/untraditional programming, such as the ACE Academy in Fond du Lac, which allows industry professionals to teach their skilled trade specialties directly to as many as 300 students within the existing school year using hands-on applications. With teacher shortages and upcoming building construction already in consideration, would you consider adding alternative education options into strategic planning conversations if supported by the local business population?

Absolutely, if there are businesses that are willing to teach our students trades or give them hands-on experience in an industry I feel that would be very beneficial. These programs could open many doors for students and maybe give students an idea of what career paths they may be interested in pursuing.

2. What are the literacy challenges students face, and how would you address them?

There are many things that contribute to literacy challenges in the OASD. Language barriers, socioeconomic factors, as well as foundational skills are things that can affect literacy rates in the district. As a district I believe we need to focus on fundamental skills at a young age and provide additional support if we see a student falling behind. However it has been brought to my attention that current testing methods for literacy focus on speed rather than retention. I believe that comprehension and vocabulary development are more important than the speed at which a student can read. If there is a solid base to our students comprehension and vocabulary, the rate at which they read will increase over time. Sometimes I feel as if our standardized testing is not a true representation of how our students are actually progressing.

