

CNC / PTA Council  
2017 School Board Candidate Questionnaire  
for School Districts 65 and 202  
Evanston/Skokie, Illinois

**Part I - Involvement**

Candidate for District  65 or  202

Name: Jude Laude  
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Occupation: High School Counselor

Educational Background: Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana, Completing a Master's Degree in Public Administration from Governor State University

Volunteer or Community Activities: Board member Foundation 65, AYSO Coach, Founder of Phoenix Male Achievement Mentoring Program, Co-Founder Kuumba Youth Program Inc. NFP

Other Experience: Educator since 1991, Instructor at the Malcolm X College Academic Support Center for the Pre-College Institute Counselor for the Chicago State University Upward Board Program, Post-secondary counselor at Clemente High School, High School counselor at North Lawndale College Prep High School

Do you have children?  Yes  No

What school(s) do (did) they attend? Bessie Rhodes Magnet School and ETHS

How long have you lived in Evanston/Skokie? Born and raised in Evanston

**Part II - Platform**

1. What motivated you to run for school board this year?

A. I am a parent of 2 ETHS students

B. I am currently a high school counselor and I can add my educator's perspective to the board

C. I am a product of district 202 and want to give back to the district and the community

2. What personal qualities, training or experience do you have that would be of value as a school board member? (Please answer briefly in essay form and do not attach a resume.)

Being a parent allows me a perspective that will assist me in advocating for policies and goals which are in tune with student and parent needs. Furthermore, I am also confident that my 26 years as an educator, and having worked closely with administrators and staff to improve student outcomes will be an asset to the board. The fact that I am an Evanstonian who navigated through the school system, has afforded me a good

understanding of what students need to be successful in District 202. Just as significant, I believe is my ability to work on a team in an effort to problem solve and achieve goals.

3. If elected, what will be your top three priorities as a school board member?  
If elected, my top priorities, as a board member, will be the following:
  1. Ongoing college and career exposure across all grade levels (in an effort to increase post-secondary college and career placement.)
  2. Ongoing parent and community engagement with the district
  3. Closing the achievement gap in Reading and math
  
4. What should the school board's responsibility be to the community? To parents? How should voters assess the effectiveness of the board and its individual members?  
The evaluation of a board should be tied to the degree to which the body is able to formulate goals and policy which align with the community needs and its values, while insuring that the superintendent operates the district in alignment with those goals and policies. Thus, it is the boards responsibility to hold the superintendent accountable for the intended results. The board should also insure that a system and protocol is in place for addressing parent concerns and issues. Furthermore, in evaluating a board, emphasis should be placed on the effectiveness and its accomplishments as a whole, rather than the success of one individual. One board member's success is tied to the entire board.
  
5. What are the major strengths of the school district? How can we build on them? What are its major weaknesses? How can we address them?  
District 202 has many strengths. Some of which are the following:
  - A) Act composite scores have steadily risen in the past 5 years
  - B) The number of students receiving college credit for AP courses has steadily increased in the last 5 years
  - C) The number of students taking AP and honors classes has increased.
  - D) students who have experience taking AP courses team up with members of the faculty and staff to as a support network for those students who are new to AP courses . High achieving students are mentoring and leading, which makes for a strong learning community.
  - E) One of the major strengths of the district is its diversity. Continuing to insure that there is diversity and inclusion in our honors and AP courses will increase the likelihood that our students benefit from the range of perspectives, ideas, and solutions to problem solving that are as diverse as the world which they will encounter.
  - F) Although the district has made great strides, still, too many of our students are not achieving desired outcomes and struggling through the high school experience. In an effort to improve this, the district should continue to make an effort in hiring teachers across all subjects who are well versed in literacy strategies. Classroom sizes should be reduced to allow for a more personalized classroom to experience where teachers can manage the interventions which are needed to improve student outcomes. Also teachers should have the maximum opportunity to collaborate and share best practices, while participating in professional development to improve teaching practices. Also, the continued success of the freshman restructuring program where students in earned honors credit classes are taught reasoning and critical thinking

skills, analytical, and problem solving skills, is essential in order to continue the upward slope of student achievement across the board.

6. Describe your understanding of school board governance and the role of the board versus the roles of the superintendent and the administration.  
Effective board members should not be involved in the managing of the district. This is the role of the superintendent and administration and staff. Board members help to set the mission, policy, and goals of the school. The board also holds the superintendent accountable for the implementation.
7. Select two major decisions made by the school board within the last four years about which you have a strong opinion. Explain why you agree or disagree with these decisions.
  - Earned Honors Credit: The Earned Honors Credit model helped to further de-track Evanston students who would traditionally not have placed into honors classes. In this model, teacher identify the skills students need to earn honors credit. This helps to grow the confidence of the student, and teaches them that intelligence is an ongoing process and not fixed. Being in honors also teaches these students critical thinking skills which better prepares them to be successful in AP classes and ultimately college.
  - Evanston Scholars: The Evanston Scholars Program assists student from disadvantaged backgrounds with exposure and awareness regarding the college application process and attendance. This support and guidance helps to educate not only the students, yet their families as well. It also increases the likelihood that such students will attend college.

### **Part III – Student Achievement and Assessment**

8. If elected, describe how you will contribute toward enhancing student achievement. How should the district address the needs of students in the top and bottom quartiles of the achievement spectrum? How should the district address achievement disparities by race, ethnicity, or other demographic differences?  
Traditionally, in Evanston, there has been an achievement gap where those who are disadvantaged are not performing on par with their peers, and are furthermore less prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and /or lack the basic skills to make inroads into career and technical fields. It is to the benefit of this entire great community that we provide the academic support, social emotional supports, and ongoing college and career exposure, so that these students are learning the academic skills, which make them college ready, and further guide them in the process of identifying potential career pathways. Students who are high achievers, must be continuously be challenged through curriculum rigour, while expanding their depth of knowledge through interaction and problem solving alongside their peers who may not share the same skill level, yet bring to discussions a unique reference point. Recently, the district has had greater inclusion in Honors and AP courses, and an increasing number of students have received college credit at the AP level.
9. What role should standardized testing have in assessing students, teachers, and instructional methods?

Studies have shown that teaching to the test does not improve standardized test scores. Rather, adjusting the curriculum framework so that it is aligned horizontally across all subjects where skills/standards are reinforced over time through interdisciplinary projects leads to higher test scores.

#### **Part IV – Student, School & Parental Partnerships**

10. Explain your vision for student, parent and school partnerships. How do these differ from Cradle to Career and other community partnerships?

The more engaged and informed parents are, the greater the likelihood that their child will perform well academically. Informed and engaged parents are better able to encourage their children to complete assignments, study for assessments, stay organized, effectively manage time and schedule, while meeting deadlines. Furthermore, parents who are involved and informed tend to communicate readily with teachers, and thus are in a better position to advocate for their students. Teachers and administration should make parent communication a priority, and should be responsive to parent needs and questions through effective school to parent and parent to school communication. Parents also should be involved in school planning, where appropriate, and should be connected to community resources when supports are needed for the well being of their families. For those parents from communities, which tend to be disengaged, there must be a welcoming school climate. The Cradle to Career initiative seeks to confront the problem of inequity in our community through a collaborative effort of different sectors in Evanston. The district serves all demographic groups found in our city. It is crucial that ETHS identifies and connects students and their families to resources and opportunities through the Cradle to Career initiative which should ultimately lead to greater equitable opportunities for all students.

11. What is your vision for the partnership between District 65 and District 202? Which areas of collaboration are most important and why?

It is imperative that we work in collaboration with the city and district 65 to insure that all students have an educational experience, which prepares them to perform at grade level and beyond, as they make the transition into high school. This effort should begin from the point of early childhood education through 8th grade. A common curriculum throughout the Evanston's pre-K program could prove significant in the readiness of certain students upon entering kindergarten in district 65. District 65 and 202 teachers could also collaborate on a 6-12 curriculum. This could help the district 65 students become familiar with the expectations of high school and prepare them with the academic skills needed to achieve. Also, district 65 literacy coaches and experts can facilitate training and workshops to assist district 65 teachers.

#### **Part V - Budget**

12. How will you influence fiscal efficiencies at the school district?

One way to ensure efficiency is to make sure that resources are aligned to school goals. Often times, programs work well yet are not a priority for the district. These programs should be eliminated. Another way to ensure fiscal efficiency is to share purchasing cost, legal costs, and financial services with District 65. Also, faculty can receive professional

development outside of the district and in turn train their colleagues , thus cutting costs for consultants.

13. If budget cuts are necessary, which areas deserve priority and why?

In the event that the cost of pension financing is shifted to suburban and downstate districts, ETHS must be prepared to reduce expenses, while not impacting classroom instruction.

For example, administrative expenses must be lowered by not creating new administrative positions. This would help to reduce the operating budget. Furthermore, the district must effectively use teachers as resources for professional development. For example, teachers who complete professional development outside of the district can, in turn, train their colleagues within the building. Thereby, reducing the cost of outside consultants.