



A **non-partisan** resource to give Nebraska voters the **information they need** to make an informed decision when voting. A non-edited opportunity for candidates to state their position **in their own words**, online for **free**.

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS – District 4

John Cartier

Party: Democrat
Website: www.facebook.com/john.cartier.lancaster

Annie Mumgaard

Party: Democrat
Website: www.anniemumgaard.com

Note: Order of responses is generally presented in order asked, and in candidate’s alphabetical order, but is changed sometimes for better use of space.

Questions Key:

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|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Contact Information | Property Taxes | Sexuality issues |
| Biographical | Non-public school students | Abortion Schools |
| Motivation/Qualifications | Science Debates | Personal story |
| Checks and Balance | Religious Freedom | Decision making |
| Common Core | Americanism | Anything else |
| Purpose of Ed | Parents | |
| Literacy | Accommodation | |

(Contact Information) - Details of when we inputted the candidate's responses, including attempts to establish contact and other communication.

John Cartier	3-4-15, 5:50 pm, Left Message. 3-4-15, 6:10 pm, candidate called back, questionnaire emailed. 3-9-15, 9:47am, Sent reminder email. 3-9-15, 2:30pm, candidate emailed saying had not forgotten, just busy. 3-12-15, 7:30am, Sent another reminder email. Answers copied from email response received Sat, 14 Mar 2015 12:36pm.
Annie Mumgaard	3-4-15, 5:30pm, Left Message. 3-5-15, 12:30pm, Coworker said message had been given to the candidate. 3-9-15, 12:54, Left another message. 3-9-15, 4:30, Emailed questionnaire to work email. 3-10-15, Candidate emailed giving phone and personal email. Said she works very part time and was at a conference and would try to get questionnaire back by the 12 th . 3-12-15, 7:30 am, Sent a reminder email. Answers copied from email response received 13 Mar 2015 08:05am

(Biographical) - Please include biographical information , e.g. family members, church affiliation, employment, etc. you consider important for voters to know and/or reference your website.

John Cartier I was born in the small mountain town of Heber, Utah. From there I grew up in Park City, Utah before my mother moved us to Las Vegas, Nevada. While growing up in Vegas my mom, as a single-parent, sacrificed a lot to make sure I received the best education possible. As a result of her sacrifice and always pressing me to take academics seriously, I had the opportunity to attend Concordia University, Nebraska on both athletic and academic scholarships. Through the strong foundation I developed during my youth, I am now a first year law student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Website: facebook.com/john.cartier.lancaster

Annie Mumgaard My name is Annie Mumgaard. I am a Lincoln native who has lived in (semi) far away places. 18 years ago I chose to make Lincoln my home, the place I wanted to raise my family. I have two children – one in the 8th grade, one in the 3rd – both in the Lincoln Public Schools. I have a husband who is an Emergency Room nurse. I am a documentary filmmaker, a museum educator, a virtual learning educator, and a middle school creativity coach. I also teach Sunday School. I think very deeply about issues of social justice, human rights, and work hard to live by my values and moral compass. For more information please visit my website: www.anniemumgaard.com

(Checks and Balance) – According to LPS School Board Policy #6400, "The Superintendent, with involvement of the community and instructional staff, shall develop and periodically update a statement which reflects the community's purposes for its schools." How do you view the check and balance relationships between the superintendent and the school board? How do you picture representing the interests of the public if they differ with the superintendent?

John Cartier Democracy is as successful as it is because we have a system of checks and balances. This idea extends from the local governments all the way to the federal seats of office. The relationship between the Board of Education and the Superintendent displays a similar relationship where the Board is the voice of the people while the Superintendent embodies the school district itself. My priority as a representative is for the students first. As an elected official it is my duty to lobby for the interests of the public. If a scenario arises where the Superintendent comes into conflict with the public's interests I will of course side with the public; however, there is always room for cooperation and negotiation. When people fail to compromise our system of government becomes muddled with inefficiency.

Annie Mumgaard Highly gifted administrators and support staff operate the day to day business of the school district. The role of the School Board and its members is to make sure the administration has clear guidelines and visionary goals for their work, and that those guidelines and goals are followed as best as possible. This would be done with open communication and high expectations. As a School Board member I would be available to listen to, discuss, and forward ideas from the public. I would work in collaboration with the other talented and experienced School Board members and administration towards future guidelines and priorities that help guide our district positively forward.

(Motivation/Qualifications) - What has motivated you to seek this office? What do you hope to accomplish? What three qualifications do you bring to this office?

**John
Cartier**

Because education has had such a huge impact on my life, I decided to put my name in the race to help ensure the generation following mine is allowed the same opportunities – even better ones – than what I received. I truly believe education is what opens doors for children and can be the difference that ensures a successful, fulfilling life. I believe what I bring to the table is unique in that I’m still close enough to my roots as a student growing up in the school system to have a clearer grasp on what goes on inside the classroom as well as how kids think today. My experiences as a student-leader is something that the Board of Education lacks. There are plenty of educators, doctors and politicians. But there is not a representation of the students themselves, something the Board desperately needs to have a balanced understanding. In short, my qualifications are this: I am passionate about public service, I am a proven leader that leads by example and character, and I am a student with a vested interest in ensuring my generation has the best educational opportunities at their disposal.

**Annie
Mumgaard**

I am running for the Lincoln School Board because I believe in the *power* of education; I believe in the *right of all* children to receive an education; and I believe that public education is the *backbone* of our democratic society. LPS is a huge institution. It requires a steady, reasonable, creative support system to make it work. I have the skills, motivation, and love for children to take on this duty.

Lincoln Public Schools is where every child in our city should be able to find their place to best learn and grow. As a member of the LPS school board, this would be my guiding principal as I confront, contemplate, and act upon the issues, ideas, and needs that face our school district.

The school board’s role is to ensure that policies are created and enforced so that our talented teams of teachers, administrators, and support staff can do their very best work. The school board’s job is to ensure that resources are being used wisely, fairly, and in a manner that moves the district forward. And it is the school board’s responsibility to have a long-term vision for our children and their educational needs.

What qualifies me for this position? My education and work biography start at LPS. I graduated from Lincoln High, received a Broadcasting Journalism degree from UNL, and a Masters in Creative Arts in Learning from Lesley University in Cambridge, Mass. My skills honed as a documentary filmmaker and long-distance virtual learning educator will serve me well as I work with the other highly skilled and dedicated school board members and the public of public school education. I have created and managed large budgets with many moving parts, I have written curriculum, I am a critical thinker and a problem solver. I am also able to converse with just about anybody. I listen well and ask a lot of questions! My work has also exposed me to many of the ideas and concepts that must be considered as LPS integrates 21st century curriculum and technology into the classroom.

And lest I forget, I was the PTO President for Riley Elementary for three years! And yet, those are not what I believe are my strongest qualifications. My strongest qualification is that I am a mother of two students within the LPS system. My daughter attends Culler Middle School and my son is at Riley Elementary. I have volunteered in their classrooms, raised money for their schools, and have been a mentor to their friends. This is personal. I need our schools to succeed at its task of preparing our children - yours, mine, and every child of every parent within this city - for their own bright futures.

And that is why I am running for the Lincoln Board of Education’s District 4 seat.

(Common Core) - Discuss your thinking on Common Core. Should Nebraska “sign in”? Should schools use the curriculum anyway?

John Cartier Lincoln public schools should avoid unnecessary federal and state regulations. We should seek to abide by the regulations that contribute directly to the funding of our school district, but we should not seek to limit the flexibility of the educators and administrators in determining their curriculum.

Annie Mumgaard It is my understanding that our standards are already above those desired within the Common Core guidelines.

With that said, I am not an expert at Common Core so I would need more information, and would want to hear more perspectives, regarding “signing in” and/or changing our curriculum before agreeing to any action.

(Purpose of Ed) - What do you consider the purpose of public education to be? What non-academic activities should schools promote?

John Cartier To answer this question I’m going to borrow a quote from one of America’s greatest leaders, President John F. Kennedy: “Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation.” Education is a means to bring out the best in everyone. And in doing so, the entire community will benefit from a well-educated populace. Lincoln should look to increase expanded learning opportunities and community learning centers, these programs engage students in active learning and gives them a place to be after the school bells. Through encouraging students to chase after other activities and passions outside of the classroom we will see a direct benefit where students are learning valuable life skills. I believe this will enable students to be active, happy and healthy.

Annie Mumgaard I believe that public education is the right of every child. This access to a quality education is what will maximize each students skills, talents and potential. Public education is where all children begin their journey to their own bright futures. Teachers are central to the high quality educational experience that LPS seeks to deliver for every child. And I believe LPS has a responsibility to assure that every teacher has the support and resources necessary to deliver that learning experience.

(Non-public school students) - To what extent should home school, private school, charter school students have access to public school academic or non-academic activities (e.g. sports teams, musicals, clubs, advanced classes, etc.)?

John Cartier Social interactions among students provide some of the most valuable experiences in learning. I am for allowing students outside of the LPS to have access to academic or non-academic activities. Households that choose to homeschool their children are still tax-payers, and to me should still have the option of letting their students engage in activities that will benefit them.

Annie Mumgaard The beautiful thing about living in Lincoln is that we have some very fine choices on where/how we wish to educate our children. A parent must make the best choice for their child. What is important is that the state education system support educational choice that helps meet this variety of needs. I do not currently know the extent of this support, but I do believe access should be available. Alternative funding may need to be found for access for alternative or for-profit educational settings.

(Literacy) - Describe what you would recommend to increase the quality of literacy in graduates of LPS.

John Cartier By reading. The only way to increase student’s literacy levels they will need to read more and have access to reading material that not only sparks their academic interests but promotes them to think for themselves and engage in critical thinking. To achieve this, schools should have enough books for students and the students themselves need access to libraries with relevant and updated materials.

Annie Mumgaard If we do not directly address the relative graduation rates and achievement gaps between LPS students, we are not doing our job as a school board. If every child is to both receive and benefit from a high quality education, we must continuously focus on assuring our classroom experiences and educational programs are truly appropriate to the task. This involves better understanding the role of the public schools within the broader social and economic reality buffeting families and society every day. What can schools do more of or be better at, given the socioeconomic realities of the children who report each day anxious to learn? How can the schools provide the supports and resources that open the door to higher achievement for every child, no matter their background?

One thing we can probably never do enough of is to start young. It is critical that children enter school ready to learn, and master basics from a young age.

I am confident that having this as a priority governing all my considerations as a school board member will insure an open and realistic approach to this challenge.

(Religious Freedom) - Should Muslim students have freedom to pray at specified times? Should Christian students have freedom to pray in public? Should those without a specific religion be free to cancel other religious practices?

John Cartier Yes. Yes. And no. Our constitution guarantees religious freedom. Those without a specific religion should not have the right to inhibit or cancel other religious practices unless it comes into conflict with our separation of church and state. Just as those with religion do not have the right to cancel or impose restrictions on others based on their beliefs.

Annie Mumgaard These are questions best answered by our Constitution and High Court rulings.

(Americanism) – According to the Nebraska state statute 79-724, most recently amended by LB544, in 2011, known as the Americanism Statute, every school board shall appoint a committee of three members with seven enumerated responsibilities. If you were appointed to serve on that committee, what actions would you take?

John Cartier I would make sure students have access to the relevant material on our nation’s history that shows the good, the bad and the ugly. I am proud to be an American and we should raise our children with this same attitude; however, we should not attempt to censor parts of our history that might make others feel uncomfortable. In order for students to truly become patriots they need to know the whole story, not just nitpicked stories that highlight Manifest Destiny.

Annie Mumgaard A main goal of education is that we are supporting a thinking, active republic. For this we need to learn all of our history. We have nothing to fear from knowing our past. We have a lot to gain.

(Property taxes) - The overwhelming sentiment during the governor’s race was that property taxes in Nebraska are too high. Yet there is little to nothing a governor or the state can do about high property taxes. Do you think the office you are running for could manage a property tax cut? If so, what items?

John Cartier Education is not cheap but is an absolute necessity.

One of the bills going through the Unicameral currently is LB350. This bill would lower property tax valuations on agricultural and horticultural lands from 75% to 65%. This is part of an effort to address the skyrocketing ag land valuations in comparison to commercial and residential property. Using the example of Hooker County through the period of 2008-2013 total residential value dropped 10% whilst agricultural land increased 73%. A homeowner with a \$75,000 house in Mullen paid \$712 to support the schools in 2008 and \$525 in 2013. A rancher with \$1 million in property in 2008 paid \$9,500 in taxes to Mullen School. With a 73% increase in property value, the rancher paid \$12,110 in taxes to the school in 2013.

Any sort of change in the valuations of property by ag land holders will directly affect the amount of aid going to LPS schools. However, LPS is in a unique circumstance compared to other school districts that exist in primarily rural areas. LPS is an equalized school district, meaning, any reduction in ag land valuations will reduce the resources in the state aid formula for those districts. The formula currently used is the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act (TEEOSA). Through this formula if there was a reduction in ag land money going to LPS there would be an effort to either make up the difference through increased state aid or an increase in the levy. If the state does not fully fund the lack of resources, there will probably be a need to increase the levy to meet the demands of future budgets. To me this scenario would mean a shifting of burden from the state or ag land holders to residential and commercial property owners.

Going into the future, it’s pretty set how LPS receives their budget through TEEOSA. As School Board members it is up to us to make sure we meet the requirements of our growing school district (of about 1200 students a year). To do this it is imperative to be flexible to the changing policy landscape whether if we receive increased or decreased funds through state aid or property taxes.

Annie Mumgaard My first priority would be this – that we are funding first and foremost a quality education for the children of Lincoln with a high quality classroom experience..

The majority of the public both supports public education and is willing to provide additional resources to meet the new and growing demands on our local schools. To continue this support, however, we must consistently and credibly assure the public that its resources are being efficiently used, schools are providing a high quality education to every child, and that strong schools are good for everyone.

It is my expectation as an LPS leader that I will help insure adequate revenue for a high quality education for every child, through revenue streams fully supported by the public.

(Science Debates) – Discuss your thinking on the responsibility of teachers to present opposing views in scientific debates such as evolution and/or climate change.

John Cartier

Schools are a place of learning. In order for students to fully appreciate the world around them they will need to be exposed to different viewpoints than what they might be comfortable with. I support the academic freedom and the choices made by schools to bring into the classroom educational material that challenges preconceived notions of what goes on around them and encourages students to form their own views on the issues.

LPS supports curriculum that stimulates the growth of students in their ability to comprehend new materials while reflecting a variety of views on controversial issues to encourage critical reading and thinking. Selection of materials that represent these ideas happens through a cooperative process. In cases of major items to be chosen representative committees usually review and evaluate available materials. I am for the ideas set forth by the LPS in their selection of book selection and approval. Having the decision left up to a group of people rather than one individual is also beneficial in that no one person has complete control over what is being taught in schools.

I would only limit controversial subjects based on one thing: how seriously it disrupts the classroom. So long as the material being taught is not unnecessarily vulgar, lewd, indecent or plainly offensive in such a manner that it would materially and substantially disrupt classwork, I would not place a limit if it contributes to the academic growth of the child.

Annie Mumgaard

One of the fundamental goals of public education is to teach a *student* how to be a critical thinking *person*. Every teacher must be given the appropriate freedom to provide a learning experience that expands each child's mind, focuses their creativity, and prepares them for the future. In that regard, I would expect teachers to base their teaching on facts, science, and educational value.

Our society is built around our ability to be informed citizens - to be able to analyze, investigate the issues, consider other options, respect how others think, weigh alternatives, debate, and come to conclusions. These skills begin in a classroom.

(Parents) Some parents want to tell teachers what to do. Some parents feel they are not included enough in what's going on in school. Some parents, evidenced by their behavior, prefer to let the teachers/administration do parenting. Discuss what your role as a board member should be in dealing with the resulting tensions.

John Cartier

As a board member, I will strive to always be the voice of reason. I am a firm believer that in any situation there will almost always be a compromise that can work to the advantage of both parties. My role as a board member in dealing with these resulting tensions is one where I can keep an objective state-of-mind so I can best determine how to serve my constituents. Working on the Board of Education presents a unique circumstance, as the decisions I will make will always be for the students first and foremost.

Annie Mumgaard

The relationship between a parent and their child's teacher and principal is an important one. As a board member, one of my most important duties is to listen to concerns. My role is to then guide the parent to the correct channels for their complaints. Many issues can and should be handled by communicating with the teacher and/or principal. If a parent cannot find a satisfactory answer, I would listen again and help the parent find the next set of guidelines and personnel for their problems.

(Accommodation) – What accommodation should be made for individual students with unique needs, e.g. autism, high achiever, transgender, religious minority, non-English speaker, etc.?

John Cartier The LPS is more than a team, but a family. The district should, and should want to, come together to ensure that the needs of students of all types are met. No two people are the same, our educational system should reflect this reality. Where we have students who are on the high achieving end, they need harder courses and more complex material to keep their interest and engage their growth to the best of their ability. For students with disabilities, the district must make sure programs are in place to enable these students to learn to the best of their abilities. This idea extends to things such as gender-identity, religion and race. One of my platforms is to make sure Lincoln is a warm and inclusive school district that brings together students and educators in a harmonious way that best serves our community. We should strive for accommodations for all students to the best of our abilities and resources.

Annie Mumgaard 50 years ago it was not the main stream vision that children of color, or in wheelchairs, or children with behavior or cognitive issues would be an integral part of our everyday schools and classrooms. Nor was it a main stream vision that high achieving students would have access to advanced classes and mentors. But due to vision, openness and hard work – our schools are as diverse as our world.

And yet, our world is still ever changing. And so must our schools. As a school board member, I would strive for us to continually be visionary, open and work hard to meet the varied needs of all the children in Lincoln. How to meet those needs, with what resources? Today I do not know the specifics, but I would start with asking questions. What are our needs to be truly serving all children? How are we meeting that? How are we failing that? Why? Who could become better players in better meeting these needs? Business? University sources? Parents?

It is hard for anyone to support that which we don't know or understand. As a school board member I would also try to actively engage the community in the discussion on the needs of and our commitment to our public schools.

(Sexuality issues) – Some consider it discrimination on the level with race or ethnicity to speak against homosexual behavior. Some view discussion of any sexual behavior, whether same-sex or not, as inappropriate for discussion in school. Some want textbooks, reading books, curriculum to present both views as equal. Some want parents to be informed when such discussions are happening so they can opt their children out. With which group's philosophy do your most closely agree, and why?

John Cartier I believe in transparency in government. Parents should be included in the discussion of what is going on in the school district. With that being said, it is absolutely discrimination whenever one group puts down another for being different or engaging in different behaviors. This is exemplified by the discrimination of LGBT community throughout our country's history. Only recently have civil rights been extended to this group where they are finally allowed to marry the one's they love. Sex is a part of life, to ignore it and not educate children about their normal biological functions we run the risk of higher teenage pregnancies and an increased risk of STD transmission. There are ways to promote a safe, responsible discussion about these issues and I am confident our district will continue to find ways to improve education in this respect.

Annie Mumgaard I support public schools providing age appropriate, medically accurate, evidence based lessons on human biology, human behavior, human growth and development, and sex education. Our duty is to teach our students what we know of the world, so that they may become the informed, critical thinking community members we need for a strong future.

(Abortion-schools) – Even though many voters would like to know your personal position on the abortion issue, for this race, would you support Planned Parenthood presenting in the schools?

John Cartier I have had friends who have had abortions and I have had friends who decided to keep their babies. It is a tragic thing to be placed in a situation where the outlooks for the future do not look bright but I understand this is a highly personal choice. The United States Supreme Court has made it clear that this is a right protected by our constitutional framework; so I will not try to condemn or condone the practice of abortions only concede it is a reality that we must deal with in our district. Regardless of your views on Planned Parenthood, they offer more services than just abortions. In fact, abortions are a very small percentage of their total services. I support Planned Parenthood coming into schools to educate students in ways to practice safe-sex and to provide education on how to properly use birth control. My friends who went through abortions were of course traumatized by the entire ordeal, but they do not regret their decision. It was not the right time for them to have a child; I think it is important to have some freedom to control when one has offspring, especially if you are a teenager who still needs to graduate high school.

Annie Mumgaard If we want our children to be prepared for the world, it is imperative that our education system deliver medically accurate, scientifically sound human growth and development information. If an organization meets that criteria, I would support such lessons.

Medical decisions are best left to individuals, their parent/guardian if under the age of consent, and their health care providers. Our job as their friends and family is to offer love and support.

(Personal story) - Please briefly describe a situation where you had to stand alone for what you thought was right when the momentum was pushing the other way. What was the result?

John Cartier For a time I worked as a reporter and eventually the Sports Editor for my college's local newspaper. I was the type of reporter who wanted to chase after stories of significance, stories that highlighted abuses of power or the harsh realities on campus people wanted to not think about.

One such controversial story I took on was a sentiment that our Athletic Director was abusing his power and was perhaps bullying the athletic department. I was also a track and field athlete so when the higher ups in the athletic department caught wind of my story; my head track coach told me to not write the story as it would only cause trouble for the track team.

Instead of discouraging me, this talk with my coach only fueled my desire to finish the story. After the story was published the fallout was a little more ridiculous than I had expected. Some emails were exchanged between the entire faculty and myself as well as some threats that legal action would be taken against me; however, I stood firm and kept my cool knowing my first amendment rights protected me and my story was fair and balanced as the duty of a reporter is to not get caught up in the bias but stay true to the facts. Fast-forwarding a bit, the article eventually faded into memory and I actually ended up on good terms with the athletic director. So I would say as a result of me pressing to shine some light on the matters, I alleviated a lot of the problems that were staying hidden inside the athletic department.

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(Personal story) - Please briefly describe a situation where you had to stand alone for what you thought was right when the momentum was pushing the other way. What was the result? (continued from previous page)

Annie Mumgaard My child was a member of a club sport that was having great leadership problems. I felt that the leaders of this organization were unfairly and without due process punishing and ultimately wishing to fire the coach of this sport. Many parents were upset but few felt they could speak up. At a regular meeting I utilized my voice as a parent to express my disagreement with the leadership. There was a lot of anger from the powers to be at my doing so as it stopped the firing process. After several more uncomfortable meetings, the coach was found capable and held onto their position – and yet the organization was left with a leadership vacuum and in great financial peril. I was asked to step into place to help the organization continue. I did so for two years, working to create a functioning board and rejuvenated place for our kids. I am happy to say that the organization, over seven years later, is running in high gear!

(Decision making) - To whom/what will you go for counsel in decision-making?

John Cartier My mother. I value her opinion and I trust her above anyone else. During times I just need someone/something to listen to my frustrations my cat Sage is always there to listen to me. Provided I pay him in cat-treats.

Annie Mumgaard It will depend on the question at hand. A question often has many sides, and I would want to hear from as many voices as possible. I do plan to maintain communication with former school board members as they hold a wealth of institutional information, as well as develop deeper relationships with a variety teachers so I may seek their opinion and perspective.

(Anything Else) Declare anything else you want voters to know about you.

John Cartier I am eager and ready to serve my community. Together we can continue to make Lincoln, Nebraska the best place in the United States to live. Thank you for taking the time to research about me and my campaign. If you have any questions do not hesitate to call my personal phone number: 954-319-9832. Thank you for your consideration!

Annie Mumgaard I want to use my unique set of skills to help make a good system even better. LPS is graced with many gifted teachers, administrators, and support staff who love their job, have high expectations, and want the best from the 39,066 children that fill their day. This reason alone is something to be cherished and championed. I would be honored to assume that job.