

Trustee Area 1

Robin Jankiewicz

1. Why are you running for Trustee and what are your biggest priorities?

I am seeking re-election to the Napa Valley Unified School District Board of Trustees. After nine years on the Board, including serving as Board President and now as a member of the California School Boards Association Board of Directors, I bring extensive experience in school governance, fiscal stewardship, and statewide education policy. My 16 years working for an investment bank have also informed my approach to the financial responsibilities of a school board. I believe good governance is the foundation upon which everything else is built.

During my tenure, we have successfully addressed inherited structural deficits, maintained a balanced budget, built substantial reserves, and strengthened policies supporting long-term fiscal stability. That foundation has allowed NVUSD to invest meaningfully in students and create a learning environment positioned for growth and opportunity. My priorities are clear: academic achievement, educational opportunity, and fiscal sustainability.

My highest priority is continuing the district's progress in student achievement. We have seen sustained, multi-year growth in student performance, and I believe we must remain focused on accelerating that progress in state accountability measures. Academic achievement remains at the center of our decision-making, while ensuring students have access to excellent programs and opportunities that allow them to discover their strengths, pursue their interests, and envision possibilities beyond high school.

Our financial stability has helped make those opportunities possible. We opened a third K–8 program, expanding educational choices for families. Our TK–12 Dual Language Immersion pathway received a CSBA Golden

Bell Award for educational excellence. We have expanded dual enrollment with Napa Valley College, opened the Agricultural and Culinary Student Center to strengthen hands-on learning and Career Technical Education, established Wellness Centers on every secondary campus, and expanded access to family resource centers. We also launched the STARS College Network, a groundbreaking partnership giving students direct access to a network of top-tier universities while addressing historical opportunity gaps.

I bring institutional knowledge of NVUSD, financial expertise, governance experience, and a statewide perspective through CSBA. I believe that experience carries an important responsibility: to use what we have learned to keep improving the educational experience for our students while protecting the financial and organizational foundation that makes that work possible. That is the work I am committed to continuing, focused on student achievement, expanding opportunity, and responsible stewardship of public trust.

2. What do you believe are the biggest challenges facing public education, particularly NVUSD, in the next four years? What specific actions or programs would you advocate?

The issues before us are significant. Volatility in state funding, declining enrollment, and teacher shortages statewide all affect our ability to sustain programs and continue improving student outcomes. These are not separate from our priorities; they are the conditions we must manage responsibly to achieve them. While teacher recruitment is not currently an issue for NVUSD—we have an exceedingly low vacancy rate—the statewide teacher shortage makes competitive compensation and positive working environments essential to retaining our excellent staff.

State funding pressures have to be addressed by exceeding the minimum cash reserves required by the state, which we have successfully accomplished, but this continues to be a pressure point. We make adjustments annually to maintain a balanced budget and avoid disruption to

the system. We are not falling short, but we maintain a heightened awareness of these pressures.

The primary reasons for declining enrollment are declining birth rates, immigration issues, affordable housing, and migration out of California. It is difficult for a school district to combat these broader demographic and economic issues. We have expanded TK, which has helped mitigate the decline. We have strong family engagement, marketing, expanded programming, and an excellent teaching staff, and it is still difficult to combat declining enrollment.

Competitive compensation and positive working environments are key requirements for retention. We have increased employee compensation by 46.96% since 2018, and the passage of Measure B has allowed for transformative investments in our school sites.

Effective governance means keeping students at the center while making disciplined decisions. It means knowing when to stay the course, when to adjust, and when difficult decisions are necessary.

3. How do you see the use of school vouchers and the development of charter schools affecting NVUSD? What actions should NVUSD take to ensure its schools meet any unmet needs that vouchers and charter schools may provide?

I am firmly opposed to school vouchers and the expansion of charter schools. Public education dollars should remain invested in the public schools that are accountable to the communities they serve. Charter schools often promote “school choice” as a solution, but NVUSD already provides school choice through open enrollment and a wide range of programs and educational opportunities. We do not need to create a parallel system to give families choice.

NVUSD has strong academic programming, financial stability, and a commitment to meeting the diverse needs of our students. There are always opportunities to improve, and we should address them within our

public school system, not divert students or taxpayer dollars to another system. I believe in investing in and strengthening the public school system we already have, not creating competing systems that draw resources away from it.

4. If elected, how will you ensure that students have access to libraries and curricula that are diverse, bias-free, and historically accurate? How will you respond to challenges to books and/or curriculum?

Our students have access to diverse books and ideas, and I will always defend that access. NVUSD does this intentionally through diverse supplemental materials, continually expanding and updating library collections at every school site, and curriculum that exposes students to different cultures, experiences, and perspectives.

Ethnic Studies is particularly important because it gives students an opportunity to understand the history of people and communities that may be different from their own, while also helping students see their own experiences and identities within the broader story of our country. Our students deserve to learn history honestly and in its full context, not just the parts that are comfortable or familiar. This strengthens students' understanding of one another and helps them become more informed and thoughtful members of their community.

When a book or curriculum is challenged, we follow a thoughtful, established review process rather than remove material simply because someone objects to its content or perspective. I have no problem defending our choices when materials are appropriate, educationally sound, historically accurate, and meet our standards. We believe it is not our role to shield students from ideas; it is our role to teach them how to encounter ideas thoughtfully, critically, and respectfully.

I will support our educators and librarians in providing students with access to a broad range of literature and perspectives while ensuring our curriculum remains rigorous and accurate for the students we serve.

5. What measures will you advocate to address the issues of equity, harassment, bullying, and sexual assault on campus, ensuring the safety and well-being of all students regardless of their ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual identity?

NVUSD understands that every student has the right to feel safe, respected, and supported at school, regardless of their ability, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual identity. We have strong prevention systems, clear reporting systems, appropriate consequences, and support for students who experience harassment, bullying, or sexual assault. We make sure students and families know how to report concerns and have confidence that those concerns will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

NVUSD is aware and intentional in its understanding that this cannot be only a response after something happens. Each school site builds a culture where respect, inclusion, and personal responsibility are taught and reinforced every day. We have committed counselors and student services, trained staff, a focus on school climate, utilization of student data, and accountability for addressing issues as they emerge. In order to address the impact phone distraction and social media, we have a “Mobile Communication Device” policy which restricts personal phone and device usage during the school day. This has been implemented with fidelity.

Every student deserves to learn in an environment where they are safe, valued, and able to succeed, and I will continue to expect NVUSD to uphold that standard consistently.