

Coeur d'Alene School District # 271 Trustee Zone 4

	Lesli Bjerke	Tom Sanner
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	<p>My name is Lesli Bjerke- CDA School Trustee- Zone 4</p> <p>I am running to continue the important work I began during my first term on the Coeur d'Alene School Board. My focus remains on increasing student achievement, maintaining a healthy and transparent budget, and ensuring that our schools remain a strong and competitive option for families—especially in a state like Idaho where parents have many choices in education.</p> <p>With over 25 years of experience as an educator, including time as a Reading Specialist, and 3½ years of service on the School Board (two as Vice Chair), I bring both classroom-level insight and leadership experience to the role. I am committed to making data-driven decisions that put students first while being fiscally responsible and responsive to our community's needs.</p>	Declined to Respond
2. How could your school district be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	<p>Our district is committed to continual improvement. My top priorities are:</p> <p>Improving student achievement by supporting excellent teaching and strong academic programs.</p> <p>Reducing student absenteeism so every child has the opportunity to learn and succeed.</p> <p>Building trust and transparency through open communication with parents and the community.</p>	Declined to Respond
3. What is your educational philosophy and how do you plan to implement this philosophy as a member of the board of trustees?	<p>My educational philosophy is that every child deserves access to excellent teaching, safe campuses, and strong academic programs that challenge them to reach their full potential. I believe students succeed through critical thinking, hard work, and merit, and that families should have confidence in their public schools.</p> <p>As a trustee, I will support policies that put student achievement first, ensure teachers have the resources they need, and strengthen trust and transparency between the district and our community.</p>	Declined to Respond
4. What role should "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)" have in the education of children?	<p>I believe schools should focus on academics, critical thinking, and hard work. Students succeed through merit, effort, and perseverance—not through DEI programs. Every child should be held to high expectations and given the tools to achieve their full potential.</p>	Declined to Respond
5. What is your view on the growth of Charter Schools?	<p>I appreciate that Idaho families have many choices in education. I support the growth of charter schools because I believe that parents should always have the freedom to choose the best educational pathway for their children. Charter schools provide valuable flexibility and choice.</p>	Declined to Respond
6. Should children be allowed to access obscene materials through school libraries? Please base your answer on the federal definition of obscenity as it applies to minors.	<p>No. Children should not have access to obscene materials in school libraries. Under the federal definition, obscenity is not protected speech, and schools have a responsibility to ensure library materials are age-appropriate, educational, and supportive of student learning.</p>	Declined to Respond

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7. Do you support or oppose bathroom and locker room usage based on preferred gender identification? Why or why not?	I oppose bathroom and locker room usage based on preferred gender identification. Idaho law requires that students use facilities that correspond to their biological sex, and I support upholding that standard to ensure clarity, consistency, and safety for all students.	Declined to Respond
8. How should counselors work with parents to resolve issues with their children?	Counselors should work in partnership with parents through open, honest communication. Parents know their children best, and by collaborating closely, counselors can help address challenges, support student needs, and find solutions that keep families engaged in the process.	Declined to Respond
9. What is your opinion on students being able to change their gender without parental notification?	Minors should not be able to make life-altering gender changes without parental notification. Parents should be involved in any significant decisions affecting their child's health and well-being.	Declined to Respond
10. Do you support the 1619 project? Why or why not?	I do not support the 1619 Project, as it seeks to reframe our country's history in a way that is historically inaccurate and not suitable for K-12 education.	Declined to Respond
11. In what circumstances should students be able to receive mental health assistance without parental notification?	Parents should always be notified when their child is receiving mental health assistance. The only exception would be in the event of a life-threatening situation, where immediate intervention is necessary to protect the student's safety.	Declined to Respond
12. Who has responsibility for the education of children?	Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education. Schools play a vital role in supporting families by providing strong academics, safe environments, and opportunities for students to succeed, but parents must remain at the center of their child's educational journey.	Declined to Respond
13. What should the goal of education be?	The goal of education should be to prepare students to succeed by building strong academics, critical thinking, and a solid work ethic—so they are ready for life beyond the classroom.	Declined to Respond
14. Do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not?	I do not support the legalization of marijuana. It brings many concerns, including health risks, public safety issues, and negative impacts on youth. From my classroom experience and now in my work on the school board, I have seen firsthand how substance use can harm students and interfere with their ability to learn and thrive.	Declined to Respond
15. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	My background includes both classroom experience and service on the school board. I understand the challenges teachers face, the importance of strong academics, and the need for clear communication with parents and the community. This combination of hands-on teaching experience and governance experience qualifies me to make informed, balanced decisions that keep students at the center.	Declined to Respond