

# Candidates' responses to standardized questions

The Dallas Post presented the same five questions to each candidate for the Lake-Lehman School Board. These are the questions and responses.

**What do you think is an appropriate maximum class size for the lower grades? Would you support adding teachers to stay below that level?**

**If it is necessary to curtail spending, what area would you select to cut back first?**

**What steps do you feel could be taken—at any grade level—to improve academic performance?**

**Do you support construction of a new middle level building? If not, how would you address the problems in the present building?**

**Can you name one thing the present school board has done particularly well?**



**David D. Crinman**  
Region 1

Kindergarten 18, grades 1-6 22. At times, Lake Lehman has had 40.

Not being a member of the school board and not having total access to the expenses of the school, I think it's unfair to try and guess.

Increased technical aids, computers, implementation of the long distance learning program

The feasibility study is coming out. We will have options. In the end we're going to have to do what is necessary.

The school board and the administration and teachers collectively have maintained Lehman as one of the highest schools that graduate kids that choose to go on to college.

**Ronald J. Payne II**  
Region 1

Around 35 students maximum, 30 seems appropriate per class. No. The teachers now are capable of shifting schedules to accommodate. Until we can get our debt under control and if our teachers are willing to take less pay, we would have enough money to hire enough teachers so we wouldn't have to compromise education

Because are teachers make 16% higher than the national average, our teachers' salaries need to be cut back. We need to hire teachers who will work for less money.

This school district has run into so much debt they're trying to cut wherever they can and they're having students share textbooks. We need to provide tools, textbooks, and computers.

No I do not. Remodel the present building.

No. I can't think of anything except they've spent money they don't have very well.



**Samuel F. Rhodes**  
Region 2

Kindergarten through third grade 15 or 16, but under current conditions, that's not possible. No more than 20. Grades 4-6 no more than 25 is ideal, but we must keep it under 30. At this point, I don't think we can afford it. If money weren't a problem, definitely.

I'm concentrating on tightening up everything we have and seeing where that takes us. Teacher contracts are the biggest part of anyone's budget. I hope we can stand firm in negotiations.

In this past year, we have done a lot. We have the teachers in the classroom as much as possible. We are rewriting the curriculum. We have hands-on science and languages in the lower grades. We hired a new elementary guidance counselor, which allows for more counseling. We should strongly encourage students taking advanced placement courses to take the advanced placement test so that we can see what the courses are teaching.

Not at this point. I am very interested in what the community has to say. I'm interested in seeing what the options are.

Addressing the financial situation, computerizing the budget, financial planning for the future. In the past you never knew where the budget was going. Now it will be easier for us as a board to give direction. I am generally pleased with what we've done financially.



**Moderno "Butch" Rossi**  
Region 2

Not over 24. I don't think we're in that predicament now. We have a lot of teachers.

Teacher contracts, go over the budget item by item and make cuts to everything that doesn't have to do with education.

Long distance learning program, make sure our children have the proper books

I would wait for the feasibility study. If the school is not safe, I will not let my kid in. I would ask that the problems be corrected.

Spend money. I don't know what you can say positive. I think we need to put new people in there.



**Robert Allardyce**  
Region 3

20 to 25. I imagine if you're a strict teacher you could have 50 kids in a classroom.

You would have to have a meeting of the minds and look at all facets of the whole district.

It's a combination of having both a teacher who wants a student to learn and a student who wants to learn. Society has placed values on having something materialistic, but everything is not based on money.

That's going to have to be looked at a lot more thoroughly than it has been. The school has improved and you can probably fix it up, but in America, we like to tear things down.

I think they've tried to get on the right track. There were a lot of mandates placed on the school district by the state that can be very discouraging to school board members.



**David R. Kaufman**  
Region 3

20 plus or minus, but it would have to be evaluated on a case by case basis. One of our schools utilizes team teaching in classrooms that have greater than 20 students.

Cut budget through competitive bidding, collective purchasing, refinancing of long term debt when interest rates are favorable, look at salary and benefits. The benefit area is a key area where costs escalate.

Technology is an area where continued improvements will yield improvements in students overall. The Video Distance Learning Center allows districts in conjunction with one another to use an interactive method of teaching.

The jury is still out on what needs to be done there. There are substandard conditions there. There is an independent study being done. I would like to see what their recommendations are and then form an opinion.

Refinancing and budget improvements. We've implemented a new computerized budget system that was developed through Vo-Tech. It's more concise data on a timely basis.

**Gary Miller**  
Region 3

25-30 range, max of 30. You'd have to look at the quality of education, how that will affect the learning.

Our light bills, our phone bills are a given. About 80% of our budget is mandated by the state. I'd like to see some of the mandates eased.

They've taken some already. We've started language in the lower grades, keyboards in the lower grades. The younger the children are, the easier it is for them to learn. Whatever they can bring into the lower grades.

Not until feasibility study comes out. When that comes out we will have time to look it over. I know I am in favor of the most cost-effective proposal.

In general, we work well on cutting costs and agreeing on what has to be cut. We try working together. We have different opinions but we respect each other's opinions.

## Candidates

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my legislative background could help the school board get rid of the yokes that Harrisburg has put on all schools," he said.

Crisman believes the majority of the school board members are trying to do a good job, "but the taxpayers association has given out a lot of misinformation in terms of cost," he explained. "I feel they do not want the kids to be educated."

David Kaufman has already served one two-year term and is running for re-election. Kaufman, an operations manager for a water utility, feels that his engineering and management background allow him to bring to the board some unique insight. Kaufman said he ran for school board because of a "vested interest." He is the father of one Lake-Lehman graduate and will see two more of his children graduate from the district. "I'm not one to sit on the sidelines if I can help with the betterment of the district," Kaufman said.

Gary Miller was appointed to the Lake-Lehman School Board 18 months ago. Miller cites one of the board's biggest accomplishments. "We've come up with a bi-line budget so that we can understand where the money is going."

Despite the present board's efforts, Miller feels there is more to be done. "I'd like to continue on the avenue we're going down. The board has to work together. That's going to benefit the students and everybody."

Ronald J. Payne II feels that his experience as a local businessman makes him a good school board candidate. "All school boards in general need people with a business background," he said. "That's a business they're running." Payne cites falling SAT scores and the district's debt as two issues he'd like to deal with if elected. Payne also noted, "I'm not doing this as a political stepping stone. These people just continue to spend more and more money. I'm doing this because we are so far in debt."

Samuel F. Rhodes says being on the school board is a tough job. One of the tough decisions Rhodes will be facing is what to do about

the substandard condition of the middle school. "We have to deal with it," he said. "I encourage and beg people from the community to come to the meetings and tell us what they think. I don't want to make this decision on my own. This is going to effect the district for a number of years."

Moderno "Butch" Rossi also has a vested interest in the school board. Rossi is the father of a Lehman-Jackson sixth grader. Rossi isn't happy with the work of the current board. "They're not very good at handling money. If they took care of things earlier, we wouldn't have such a mess. We have many, many disasters over at the school district," Rossi said.

Rossi feels one way to cut the budget is through salaries. "There should be absolutely no raises for anyone in the district. There is no way we can solve these problems without everyone taking a freeze," he said.

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