AEA District Director

IASB District Director Statement of Candidacy

Candidates for the position of District Director of the Iowa Association of School Boards should possess, at a minimum, the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated leadership and involvement on a local board of education.
- Demonstrated participation in IASB activities.
- Strong supporter of public education in Iowa.

Please supply information requested in all categories and return to:
Stephanie Rousseau, Executive Assistant, Iowa Association of School Boards, 6000 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312-1417 or by email at srousseau@ia-sb.org.

-- Must be in IASB office no later than Wednesday, October 28, 2026 –

-- Submissions not to exceed 3 pages --

Type your answers in the blue boxes. Each cell will expand as needed to accommodate longer responses.

Name:	Tiara L. Mays-Sims
Address (Home):	10541 Powell Ave Johnston, Iowa 50131
Address (Office):	
Telephone (Cell):	515-771-2674
Telephone (Work):	
Email:	tmays@heartlandaea.org
Occupation:	Provider Relations & Contract Manager, Avera Health Plans
School Board(s):	Heartland Area Education Agency (AEA) Board of Directors
Years Service as Board Member:	5 years
Present Term of Office Expires:	2027

School Board Activities (Local Level):
I have served on the Heartland AEA Board of Directors since 2021 and currently serve as Vice President. My board service has centered on responsible, student-focused governance and advocacy for Iowa students, families, educators, and the school districts Heartland AEA supports. I have been especially attentive to students with disabilities and other learners who depend on strong, accessible AEA services. My local board leadership has also included service on the Compensation and Benefits Committee and participation in the 2022 Chief Administrator search process.
School Board Activities (State Level, including IASB Activities):
At the state level, I serve as the Area Education Agency representative to the Iowa Association of School Boards, a role I began in 2026. Through this service, I bring the perspective of Iowa's AEAs into statewide conversations about public education, governance, student supports, and policy. I have engaged in IASB and statewide education issues with a focus on strong board governance, effective advocacy, and ensuring that board members have the information and training needed to make sound decisions for students and communities.

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School Board Activities (National Level):

My national-level engagement has primarily been through advocacy and learning related to special education, early intervention, disability services, student supports, equity, and strong public systems. I also participate in federal advocacy through the March of Dimes, meeting with policymakers on issues affecting children and families. These experiences help me connect local and state board service with broader policy conversations that affect Iowa students.

Special Interests, Activities and Recognition:

My special interests include public education, special education and disability services, early intervention, family engagement, equity and access, and responsible public governance. I am a parent and community advocate, a March of Dimes advocate, and an active civic and community leader. Professionally, I serve as a Provider Relations & Contract Manager with Avera Health Plans. I hold an MBA from Purdue University Global and a B.A. in Psychology from Iowa State University.

Other Comments Including Personal Qualifications for IASB Leadership:

I bring a combination of board governance, professional negotiation, strategic partnership, and community advocacy experience to IASB leadership. My professional work requires me to build relationships across organizations, navigate complex issues, listen carefully to competing perspectives, and move groups toward practical solutions. My leadership style is collaborative and people-centered, with an emphasis on preparation, accountability, trust, and clear communication. As both a board member and a parent who has experienced the importance of AEA services firsthand, I understand that sound governance decisions ultimately affect real students, families, educators, and communities.

Please comment on your willingness and availability to serve as IASB AEA Director:

I am willing and available to serve as IASB AEA Director and to fully participate in the responsibilities of the role. I understand that effective statewide leadership requires preparation, consistent engagement, communication with fellow AEA board members, and a willingness to represent perspectives that extend beyond one's own local board. I am committed to making the time necessary to serve thoughtfully and reliably.

Please explain your philosophy of what you believe the role of IASB should be to assist Iowa school boards and strengthen public education:

I believe IASB should serve as a trusted resource, advocate, and connector for Iowa school boards. IASB is uniquely positioned to strengthen public education by providing high-quality board development, timely and accurate information, policy guidance, and opportunities for board members to learn from one another. IASB should also elevate the voices and experiences of local boards in conversations with policymakers and the public while helping boards remain focused on effective governance and student success. Strong public education depends on well-informed, well-prepared boards, and IASB should continue equipping board members to lead with clarity, accountability, and a commitment to the communities they serve.