

Name: Robbie Chacon

District: Carlsbad

Position: 2

Please answer the following to the best of your ability within 150 words or less.

1. What is motivating you to run for the school board?

Our community has grown and will continue to grow. I feel like I can help make responsible, sensible and informed decisions to help the Superintendent and the school district make the best decisions for the community.

2. What will your priorities be as a school board member?

My priorities as a school board member will be to represent Carlsbad in making the best budgeting and policy decisions for our district.

3. What have you done in the past to help your community thrive?

I try to stay involved in the community. I spent several years on the Bat Brigade representing Carlsbad in Santa Fe at the state legislature where we met with governors and state representatives to show support and successfully obtained funding for numerous city projects. I have been on boards such as Habitat for Humanity, Rotary Club, The Carlsbad Community Foundation, and recently joined the CARC board. All these boards have been meaningful and have presented me with a way to give back. One of the best ways I feel I have been able to help my community thrive is through my work in coaching youth sports and teach students at San Jose Catholic Church Lifeteen youth group. If I can help develop the youth of our community, I can help ensure that Eddy county has a bright future.

4. How have you previously advocated for students and educators in your community?

I have tried to do my part in different facets of the community. Helping my own kids to learn and grow has always been one of my priorities. In doing that, I found that I really enjoy helping all youth. Whether it be coaching youth sports, teaching the Lifeteen youth group at my church, or dealing with students attending camp RYLA and Interact club through Rotary, I do my best to deliver a positive useful experience for the youth.

5. How did your educational experiences shape you, and what lessons will you take with you from those experiences?

I attended elementary through high school in Loving, NM. Our superintendent was very active in obtaining state and federal funding for the district. He was a big part of why the district was so successful. I saw the impact he had on the district and hope to assist our leadership in having the same type of impact. My education and experience in business will be a big part of the way I help the board and the district to analyze potential budgeting and policy issues,

maintain previous solutions to past issues, and communicate those to members of the community. Communication is an essential part of any organization so i hope to help administer that.

6. Have you ever worked as an employee in public education? If so, how did your school board affect you? What lessons will you take from your experience into this position?

I worked as a middle school basketball coach in Carlsbad and the school board really didn't affect me except in accepting my short coaching contract. I do have experience working with, what was back then the known as the School to Work program at Los Lunas Schools. The school board was pretty hands off on my position there as well. My job as a school board member will be to help manage the budget, the Superintendent and district policies. The superintendent, along with his leadership team will handle personnel issues.

7. New Mexico has the lowest high school graduation rate in the nation. What specific steps will you take to address this problem?

That has been an ongoing problem that I believe starts at the top. My immediate priority and concern would be to start with things that I can help change and guide in a positive direction. One of my favorite prayers is The Serenity Prayer. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference". I've never been a school board member so there is a lot I have to learn about that and our school district before I try and go out to try and change New Mexico's ranking.

8. New Mexico ranks 49th in 4th-grade reading and math scores. What specific steps will you take to address this problem?

Reading and math should definitely be priorities along with a couple other subjects. I never try and change anything until I get a deep understanding about what is behind something like being ranked 49th. I am not an educator, but will do all I can to support and help guide those making decisions that will impact these types of issues.

9. How will you advocate for both the students and the employees of the public education system in your role?

Students should be our top priority. Employees are what keep the education machine moving. We have to have both and support both. I have faith in the current school board and their choice of leadership. From the outside looking in, the current Superintendent seems to be addressing issues with compassion, logic, and keeping employees, students and parents as a top priority. My job is to make sure that continues.

10. Think New Mexico, a non-partisan think tank, released a study in 2017 which suggests that the percentage of a state's education budget that makes it to the classroom, as opposed to administrative costs, is related to student performance. Do you agree? Will you advocate for an increased percentage of the budget going to the classroom? Why or why not? If so, how will you address the issue?

I would guess that with all the great minds in this state we should have a good solution by now. I do agree that most of the funds should be used in the classroom when feasible. We also have to have leadership to guide those teachers and students in the classrooms. Teachers have to be paid or we will lose good people. It is out of my "jurisdiction", but I believe teachers, administrators and parents should be held accountable for performance. You cannot throw, only, money at a problem. We must work together to find solutions that increase performance and those solutions, to me, should be dealt with case by case.

11. New Mexico is combating a “teacher shortage.” A recent study by NMSU said New Mexico’s “teacher attractiveness score”* is 2.18 on a scale of one to five. What will you do to increase this score and make sure these vacancies are filled by qualified individuals as quickly as possible?

Carlsbad, NM will be my priority. We were once the highest paid district in teacher salaries. Changes at the state level have changed that. Oil and gas, successful potash mining and government contracts are all part of our booming economy in Southeast New Mexico. The economy and cost of living have caused some challenges for our school district. We have to try and make it more attractive to be a teacher so that good teachers do not leave the district. The school board is currently working toward those objectives.

12. How can you make your school board an example of excellence for the other boards in the state?

My focus will be to do the best I can to contribute to the school board and help Carlsbad be successful. What we do here in Carlsbad may or may not work anywhere else. We are one of the fastest growing cities in the state and there are challenges that come with that. If we can attack those challenges successfully, and others can take something from that, by all means do not reinvent the wheel. There is a lot to keep in mind as a school board member. I pray that I will play, even just a small part in guiding leadership in Carlsbad schools to excellence.

**According to [NMSU](#) “Teacher Attractiveness Score” takes into consideration compensation, working conditions, teacher qualifications, and teacher turnover.*