

**WORTHINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SCHOOL BOARD VACANCY SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Candidate's Name: James A. King

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Please answer all questions and send a completed questionnaire by January 16 via email to:

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1. Please state your professional or volunteer activities with K-12 education, either in the Worthington School District, another school district or in a private school.

Over the past five years, I have served on the Board of Trustees of Junior Achievement of Central Ohio (JA). I have actually taught JA classes in the Worthington School District and, more recently, in the Columbus City Schools. With respect to the latter, I serve on the JA Board's Urban Initiative and taught JA to high school students at Linden McKinley High School.

In addition to my activities with JA, I served on the Worthington School/Business Partnership Council. My family also supports the PTA at the school that my two children attend, Colonial Hills Elementary School.

2. What personal traits, skills, or experiences would you bring to the position that you feel would make you an effective board member?

I am a lawyer and partner with a major Ohio law firm. I have broad-based experience in commercial, employment, and public policy matters. I have had many opportunities to work collectively with clients, my partners, and other individuals in various professional organizations. I have learned that it is important to listen and hear what others are saying, and to respect varying points of view. My legal training and experience have given me the unique ability to build consensus on even the most contentious issues. I have also had various management responsibilities within my law firm.

In addition to my professional activities, I am resident of the City of Worthington, have two children in Worthington schools, and am committed to the community. I have served on various non-profit boards, including JA, Session of the Worthington Presbyterian Church, and Stafford Village Retirement Center. I have dealt with complex fiscal issues and have assumed leadership responsibilities on these issues. For example, while on Session at Worthington Presbyterian Church, I headed the church's Finance Committee.

3. What do you think is the most pressing issue in the Worthington Schools?

The most pressing issue is funding. The system for funding public education in Ohio remains in flux, and its impact on the Worthington Schools has been profound. The bond issues that have been presented to the Worthington voters over the past several years have caused division within the community that somehow the district must find a way to resolve. Resolution, however, cannot be to the detriment of the district's educational mission. To the extent realistically possible, finding a long-term solution to the funding problems while maintaining high-quality education is the most significant challenge facing the schools.

4. If it were necessary to make substantial cuts in the expenditures of the district, what areas would you cut first, and what areas would you seek to preserve?

I do not believe that one can determine the areas in which substantial expenditure cuts are warranted without first prioritizing the areas that must be preserved. Obviously, the core educational curricula must be preserved at all costs (e.g., reading, writing, math, social studies, science, etc.). Those subjects that are now required by the State of Ohio, such as foreign language and lab-based science for high school students, also must be preserved. Other classes that go beyond the core subjects need to be evaluated to ensure that those subjects which the educators and administrators believe are important are likewise preserved.

Beyond the classes and subjects that comprise the educational foundation for the schools, the areas that may require cuts include those that are "extracurricular," such as school clubs, organizations, and even sports. Cuts in these areas will require difficult choices and may be unpopular, although necessary. Efficiencies may also be found in eliminating redundant services, or consolidating those services among several schools.

5. If it were possible to add new programs to the district, what programs would you seek to add?

I believe that expanded foreign language programs at the elementary school level should be seriously considered. The world has become increasingly smaller. Early education in a new language will help prepare our students for the global marketplace.

6. What do you see as the impact of "No Child Left Behind" on the Worthington Schools? What about the Ohio Core legislation?

The federal "No Child Left Behind Act" imposes certain minimum requirements on primary and secondary schools. I assume that the minimum standards of accountability that the statute imposes have resulted in additional expenditures for the district. I do not know whether those expenditures, in the view of the educators, administrators, and current board members are considered well spent. The district, however, has historically done well on standardized tests, so I assume that the act has had some positive impact. It is important, though, that our schools do not begin to over-emphasize the subjects covered by standardized testing (i.e., "teaching to the test") to the detriment of providing our children a well-rounded education.

The Ohio Core requirements impose a rigorous core curriculum on high school students. I believe that these core requirements are necessary for any student in order to graduate from high school. I do have a slight concern, however, about imposing state (and federal) requirements on a local school district if that district, like Worthington's, is performing well. Often these decisions are best left to the local decision makers who best can gauge the needs of the district's students.

7. If selected, what do you see as your role in influencing state education laws and policies that affect the Worthington Schools?

If selected, I believe that my primary role of course will be to assist in setting policy and overseeing the operations of the district. But I am also mindful that policy decisions are constrained by state education laws and requirements (such as Ohio Core). I would seek advice from the administrators and educators on what they see are the beneficial and negative effects of state policies. Insofar as state laws and requirements are having a direct impact on the ability of the district to educate its students, the board should participate in whatever lawful way it can to help shape state policy. Being so close to Columbus also enables Worthington's board members to have easier access to state educational leaders.

8. What do you see as the roles and responsibilities of a school board member?

It is my understanding that the school board is responsible for setting goals for the school system. Those goals must be based on state laws and standards, the particular needs of the system, and concerns of citizens within the school district. The board also plays the important "big picture" role of establishing policies, engaging in long-term planning, and developing budgets. The board's role is not to micromanage the day-to-day operations of the school district. Assuming the right hiring decisions have been made, the board should respect the views of the educational professionals, such as the superintendent, the treasurer, and the teachers. It is important to emphasize, however, that the board is not just a rubber stamp. The board has the duty of overseeing and evaluating the full-time administrative staff within the school system, including the superintendent.

A board member also must represent the values of the community. While not necessarily critical, I nevertheless believe that the board should contain at least some representation of the City of Worthington proper, and of parents who both pay property taxes and actually have children in the Worthington schools.

9. What evidence do you believe shows the Worthington Schools are adequately, or inadequately, preparing students for their lives after graduation?

I see every day through my children the positive impact that the Worthington Schools are having on our students. I believe that, currently, the schools are doing an excellent job in preparing students for their lives after graduation. Our top high school graduates are attending top colleges. Our alumni go on to do great things. The standardized test results from the district show that it is one of the best in the state. The district, however, can never be satisfied and must continually strive to be the best, most cost-effective district in the region and the state.