



**DJUSD**

DAVIS JOINT UNIFIED  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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SUPERINTENDENT'S OFF

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John A. Bowes, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

526 B Street ♦ Davis, CA 95616 ♦ (530) 757-5300 ♦ FAX: (530) 757-5323 ♦ www.djUSD.net

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Candidate Application Form**

Please complete and return by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 10, 2018, to the Superintendent's Office of the Davis Joint Unified School District, 526 B Street. Application forms received after the above time and date will render the applicant ineligible for consideration of the position of Board member. Per Education Code 35107, applicants must be at least 18 years of age, reside within the boundaries of the Davis Joint Unified School District and be a registered voter.

<u>Neville</u>	<u>Donna</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>8/9/18</u>
<b>Last Name</b>	<b>First Name</b>	<b>Initial</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>[Redacted]</u>			<u>Davis, CA</u>
<b>Address (Street, City, State, Zip)</b>			
<u>[Redacted]</u>		<u>[Redacted]</u>	
<b>Email Address</b>		<b>Phone Number</b>	

Please answer the following questions using a maximum of 250 words per question. Submit a brief resume with your application.

*Please see attached.*

1. In what school or community committee or activities have you been active? Describe your contributions.
2. Why do you want to be a Board member? What about this district motivates you to apply for the position?
3. There are three goals\* expressed in our LCAP focused on Conditions of Learning, Pupil Outcomes, and Engagement. Please review the goals (on the reverse) and describe how would you support each of our LCAP goals and why are they important to our schools and students?
4. One issue that Davis faces is a structural deficit - what suggestions do you have to solve it and how would you go about gaining support for those ideas?
5. What attributes do you feel are important for a Board member? Describe your own skills and interests in relation to these attributes.
6. What in your professional experiences or volunteer activities with schools have you used a team approach to solving problems?
7. A violation of ethics occurs when a Board member does not clearly separate personal and district interests and govern on behalf of the district. How would you respond when confronted with this conflict yourself?

1. In what school or community committee or activities have you been active? Describe your contributions:

Because my work as Chief Counsel for the California State Auditor placed limits on my ability to be involved in activities that might be subject to review by that office, I was not as involved in community activities as I would have liked. However, I am now retired, and this is my opportunity to be more involved in our amazing community. My community engagement includes the following: while a law student at UC Davis, I performed legal work for the Immigration Law Clinic, including the preparation of a political asylum case. From the time my son entered kindergarten until he graduated from Davis High in 2016, I volunteered as much as I could in his classrooms: I also chaperoned field trips; served as a debate team driver and judge, and was a very active "sports mom," because my schedule allowed for that. From early mornings at the soccer fields, Little League, city basketball, tennis, Jr. High and High School Basketball, and, finally, lacrosse, I did whatever I could, including bringing the right snacks and serving as team driver. Since retiring almost two years ago, I've been able to get more involved. Immediately after retiring, I assisted the Measure H committee (2016) by assisting with voter outreach and written communications. I also did both volunteer and consulting work for a non-profit organization that assists school districts in improving relationships between teachers, students, and families. My other activities since retirement have been devoted mostly to political activities surrounding the upcoming midterm elections.

2. Why do you want to be a Board member? What about this district motivates you to apply for this position?

After years of working on education issues at the state level, I am excited about the possibility of serving on the Davis School Board. My early experience as a high school teacher in Upstate New York opened my eyes to the needs of low income students and made me a passionate advocate for equity in education. I later went to law school and subsequently spent many years working in the education arena, first as an attorney for the legislature where I drafted hundreds of bills and legal opinions related to education; then as Chief Counsel to the State Board of Education, and finally as Chief Counsel to the State Auditor where I provided legal advice related to school finance and various school district programs. These experiences gave me great insight into the workings of local school boards.

On a more personal note, one factor motivating me to apply is that I want students who are now at the Davis schools or who will be entering them in the future to have the same opportunities my son had. He is now a senior at Vassar College and flourished as a result of the Davis School system. He attended Cesar Chavez elementary, where he became proficient in Spanish; and he also benefitted from many other programs, including the outstanding music programs, debate team, and, last, but not least, participation in many athletic programs. I believe that I have the knowledge and skill to quickly step into this position and welcome this opportunity.

3. There are three goals\* expressed in our LCAP focused on Conditions of Learning, Pupil Outcomes, and Engagement. Please review the goals (on the reverse) and describe how would you support each of our LCAP goals and why are they important to our schools and students?

I am very proud of the Davis LCAP and, if selected for this position, would strongly support the three goals related to 1) conditions of learning, 2) pupil outcomes, and 3) engagement. I appreciate the simplicity of the three key goals, which I believe, highlight how essential they are to a quality public education. If selected for this provisional appointment, I would further familiarize myself with the details of the LCAP and would work hard to provide support to the activities identified in the LCAP.

I have been particularly pleased to see the focus in our LCAP on closing the achievement gap. There is a segment of the Davis school population that often seemed to go somewhat unnoticed but our LCAP highlights the need to focus on those student populations - in particular English Language Learners and low-income students. I would proudly support the goals of our LCAP designed to assist these students.

As an aside, the evolution to the Local Control Funding Formula and the Local Control Accountability Plan is something that I was very involved in at the state level, and I am excited about the prospect of being able to assist in the implementation of the Davis LCAP at the local level.

4. One issue that Davis faces is a structural deficit - what suggestions do you have to solve it and how would you go about gaining support for those ideas?

Solving a structural deficit requires a multi-faceted approach and considerable creativity. First, on an ongoing basis, the trustees need to scrutinize expenditures – even those that have already been approved in the budget. Also, the trustees should continually look to increase the district's revenue stream. This might include placing a parcel tax on the ballot but should also include other measures, such as ensuring that the district is drawing down all available federal funding.

When considering and approving the budget, the trustees need to be truly comfortable with the projections in the budget and need to ask probing questions. This is probably one of the most important decisions they make each year. In particular, unfunded pension liability has become an enormous financial issue, not just for school district budgets, but for public entities across the country, so I would like to see the Board consider various approaches to tackling this issue. This might range from looking at ways to generate greater revenue from our school district facilities through multi-use leases; seeking additional state funding; or even advocating for major reforms in California's property tax scheme that would allow school districts to receive more revenue.

I believe the most effective way to gain community support is to present the facts to the public in a clear and convincing manner. If the public understands the tradeoffs involved in budgetary decisions and/or they see the importance of a particular program or activity, then they will often be willing to support a parcel tax for that purpose.

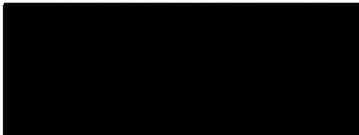
5. What attributes to you believe are important for a Board member? Describe your own skills and interests in relation to these attributes.
- A school Board member should make students the top priority. As a policy advisor to Governor Brown on education and a volunteer for a non-profit education organization, one question is always at the forefront of my mind: "How will this impact students?"
  - A school Board member must have a clear understanding of the school Board's responsibilities and possess the technical competency to perform those activities, including approval of the budget and deciding sensitive personnel matters. My years of experience in education policy and serving as Chief Counsel to the State Board of Education have given me a clear understanding of what it takes to make these difficult decisions.
  - A school Board member needs to be a great listener and should collaborate effectively with fellow Board members. Throughout my career I have worked on numerous teams and value collaboration.
  - A school Board member must communicate effectively and engage the community with clear, understandable explanations of Board decisions. Throughout my legal career, I have been lauded as an attorney who explains complex legal issues in a clear, straightforward way.
  - A good school Board member makes difficult decisions that often require balancing competing priorities, based on sound judgement after carefully considering the facts, staff recommendation, and public input. A good school Board member asks probing questions and does not make important decisions based on assumptions. Throughout my career I have had to make difficult decisions and choose between competing priorities.
6. What in your professional experiences or volunteer activities with schools have you used a team approach to solving problems?

My work as Chief Counsel to the State Auditor placed significant restrictions on my outside activities while employed, so I am providing the most relevant examples that I can. I firmly believe that good team work can result in an amazing end product. In my work for the State Auditor, we did all of our projects as a team. Our work focused on improving the performance of various state and local government programs, including school district programs, by making specific recommendations for improvement. To develop these recommendations, we met frequently, brainstormed ideas, challenged one another, and ultimately came up with evidence-based proposals for improving that government program. Perhaps the best example of effective teamwork involved my assignment, while at the State Auditor's Office, to the team that was tasked with setting up the first ever Citizens Redistricting Commission. The State Auditor created a team of eight, including a mix of lawyers, public affairs staff, and administrative staff, and charged us with developing the process for selecting, training, and supporting the members of this new commission. We had to visualize the entire process from start to finish, including how the application process would work, how members of the selection panel would be trained, how we would obtain funding, perform public outreach, and conduct public meetings. It was an extraordinary process and couldn't have happened without great team work and creativity.

7. A violation of ethics occurs when a Board member does not clearly separate personal and district interest and govern on behalf of the district. How would you respond when confronted with this conflict yourself?

It is essential to public service that a school Board member always act on behalf of the students, parents, and teachers he or she serves. Personal interests, financial or otherwise, cannot come into play. If appointed to this position, I would comply with all applicable laws regarding conflicts of interest, including the Political Reform Act of 1976 and Government Code 1090, as well as Board adopted policy. Also, if there was even the appearance of a conflict of interest, I would disclose that interest and recuse myself from any participation in that matter. As a government lawyer, I am extremely familiar with these laws and policies and have advised various Board members, including the members of the State Board of Education, on how to adhere to these laws. In any matter to come before the Board, I would listen closely and read all of the supporting materials and make decisions that I believe would best serve the public interest, never my own personal interest. As someone who served in government law for nearly thirty years, I have always worked to protect the public interest and never to further my own personal interests, financial or otherwise and I would apply that same standard if selected to fill this provisional position. Also, as I no longer have a student attending school in the district, my student's participation in a particular program or activity would not come into play in any decision I might make as a Board member.

**DONNA L. NEVILLE**



**RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:**

- 2012-2016 Chief Counsel, California State Auditor. Responsible for managing the Legal and Investigations Divisions and ensuring the effective delivery of legal services on all matters pertaining to the agency.
- 2009-12 Associate Chief Counsel, California State Auditor. Responsible for assisting in the management of the day-to-day operation of the in-house legal division as it provides support to the Audits Division. Responsibilities include providing legal advice to auditors who conduct performance audits of governmental programs at both the state and local level. Responsible for providing legal advice to the California State Auditor and her staff on all legal matters that come before the agency, and for providing in-house training to staff on various legal issues, such as state open meeting laws, conflict of interest laws, public contracting requirements, and laws related to the confidentiality of information.
- 2008-2009 Chief Counsel, State Board of Education. Served as the legal advisor to the 11-member board; provided legal advice at board meetings; managed ongoing litigation involving the state board; and gave direction to support staff.
- 2002-2008 Senior Staff Counsel/Associate Chief Counsel to the California State Auditor; duties as described above.
- 1991-2002 Deputy Legal Counsel, Office of the Legislative Counsel, Sacramento, California. Responsibilities included drafting legislative proposals and providing legal opinions and advice to legislative members and staff regarding various legal issues, with a particular focus on environmental law and education law. Assigned to the Senate Committee on Education.
- Spring 1997 Instructor, Department of Natural Resources, University of New Hampshire. Developed and taught a course on Environmental Advocacy and Leadership.

**EDUCATION:**

- 1990 Juris Doctor, received from the University of California at Davis, Davis, California. Law school activities included the following: Editor, U.C. Davis Law Review, contributing writer for environmental policy journal, teaching assistant for Legal Writing, and elected officer of the Women's Caucus. Courses of special interest: Advanced Constitutional Law, Water Law, Trial Practice, Investigative Journalism (U.C.

Berkeley, Graduate School of Journalism), and Federal Jurisdiction.

- 1983 Master of Science in Technical Writing, received from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, NY. Graduate work included advanced writing workshops, courses in computer programming, social science research methodology and statistical analysis (SPSS), and graphic design and layout.
- 1979 Bachelor of Arts in English Education and History, received from the State University of New York at Albany. Teaching certification: secondary school English. Recipient, New York State Regents Scholarship. Studied Irish Literature and History at the School of Irish Studies, Dublin, Ireland, Spring 1979.

#### **PUBLICATIONS AND SELECTED AUDIT REPORTS:**

*“California Community College Accreditation: Colleges are Treated Inconsistently and Opportunities Exist for Improvement in the Accreditation Process.”* (California State Auditor, June 2014).

*“New High Risk Issue: Providing a High Quality and Affordable Public Education Presents Significant Challenges”* (California State Auditor, Dec. 2013).

*“School Safety and Nondiscrimination Laws: Most Local Educational Agencies Do not Evaluate the Effectiveness of Their Programs, and the State Should Exercise Stronger Leadership.”* (California State Auditor, August 2013).

*“Office of the Secretary of State: It Must Do More to Ensure Funds Provided Under the Federal Help America Vote Act Are Spent Effectively.”* (California State Auditor, August 2013).

*“Employment Development Department: Its Unemployment Insurance Program is Still Failing to Meet Acceptable Federal Performance Measures and its Corrective Actions Have Fallen Short.”* (California State Auditor, November 2012).

*“City of Vernon: Although Reform is Ongoing, Past Poor Decision Making Threatens Its Financial Stability.”* (California State Auditor, June 2012).

*“Administrative Office of the Courts: The Statewide Case Management Project Faces Significant Challenges Due to Poor Project Management.”* (California State Auditor, Feb. 2011).

*“California’s Charter Schools: Some are Providing Meals to Students, but a Lack of Reliable Data Prevents the California Department of Education From Determining the Number of Eligible for or Participating in Certain Federal Meal Programs.”* (California State Auditor, Oct. 2010).

*“California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation: It Needs to Improve its Processes for Contracting and Paying Medical Service Providers as Well as for Complying with the Political Reform Act and Verifying the Credentials of Contract Medical Service Providers.”*  
(California State Auditor, April 2007).

*“F.E.R.C. v. State of California, Should State or Federal Law Govern the Rights of Private Hydropower Plants?”* (Environs, Spring 1990, U.C. Davis Law School).

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION:**

Member, California Bar Association.