

FLEA Screening Questionnaire for School Board Candidates 2026
Please return to vicepresidentflea@gmail.com no later than 4pm on Monday, June 15th

1. What would be your greatest strengths as a school board member?

My primary responsibility as a school board member is to ensure that every decision we make supports student success and strengthens the district as a whole. I approach this work with a focus on transparency, accountability, and long-term stability. I believe in listening to staff, students, families, and community members so that board decisions reflect real needs and real experiences.

I also see the role of a board member as one of advocacy. Whether it involves supporting fair contracts, improving compensation for our educators, or ensuring that our district remains financially healthy, I work to represent the best interests of students and staff in every discussion. My goal is to help create a district where people want to learn, work, and stay, and where decisions are made thoughtfully and responsibly.

2. How much control do you feel teachers should have over decisions that affect their classroom?

Teachers should have meaningful control over decisions that directly affect their classrooms. They are the professionals closest to students and best positioned to understand what supports effective instruction, classroom management, and student engagement. To maintain safe, orderly, and productive learning environments, teachers must be empowered with the authority to make instructional and behavioral decisions that support all students. When teachers have the autonomy and support they need, the entire school community benefits.

3. What can our district do to make schools more welcoming and safe for all students and staff, regardless of their race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender expression, or ability?

Forest Lake Area Schools already has a strong culture of being open and welcoming to all students and staff, and that is one of our district's greatest strengths. We can continue to build on this by keeping our focus on individuals and ensuring that every student and staff member has the tools, support, and opportunities they need to succeed academically, socially, and professionally.

Maintaining a safe and inclusive environment means reinforcing respectful relationships, supporting staff with the resources they need to meet student needs, and ensuring that every person in our schools feels valued. When we prioritize belonging and safety for everyone, the entire district thrives.

4. What do you see as your role in representing our district at the state legislature? The community?

At the state legislature, a school board member's role is to communicate clearly, consistently, and collaboratively with our elected officials. I maintain regular check-ins with most of the legislators who represent our area, and I use those conversations to share local concerns, highlight district needs, and seek guidance or support when appropriate. My goal is to ensure that state-level decision-makers understand how their policies affect Forest Lake Area Schools and to advocate for solutions that strengthen our district.

Within the community, my role is to remain open, accessible, and engaged. I make a point of listening to a wide range of perspectives, including those I may not personally agree with, to understand the issues facing families, staff, and students. I regularly gather feedback on board decisions, district challenges, and potential improvements, and I work to bring those insights back to the board table. Strong community engagement helps ensure that our decisions reflect the needs and experiences of the people we serve.

5. Are you willing to join efforts with Education Minnesota members, parents and community members to advocate at the state legislature for full funding of public education?

Yes. As a current board member, I have already worked with several elected officials to advocate for strong and stable public education funding, and I will continue to do so. Ensuring that our schools have the resources they need is essential for students, staff, and the long-term health of our district. I am committed to continuing my partnership with parents, community stakeholders, and Education Minnesota members to support full and sustainable funding for public education at the state level.

6. What is your opinion on school choice, charter schools and private school vouchers / tax credits?

School choice, charter schools, and private school vouchers or tax credits are ultimately decisions made at the state legislative level, not by local school boards. However, school board members do play an important role in advocacy. My focus is on ensuring that public schools receive fair, stable, and adequate funding so they can continue to meet the needs of all students.

I will continue to advocate for policies that strengthen Forest Lake Area Schools and support the resources, staffing, and programs our students and educators rely on. My priority is keeping our public schools in the strongest possible position to succeed.

7. If endorsed by the Forest Lake Education Association, what type of support are you looking for?

If endorsed by the Forest Lake Education Association, the support I am seeking is rooted in partnership, not financial contributions. I would value FLEA's support based on my track record, including my work to advocate for fair contracts and to move our teacher compensation closer to that of comparable districts. I believe I have done more than any board member in recent years to push for competitive pay and to ensure our educators are treated with the respect and professionalism they deserve.

To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, I am not requesting funding or direct donations to my campaign. What I am seeking is the association's confidence in my continued commitment to advocating for strong public schools, fair compensation, and a collaborative relationship between the district and its educators.

8. What is your vision for our school district?

I envision a district that is a true destination for both students and staff. A place where people choose to learn, work, and build their futures. I want Forest Lake Area Schools to be known for producing rich and varied student successes, whether graduates pursue college, the military, skilled trades, or enter the workforce directly.

My vision includes a district staffed by committed, respected employees who are compensated at or above the levels of comparable districts. At the same time, we must remain financially healthy and prepared for the economic challenges of today while planning responsibly for the uncertainties of tomorrow.

Ultimately, I want a district that is stable, forward-looking, and capable of supporting every student and every staff member in achieving their highest potential.

9. What do you believe the district should be doing to address any gaps in learning, opportunities or resources across the district?

Much of this work is already underway through the 2025 rewrite and 2026 adoption of the Achievement and Integration Plan. When we had the opportunity to revise the plan, the focus was on using those resources in a way that would reach the greatest number of students and deliver the strongest impact. Even in its early stages, the updated plan is already showing positive results, and I expect those benefits to grow over time.

At the same time, we need to continue exploring ways to make educational services more accessible and effective for a wide range of learners. That includes looking at how instruction is delivered, how supports are targeted, and how we ensure that every student, regardless of background or circumstance, has access to the opportunities and resources they need to succeed. Addressing gaps requires both strategic planning and ongoing responsiveness to student needs, and I am committed to both.

10. What progress have you seen in providing mental health resources for students and staff? Do you still see needs in that area?

The district has continued to make meaningful progress in expanding mental health support for students and staff. One important step during my tenure was bringing mental health services directly into our school buildings. This has allowed students to receive help without leaving campus, which keeps them in school, reduces disruptions to learning, and ensures they can access support when they need it most.

There is still more work to do. We need to keep looking for opportunities to strengthen these services, expand access, and remove barriers that prevent students from getting timely support. Continued investment in school-based mental health resources will help students stay focused on their education while receiving the care they need.

11. Please describe your personal approach when it comes to the budget and financial oversight responsibility of the school board. What experiences have you had that will help you as a school board member carry out that responsibility?

My approach to budget and financial oversight is grounded in long-term stability, responsible risk management, and a commitment to supporting the staff and students who rely on our district every day. As a business executive focused on risk management, I bring a disciplined, analytical perspective to financial decision-making.

During my time on the board, I have prioritized rebuilding the district's financial health. In my first year, the unrestricted general fund balance closed at approximately \$360,000. This year, that same fund exceeds \$10 million. We achieved this turnaround while also providing above-market raises for all of our employee groups, demonstrating that fiscal responsibility and competitive compensation can go hand in hand.

I intend to continue this balanced approach: maintaining strong reserves, planning for economic uncertainty, and ensuring that our staff are supported and compensated in a way that reflects their professionalism and the value they bring to our schools.

12. How can the school board ensure that the community has a voice in discussions regarding the direction of the district?

During my tenure on the board, I authored policy changes that expanded the public's ability to address the board. Previously, community members could speak at only one meeting per month; now, they have the opportunity to address the board at every meeting.

In addition, we have maintained a listening session format that provides direct access to board members and the superintendent, a level of openness that exceeds what is typical across the state. Board members are also available by phone and email, and I make it a personal practice to respond to every respectful inquiry I receive.

Ensuring the community has a voice requires consistent accessibility, clear avenues for input, and a genuine willingness to listen. I will continue to support and strengthen these practices moving forward.

13. What personal qualities, skills and previous experience will you add to the school board that will improve teamwork and the way it functions?

I bring a combination of business leadership, formal education, and practical board experience that supports strong teamwork and effective governance. As a business executive, I work daily with complex issues, risk management, and strategic decision making. My degrees in

cybersecurity and business administration give me a solid foundation in analytical thinking, organizational systems, and operational planning.

I also have extensive experience authoring policies and collaborating with attorneys, executives, and cross-functional teams. These skills translate directly to board work, where clear communication, thoughtful problem solving, and a collaborative mindset are essential. I approach board responsibilities with professionalism, preparation, and a commitment to working constructively with others.

14. There is a growing diversity of families in the school district. How can the district create an environment of acceptance for every student?

My approach here is the same as in Question 3, because the core principle does not change. Forest Lake Area Schools already has a strong foundation of being open and welcoming to all students, and we need to continue building on that strength. The district can create an environment of acceptance by focusing on each individual student, making sure they have the tools, support, and opportunities they need to succeed.

This includes reinforcing respectful relationships, supporting staff with the resources needed to meet diverse student needs, and ensuring that every student feels valued and safe, regardless of their background or identity. When we prioritize belonging and support for every student, we create a district where all families feel welcome.

15. What do you see as the most pressing financial issues for the district over the next 2-4 years and how would you propose to address them?

The most pressing financial issues over the next two to four years will center on maintaining fiscal responsibility while preparing for uncertainty. We need to continue the disciplined approach that has guided the district through the past two years of financial improvement, with a strong focus on stability and risk aversion.

One key challenge will be anticipating potential funding gaps that may arise from disagreements or delays at the state and federal levels. The district should build contingency plans that account for possible interruptions or reductions in payments so that operations and staffing remain stable even during periods of uncertainty.

We also need to prepare for rising costs related to energy, transportation, and increased state regulatory requirements. These pressures will require careful long-term planning, ongoing monitoring of expenditures, and a commitment to protecting the classroom from unnecessary cuts. By continuing to plan ahead and manage risk proactively, the district can remain financially healthy and positioned to support students and staff.

Throughout my time on the Forest Lake Area School Board, my focus has remained consistent: supporting students, supporting staff, and strengthening the long-term health of our district. I believe that when we invest in the people who make our schools work, our students benefit the most. That belief has guided my decisions, my advocacy, and my approach to every challenge we have faced.

One of the areas I am most proud of is the progress we have made in improving teacher compensation. I have been a strong advocate for fair contracts, and during my tenure we have made significant gains that bring our educators closer to the compensation levels they deserve. In the most recent round of negotiations, I pushed for larger raises than any other board member because I believe competitive pay is essential for attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and staff. This will continue to be one of my top priorities moving forward.

I am committed to building a district where students have every opportunity to succeed and where staff feel respected, supported, and valued. I appreciate FLEA's consideration, and I welcome further conversations if you would like additional information or clarification on any of my responses. I look forward to continuing our work together on behalf of the students and educators of Forest Lake.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Curt Rebelein Junior". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.