

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

**2011**

**PSEA**

**School Director**

**Questionnaire**

*Sally Z. Schopf*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Candidate Signature

**Pennsylvania State Education Association  
400 N. Third Street, Box 1724  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-1724**

# 2011 PSEA SCHOOL DIRECTOR QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please Print or Type)

Name of Candidate:

Sally Schopfthal

Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address:

sally@schopfthalandfocht.com

Does or will the campaign have a web page? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes  No

If so, the address is:

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number:

(Home) \_\_\_\_\_

(Office) 610 706-0686

(Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Democrat

Republican \_\_\_\_\_

Crossfiled? Yes

No \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Chair:

—

Campaign Treasurer:

—

Candidate Campaign Committee:

—

Campaign Committee Address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Committee E-mail:

—

School District

Northwestern High

County/Counties in School District

High

## Philosophy of Education

1. Why have you decided to be a candidate for the school board?

Comments:

I believe education is crucial to the well-being of our society. I value my own education and desire to give back to the system.

I question the motivation and qualification of most of the candidates running for my seat and can't, in good conscience, refuse to run.

2. What is your view of the purpose of public education?

Comments:

To provide all students with fundamental tools to become productive citizens.

3. What are your top five objectives if elected to the school board?

Comments:

1. Effective Boards make policy; they don't micro-manage.

2. Promote education as priority spending in our community.

3. Listen to, and balance, the needs of all stakeholders.

4. Provide continuity and stability to our District.

5. Utilize my own education, experience + skills to make reasoned, deliberate decisions.

4. Do you oppose public tax support of private and parochial schools through a system of tuition vouchers or tuition tax credits?

Yes

No

Comments:

5. Privatization, or the corporate takeover, of public services is receiving increasing attention. Would you oppose efforts to allow private companies to provide the services now offered by our public school district such as custodian, transportation or food services?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

Maybe X

Comments:

Given the current state of the economy I must be willing to consider privatization as an option. My first priority is to ensure students' needs are met.

6. Do you have children in public schools or did you have children attend public schools when they were younger? Do you have children in private or parochial schools or did your children attend non-public schools when they were younger?

Comments:

Both children attended Northwestern High

7. Would you please list your volunteer activities within the school or your community?

Current Board member - 19+ years

8. How would you respond to a parent who wants the district to limit access to, or remove books from, a school library?

Comments:

- ① Our Board addressed this issue early on in my tenure. We have a process the parent followed that ended with a hearing before the Board.
- ② We also have a process whereby a parent may request alternate materials for their individual child.

In general, I would allow liberal substitution in situation #2 but would have to be convinced that banning a library book is required in situation #1.

9. Have you ever attended a school board meeting? Under what circumstances were you there?

Yes; current Board member for past 19+ years

### **Personal Philosophy**

10. As a school director, which of the following will be the most important to you?

Holding the line on taxes at all costs

Providing the best possible curriculum, textbooks and new technology even if it means an increase in taxes.

Comments: I avoid absolute statements; however, the checked statement is closer to my position than the unchecked statement.

### **Employee Rights**

11. What is your overall opinion about organized labor?

Comments:

I understand the gains organized labor has made through time.

Personally, I've never worked in a management/labor setting.

I don't believe any public employee should have the right to strike; most public employees provide essential services.

12. What are your views on public education employee collective bargaining rights?

Comments:

I disagree with what is transpiring in Wisconsin. Over time, I believe the need for union representation ebbs and flows. I am very concerned about the obliteration of the middle class in our country. Collective bargaining rights are crucial to the viability of the middle class.

13. Would you support binding arbitration as an acceptable method to bring closure to labor disputes in our school district?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe ✓

Comments:

our Board provides local control I would not be anxious to abdicate that control to binding arbitration.

14. What is your opinion on the right of school employees to strike?

already answered

## **School Reform**

15. There is much discussion of "education reform." What would you consider to be the important elements of education reform?

Comments:

I consider "tax reform" part of "education reform". The PA legislature simply must enact a better way to finance public education other than a tax tied to real estate ownership. I also believe "funding reform" is required where the actual cost of special education is a factor.

On the federal level, NCLB is based on a statistical impossibility. To date, needed improvement/gains have been made but at this point we are teaching to this test rather than for substantive content.

Where are the creative, authoritative, positive educational leaders in our state and Federal governments?

16. The terms "charter school" and "cyber school" are popular buzzwords in education. In some ways, charter and cyber schools can serve a purpose to provide for experimentation in education, but in other instances, it is a euphemism for corporate or private take-over of schools for profit. In either case, charter and cyber schools have diverted large sums of money from public schools. What is your philosophy on charter and cyber schools?

- I believe charter schools are a viable option for a specialized need; e.g., performing arts. I view LCTI as a type of charter school.
- I struggle mightily to keep an open mind on cyber schools. I believe they are academically, socially + financially a rip-off.

17. Would you be willing to meet with our local association members, on a regular basis, to discuss issues of importance to children and education in our school district?

Yes

No

Comments:

I have inquired if I could do this in the past but was advised against it with respect to collective bargaining issues/problems. In this regard I believe the union setting gets in the way of reasonable people being able to discuss issues as mature adults who recognize the collective goal is to educate our children.

18. Do you support all day kindergarten and reduced class size (classes no larger than 18-20) in K-3<sup>rd</sup> grades?

Yes  , but

No

Comments:

I also acknowledge the current economic realities

If yes, what steps will you take to institute reduced class size within our school district?

3 part solution: (I would have all stakeholders participate)

1. increase taxes in amount under, or up to, the index
2. ask all employees for wage freeze
3. students/parents will have to deal with class sizes on the higher end of the range; i.e., 20-22.

19. Although the state sets the minimum certified school nurse to student ratio at one nurse to every 1500 students, would you be willing to instate a policy that lessens the ratio in our district. Additionally, would you consider instituting ratios for guidance counselors?

Yes  No

Comments:

### ***School Funding***

20. Tax reform is a subject of ongoing debate in the state Legislature. Do you think additional school tax reform is needed? Would you support completely eliminating the property tax as the primary vehicle for local school funding?

Yes  No

Comments:

*already addressed above*

21. The issue of education funding has been an ongoing debate in the legislature for many years. Would you support changes to Pennsylvania's education funding formula that would both increase equity and the percentage of state support?

Yes  No

Comments:

*already addressed above*

22. The backend referendum requirements of Act 1 of Special Session 2006 prohibit school districts from raising taxes above a set rate unless the school board gains voter approval. Would you support seeking a referendum to increase taxes above the rate of inflation, if deemed necessary?

Yes  No

Comments:

I support repeal of Act 1. If PA supported public education in an appropriate fashion, local school boards would not have had to increase real estate taxes. In my 20 years as a Board member, I have witnessed the state balance its budget by pushing the cost of quality public education on to the local districts.

23. Act 1 of Special Session 2006 does permit school boards with the ability to raise tax rates above the rate of inflation without seeking voter approval in limited instances, when school districts have what are deemed "exceptional" costs. Typically, these are costs over which school boards have little or no discretion, such as special education costs. Would you support seeking all available exceptions to avoid costly and polarizing backend referendum ballot questions?

Yes  No

Comments:

**IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED FOR ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE A SEPARATE SHEET AND ATTACH TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE**

**RETURN TO:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you!*

*Interesting questions; thanks for asking.  
Felly Schoppell*

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