

**Newberg School Board Candidate Questionnaire  
May 19, 2015 Election**

**Name: Polly Peterson Zone 2**

1. Why do you believe that you would be a good member of a School Board? And what called you to run for this position versus other opportunities to run for an elected office (200 word limit)?

*A quality public education is vital to a healthy democracy. The school board is ground-floor, local politics and civic duty of the most important kind.*

*Why me? Well, I take the time to understand the connectedness and consequences of each of the important decisions I make -- a line item on a budget is not just a number; a paragraph in a policy is more than just words; a decision regarding curriculum is not just a choice between e-books or paperback copies.*

*I seek to make decisions that are dimensional; I consider more than one perspective.*

*I believe in the importance of the careful and significant work I have been doing on the Board of Directors and ask you to let me continue to work another four years for you, for our students, for our community, and for our future.*

2. What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the school district today? In the near future? Long term? (200 words)

*I think the biggest challenge for the school board is to educate an increasingly diverse population for an unseen and rapidly changing future. With this comes a paradox. Our students need to be good decision makers, information evaluators, problem solvers, critical thinkers, and excellent communicators. The world is demanding these skills. And, yet, at the same time, the government is asking us to measure those skills using standardized tests. How do we teach a broad and diverse population the knowledge and skills that are rapidly evolving AND measure that progress using a standardized test?*

*The answer? It lies in the paradox. It is both/and. We need to teach the students how to be creative thinkers, and we need tests to measure growth and look for areas of improvement. I don't know if SmarterBalanced is the best tool for this. I have heard there is a lot of frustration with the test and its length. But the school board needs data. It also needs administrators who know how to walk the fine line of fostering critical thinkers and making sure students have basic knowledge and competencies. The leadership team is doing just that.*

3. What has been your process to familiarize yourself with the current priorities

of the school board? In what ways do your priorities align or differ? (200 words)

*I am running again to continue the important work we have started district-wide. The district is already seeing increases in graduation rates, better attendance in elementary schools, and innovative, new programs like AVID at both the middle school and high school levels. Frankly, I want to keep the ball rolling. We are already seeing short-term results from the good work this district is doing; I expect the next four years will create a long-term lasting impact on NSD and the community.*

4. Tell us about your experience understanding and working with government budgets or do you have another skill that you feel is valuable to board? (150 words)

*Over the past four years I have gathered with the budget committee -- other board members, parents, business owners, community members -- to listen to listen to the people of Newberg and Dundee, helping the school district weather the challenging economic and educational climate.*

*While other districts around us cut days in order to balance budgets, we made adjustments to the budget without slicing into the school year. Balancing a district budget is important, collaborative work, and it is not easy.*

*Now, as there is a possibility of money being restored to public education, I will have a four-year perspective to help with decisions about where to use the funds.*