

**LAWRIE KOBZA'S RESPONSES TO
MTI'S 2005 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dated January 3, 2005

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT: I am at the start of my campaign. I have answered the following questions the best I can based upon my current knowledge and general beliefs. Over the course of my campaign, I will be learning more about the different issues. I would very much appreciate having the opportunity to meet with MTI representatives to learn about the issues that MTI believes are most important to its members. As I learn more, I expect that I will be able to provide more specifics to some of the questions posed. I would be more than willing to meet again with MTI to discuss these questions later in the campaign.

QUESTION 1: Did you support the 2003 referendum?

ANSWER 1: Yes.

QUESTION 2A: Would you support a referendum to enable the School Board to continue the expenditure level for maintenance, as was approved in a referendum 5 years ago?

ANSWER 2A: I support investing in building maintenance, and generally would be supportive of a maintenance referendum. At this time, I do not have an opinion on what is an appropriate amount for the maintenance referendum. I believe a good decision on the amount of a maintenance referendum can be made only after considering the District's other financial needs.

QUESTION 2B: Would you support a referendum to exceed the revenue controls in 2005 for general operating expenses, including staffing levels (so that class sizes don't increase and to provide wage increases).

ANSWER 2B: I would support a referendum to exceed the revenue controls in 2005 for general operating expenses if such a referendum was needed to continue to provide our students the same quality of education they are receiving. That being said, based upon comments made at Board meetings, discussions with people in the community, and newspaper articles, I am concerned that the public will be less supportive of referendums then they were in the past. The public has little confidence that the Board and District are managing the money the District already has wisely. The Board and District must do a better job of making its budget and budgeting process understandable and relevant to the public in order to regain the public's confidence in the Board's financial management of the School District.

QUESTION 2C: Would you support a referendum to enable school construction to alleviate overcrowded schools?

ANSWER 2C: I would have to look at all the facts before I made a decision whether to support a referendum to enable school construction to alleviate an overcrowded school. Schools should not be overcrowded. The question is what is the best and most cost-effective way to alleviate the

overcrowding in both the short term and the long term. To answer that question we must look at a variety of issues including available space in other school buildings, possible boundary changes, the cost of constructing new buildings or additions, transportation costs, and increased operating costs. Other alternatives must be thoroughly considered before pursuing the expensive option of new construction.

QUESTION 3: Identify specific MMSD programs and/or policies which you believe should be modified, reprioritized, or eliminated, and explain why.

ANSWER 3: At this time, I have no specific MMSD programs and/or policies which I would recommend be modified, reprioritized, or eliminated. I am a strong proponent of the District's equity policy and believe that this should be a priority for the District.

QUESTION 4: What should the District do to reduce violence/assure that proper discipline is maintained in our schools?

ANSWER 4: Each school should have a discipline plan which is developed internally by school administration, staff, students and parents. Everyone needs to be and feel responsible for the discipline plan for it to be successful. The discipline plan and the District's no harassment policy need to be fairly and consistently enforced.

QUESTION 5: Explain any concerns/proposed solutions you have about the District's minority achievement efforts.

ANSWER 5: I am greatly concerned about the achievement gap, the disparate graduation rates between whites and minorities, and the concentration of high need students in certain schools. I think that the District needs to do more to address these issues, and needs to consider appropriate actions on a school by school basis. Problems can be ignored if we look at District-wide statistics, as opposed to individual schools. We must do everything we can to support struggling schools and provide them with the resources needed to be successful.

QUESTION 6: Explain your commitment to four-year-old and all day kindergarten programs.

ANSWER 6: I value and support all day kindergarten. Early childhood education is essential to our community and our families; however, whether and how the District should implement four-year-old kindergarten is an issue that must be given more study.

QUESTION 7: Would you support the Early Learning Initiative, if it violated the MTI/MMSD Contract ban on contracting out?

ANSWER 7: Without knowing the specifics of the Early Learning Initiative, it is impossible for me to take a position at this time. In general, I do not support outsourcing work that is being done by current employees.

QUESTION 8: Should planning time for elementary teachers be increased? If yes, how could this be accomplished?

ANSWER 8: I support teachers having adequate planning time. If planning time for elementary teachers is inadequate, then we must examine the reasons. For example, if teachers are assuming non-classroom-related duties that detract from academic planning, perhaps alternatives can be made. If staff meetings are encroaching on planning time, then perhaps technology can eliminate the need for face-to-face staff meetings. It is important that the district and parents work with teachers to support their critical function: teaching.

QUESTION 9: Do you support the District withdrawing from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards?

ANSWER 9: I do not have enough knowledge about the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to have an opinion about that specific organization. However, in general, I believe that it would be wise for MMSD to be a member of an organization of school boards with similar interests and issues. I strongly believe that information sharing and networking will result in better decisions.

QUESTION 10: From what sources do you believe that public schools should be funded? Do you support increasing student fees?

ANSWER 10: I believe that public schools should be funded with tax dollars. In general, I wouldn't support increasing student fees because of their negative impact on families, but I would not eliminate fees as a possibility. However, any fee increase proposal must be well thought out and justifiable to the general public.

QUESTION 11: Do you support class sizes for the primary grades of 15 or less?

ANSWER 11: I support small class sizes for the primary grades.

QUESTION 12A: Do you support the use of public funds (vouchers) to enable parents to pay tuition with taxpayers' money for religious and private schools?

ANSWER 12A: No.

QUESTION 12B: Do you support the expansion of charter schools within the District?

ANSWER 12B: If the District has a particular need, a charter school may be an innovative way to address that need. The Nuestro Mundo Community School is a good example of how the District used a charter school to address a need and desire to provide dual language education. That being said, I believe the District's primary focus should be on supporting its existing schools. Before creating a new charter school, the District needs to make sure that the other schools in the District are not inadvertently harmed by losing students, teachers, or funds.

QUESTION 13: List MMSD staff from whom you do or would seek advice.

ANSWER 13: I would be pleased to receive information, ideas, or advice from any MMSD staff member.

QUESTION 14: Is your candidacy being promoted by any organization? If yes, please name the organization.

ANSWER 14: No organization has approached me to run; I made the decision in consultation with friends, family and many parents and advocates in the School District. I do hope, however, that organizations that support community-involved education will endorse my candidacy during the campaign.

QUESTION 15: Have you ever been employed as a teacher?

ANSWER 15: No.

QUESTION 16: Do you support the inclusion model for including Title 1, EEN and ESL students in the regular education classroom? Why/why not?

ANSWER 16: As with several of these questions, there is no simple answer to this one. Title 1, EEN and ESL students all present specific challenges in the educational setting. I would support a student-based education plan that is determined by the District, teachers, parents and staff in addressing the needs of these students.

QUESTION 17A: To you believe the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of policy which the Board has created?

ANSWER 17A: The Board should delegate implementation of policy to Administration. However, I believe it is essential for the Board to be accountable for and take responsibility for its policies and to monitor how policy is being implemented, whether implementation is consistent with the Board's intent, and whether Board policy should be revised.

QUESTION 17B: Do you believe the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of State Statutes?

ANSWER 17B: Like all day-to-day functions, the Board will have to delegate implementation of state statutes to Administration. However, the Board should decide how state statutes should be implemented and give the Administration appropriate direction. The Board must then monitor how statutes are being implemented, whether implementation is consistent with the Board's intent, and whether the Board believes statutes should be implemented in a different way.

QUESTION 17C: Would you support the Board exploring a means to make their meetings more efficient?

ANSWER 17C: While the Board's meetings could certainly be made more efficient, it is essential that this streamlining not be at the expense of a thorough deliberation and review of essential matters.

QUESTION 18: Have your children attended private or parochial schools during their K-12 years? If not, what schools have/will they attend?

ANSWER 18: My three children attend public school. They attended Lake View Elementary, my daughter is presently at Sherman Middle School, and my two sons are at East High School

QUESTION 19: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the revenue controls on public schools?

ANSWER 19: I do not know anything about the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, or how it works, so I cannot directly answer this question. I am supportive of all efforts to gather information and educate state legislators regarding the impact of the state's current funding structures on K-12 education. My general opinion is that state legislation should not limit local control over schools.

QUESTION 20: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to oppose any legislation which would authorize a tax freeze and/or a taxpayers bill of rights (TABOR)?

ANSWER 20: I oppose TABOR.

QUESTION 21: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the Qualified Economic Offer?

ANSWER 21: I support teachers being paid fairly. As I said in Answer 19, I am supportive of all efforts to gather information and educate state legislators regarding the impact of the state's current funding structures on K-12 education. My general opinion is that state legislation should not limit local control over schools.

QUESTION 22: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to prohibit the privatization of public schools via the use of tuition tax credits to pay tuition with taxpayers' money to private or religious schools?

ANSWER 22: I do not support the use of tuition tax credits to pay tuition to private or religious schools.

QUESTION 23: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation

which will maintain or expand the benefit level of the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act?

ANSWER 23: The Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act provides a necessary level of security for employees who must take time from work for family and personal illness, childbirth and care of elderly parents. It is a fundamental “family values” law, which the District should support.

QUESTION 24: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will increase the retirement formula multiplier from 1.6% to 2% for teachers and a general employees, i.e. equal that of protective employees?

ANSWER 24: I would need more specific fiscal estimates on this proposal, as well as information on how this pension multiplier might affect our operating budget and current workforce before committing to a position on this question.

QUESTION 25: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will prohibit public employee residency requirements?

ANSWER 25: My understanding is there is no public employee residency requirement for the District except for top administrators. I see no reason to change that.

QUESTION 26: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will eliminate and forbid restrictions to free and open collective bargaining for the selection of insurance for public employees (under Wis. Stat. 111.70), including the naming of the insurance carrier?

ANSWER 26: While I believe this is a bargainable issue, I am also cognizant that insurance costs are skyrocketing. My inclination is to support local control in these types of contract issues, rather than legislative fiat.

QUESTION 27: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will guarantee free and open collective bargaining regarding the establishment of the school calendar/school year, including the right to begin the school year, via negotiations between MTI and the District?

ANSWER 27: I believe the start of the school year should not be mandated by the State.

QUESTION 28: Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to forbid the work of employees organized under Wis. Stat. 111.70 (collective bargaining statute) to be subcontracted?

ANSWER 28: In general, I would not support the passage of state legislation that limits local control.

QUESTION 29: Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will mandate full State funding of any State mandated program?

ANSWER 29: I support State funding for State mandated programs.

QUESTION 30: Will you introduce and vote for legislation which will provide adequate State funding of public education?

ANSWER 30: I support adequate State funding of public education, and believe the State should desist in its efforts to balance the State budget by squeezing the resources of school districts.

QUESTION 31: Are you, or any of your campaign committee members, active in or support of the "Get Real" or "ACE" organization?

ANSWER 31: I am not. To my knowledge my campaign committee members are not.

QUESTION 32: Name of Campaign Committee/Address/Phone #/Treasurer. List the members of your campaign committee.

ANSWER 32: Kobza for School Board, 308 New Castle Way, Madison, WI 53704. Telephone number 249-7519. Treasurer is Barbara Schrank, 2313 Keyes Avenue, Madison, WI 53711.