

Name: Naveed Ahmad

Address: 72 Hillside Avenue

Years in Teaneck: 7

Party Affiliation (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green, Unaffiliated, etc.): Unaffiliated

1. What programs would you advocate for to prepare students in a varied range of careers?

A strong public school education is the backbone to any educational system, and while I am a firm believer in the benefits of a college education, it is important that our students understand the broad career paths that are available to them, including vocational careers and entrepreneurship. I am an advocate of internships and externships as I believe experiencing a prospective career firsthand is a great way to determine if an industry is for them while gaining valuable experience and insight at an early age. Additionally, I believe we must educate children to have the financial skills they will need as working professionals. I would advocate for offering financial literacy at an earlier age, introducing basic concepts in grade school, as developing healthy practices around money management would benefit students in all career paths.

2. What is your plan for improving access to mental health services?

Normalizing the discussion of mental health is an important first step. Having students being comfortable enough to have a discussion with their guidance counselor or at home is key in students getting access to the resources they may need. I would advocate to ensure that our school's administrators and teachers had the information and access to resources necessary in order to be effective facilitators for students that reach out. Additionally, I believe mentorship is an important preventative tool in the equation. Research has shown that mentorship develops resilience in students and positively affects academic outcomes. I would advocate for robust mentorship programs in our schools.

3. What would you do to recruit and retain a diverse staff and pipeline to leadership?

It is incumbent upon the board to hire a superintendent that understands the need and importance of having a diverse staff with a broad range of perspectives that mirrors the diversity of Teaneck and our residents. Once hired, the board must work with the superintendent to ensure that best practices are in place to recruit diverse talent. Professional development and mentorship can help create the pipeline to retain and prepare our own staff to take on leadership roles.

4. How will you increase student engagement in civic responsibility?

Connectedness is an important factor – the more people feel connected to a cause, the more likely they are going to do something to support it. I believe we build a connection to civic responsibility through transparency. The more our students are communicated with and brought into the conversation, on the work being done on the board and throughout the township, can create a feeling of shared responsibility. Educating students on opportunities that are available to them to participate is equally important. I believe in transparency and being proactive in communication to parents, students, and the township.

5. How will you guarantee and expand universal early childhood education?

I am a strong advocate for early childhood education, and believe our full-day Pre-K is an asset to our school system. As mentioned previously, I believe that financial literacy should be expanded to younger ages. Additionally, I would advocate for increased resources for our students on IEPs and special education programs as early intervention and education can help improve student success.

6. How would you expand after school programs?

I would advocate for additional STEAM programming for after school programs. These programs could be optional for parents to enroll their children in, but extended math, reading, arts, and science related programming can help diversify and expand our after school programs.

7. How would you integrate updated educational standards (Amistad, LGBTQ+, Disability, Sex, etc.)?

I am a firm believer that the education our children receive should help allow them understand diverse perspectives, think critically and independently. Implementing updated educational standards (including important ones as listed above) should first follow NJ state mandates, but also include important stakeholders, including teacher, staff, and leadership to best determine how to integrate the material into the curriculum.