



D86 candidates share their opinions

Seven are competing for three four-year terms on the high school board

Where do the candidates stand on the issues?

Pamela Lannom compiled these responses from personal interviews and questionnaires.



Fotini Bakopoulos



Cynthia Hanson



Erik Held



Kathleen Hirsman



Matthew Marron



Yvonne Mayer



Urszula Tanouye

Referendum and aftermath

Did not participate in any interviews and did not provide her opinion on the referendum. Opposes any cuts to curricular or co-curricular programs, as that does not live up to the district's mission statement. Encouraged other candidates to make same pledge.

Supports the referendum. Is confident cuts would need to be made for 2019-20 school year. From there would try to reinstate programs, but is committed to spending \$42 million for life-safety, infrastructure and security work.

Supports the referendum. Would hope to tweak and adjust cuts as needed to preserve overall academic experience but understands board's logic in approving them. Hates idea of lost year at Central and South.

Supports the referendum. Cuts have to be enacted if it fails. Would have preferred to spread cuts out over more sports and activities, but Title IX constraints and the total dollars that need to be saved are realities.

Referendum should have been put on hold until after new teachers contract is negotiated in 2020. Reduce the cost with a line-by-line review of projects. If referendum fails, prioritize and be creative in deciding on cuts.

Supports referendum. Believes board must find a way to reinstate cut sports and activities even if it fails. Would search for money elsewhere in budget to spend \$42 million on life-safety, infrastructure and security.

Seems like a decent compromise but is conflicted because community lacks consensus and South projects don't live up to hype. Would support cuts as they stand unless given a compelling reason to revisit them, as few options exist.

Curriculum equity

Decline in South's enrollment is placing pressure on district to maintain its academic integrity, as staffing smaller class sizes costs more. Opposes any budget strategies that marginalize South's academic program.

Believes it has been a long time coming. Supports capitalizing on best practices offered at both schools to create one district curriculum.

Sees initiative as an extraordinarily high priority and believes it's easier to achieve with two schools of same size. Supports use of e-learning and remote learning when viable to provide course offerings economically at both schools.

Believes this topic should be addressed and revisited regularly and supports common terms, benchmarks and processes for both schools. Wants teachers to maintain creativity as they implement new curriculum.

Give rebalancing of enrollment some time. Supports general alignment but does not believe curriculum needs to be identical, as each school has different demographics.

Is thankful the board has taken the difficult step of admitting there are curriculum inequities and is working to address it. Schools should have same textbooks, assessments, etc., or student performance will be impacted.

Has been a point of contention for decades and should be a priority. Has concerns department chairs won't have time to achieve a quick resolution.

Fiscal management

Believes budgets should be transparent, put students first and optimize the use of district facilities.

School districts must utilize available property tax revenue, which is the main source of income. Look for efficiencies where possible and focus on moving the needle in a positive direction.

Focus on controlling cost, as saving just 1 percent over 20 years generates a significant amount. Did not agree with zero tax levy, which handcuffed the district and was based on political rather than fiscal reasons.

District cannot spend beyond its means and has limited revenue (primarily from property taxes). Potential changes in state funding could have serious impacts. More than \$5 million in revenue has been lost from 2013 zero tax levy.

District must live within its means. Supports use of referendums and bond issues for necessary capital improvements when the numbers are convincing.

Supports thoughtful consideration of expenditures and data to show results of investments. There is a cost to live in a destination district, but taxpayers can't be asked to contribute more and more with no end in sight.

Would like to see more set aside in the budget for annual maintenance. Public funds prevent offering everything to everyone. Believes small additional investments by taxpayers in schools have great returns in property values.

Top three responsibilities of a board member

- set priorities in line with the mission statement to optimize students' educational experiences
- ensure a safe learning environment
- optimize dollars spent for quality education

- create the vision and mission for the district
- evaluate initiatives and tweak or create policies to support the mission and vision
- hire and supervise a superintendent tasked with meeting appropriate goals

- set overall policy and long-term road maps
- manage district resources responsibly and effectively
- preserve and foster the health of the whole district

- protect public taxpayer funds, develop realistic budgets, spend efficiently
- govern with integrity, act professionally, make decisions collaboratively
- listen to and trust administrators, support teachers, avoid micromanagement

- ensure personal development of students in a safe learning environment
- welcome parents' interaction with faculty and administrators
- approve a fiscally responsible budget that represents the community

- be fiscally responsible in setting budget, negotiating staff contracts, funding facilities projects, student programs and activities
- ensure academic excellence and curriculum equity for all students
- be accountable and transparent in communications with the community

- hire an effective superintendent to run day-to-day operations
- provide direction in the form of big-picture goals
- set district policy to guide individual decisions, keeping student outcomes in mind for all three

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