

Name: Suzanne Erkel

Occupation:

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Name: Meri Hass

Occupation: Dental Hygienist

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

I grew up in St. Francis and my mother, Joyce Neumann, was on the school board here for 14 1/2 years. I was raised that when your children are a part of something, you are too. Having 2 daughters at EBCS, I feel it is my duty to provide them with the best education possible. Also, our reputation in St. Francis is another issue. I want to emphasize the many positives in our schools and work together to change the negatives. This should be a community people move to because of the schools. Lastly, I am a tax payer in this district as well and it is important that our tax dollars be spent in the classroom. They need to be managed effectively and appropriately.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

I have 2 amazing daughters who currently attend East Bethel Community School. Macy is 9 years old and will be entering 4th grade and Breanna is 7 years old and will be entering 2nd grade.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

I am the product of an ISD#15 education, K-12. I was active in 3 sports and a National Honor Society officer. The education I received in St. Francis provided the foundation for me to graduate with honors from Minnesota State University, Mankato. Through school and my extracurricular activities, I learned time management skills, a hard work ethic, and respect for my coaches, teachers, and advisors. I am an objective and active listener. I pride myself on being fair and patient in all aspects of my life, especially raising my 2 daughters. I am very invested in this community/school district.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

I perceive the role of school board members is to be the voice of the community. The school board helps the staff and students achieve their full potential while keeping on budget. Their role is to listen to the staff and community members to facilitate the necessary changes and requirements needed. They should be actively involved in the community in which they serve.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

I believe it would be our job to form a consensus between community members, parents of students, staff, and students themselves about how we can improve the district. When we all work together and listen to others ideas, that is when we will see improvement in academic achievement for our students. The way things are trending now, it is very difficult for the students to learn and get the personal attention they need in larger class sizes.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

Before we make drastic cuts in the budget, I would support letting the people decide and have a voice on how to handle the lack of financial resources with a levy referendum to meet the needs of our students. I also want to be sure that the state of Minnesota equitably funds ISD#15.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

I believe the smaller the class size, the better. As far as grade class sizes go, I believe the teachers of the specific grade levels would have the most valuable input regarding their class sizes. I know when I was in college, some lectures could reach 200 students. It is very difficult to have personal responsibility and accountability in a class so large. Every child learns differently. I have definitely found that out with my 2 girls. What works for Macy doesn't necessarily work for Breanna and vice versa. Therefore, as class sizes continue to grow, there are that many ~~more learning styles and personalities to teach to. We can only stretch our staff so far.~~

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

I love that we have art brought back to our elementary students. I believe that having a well-rounded education is important for our students and our community. My children are currently at the elementary level and it will be my job to find out about the curriculum at every level.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

I think the fund balance should be high enough that financial institutions give ISD#15 an acceptable rating. The school district is not a bank and we should not increase fund balance at the expense of student programming.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

I cannot believe that educators voices are not being heard. They are the people in direct contact with our students every day and their suggestions for creating successful students should be valued. I am a person who is very open to listening to ideas and bringing them to the appropriate people. I have many educators in my family and know firsthand the importance of the role they play in the lives of our students and the passion they possess for successful students. I feel I share that passion.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

Funding and budget cuts always present great challenges to public education. It seems we are always having to learn to get by on less every year. We cannot continue to have increasing class sizes every year. Another hot button issue that community members keep bringing to my attention in this district is bullying. With social media, cyberbullying has taken this to a new level. I believe that dealing with bullying is an issue that starts in the home. We as parents need to teach our children respect and that this form of behavior will never be tolerated. The job of ~~the school district should be to reinforce what should already be taught at home.~~

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Where to start...I want everyone to know that I am in this for the long haul. I was born and raised here and my parents and in-laws remain here. I love being part of a community where it feels like

everybody knows everybody. I want to create a positive school environment for my children and all children in the district. Most importantly, I want to lead my daughters by example. My husband and I strive to be the people we want our children to become. By being a school board member, I will show my daughters how important a first rate education is in life and how hard I will work to provide that for them. I've never backed down from a challenge and I am ready for this. My girls deserve it. I hope I have provided some valuable information about myself and my views. I would be more than happy to explain myself further or to listen to your ideas at any time. Feel free to email, call, or come up to me if you see me around town like maybe at Bingo Night at EBCS, a football game, etc. Go Saints!!

Name: Janet Hunt

Occupation: State of MN DHS

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

I have been on school boards for 9 years and feel I have the experience to help kids by being part of the board.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

Yes a Senior.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

School board experience.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

Work together making the district a place for kids to succeed.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

Getting the district aligned with the strategic plan.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

Look at program/staffing needs. Levy is not out of the question.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

I think class sizes depend on grade/age levels. I would like to see class sizes remain smaller or get aids/ea's to help in the classroom.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

I am very excited about the curriculum changes happening in the district. I would like to see teachers and administration working together more efficiently. Some things we do are duplicated and I feel that takes more time for everyone.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

I think we need to have a healthy fund balance so we can run effectively. I would also like to see more advanced classes so kids can have the best start possible when they leave school.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

I think all staff should work together. Everyone should be invested in the district and have a voice in all decisions being made.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

Unfunded mandates, budgets, and the cost of living. Our district has many building issues and we need to build up the salaries so people want to stay instead of going someplace else to work that pays better. We need the best of the best working in our district.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

I have enjoyed learning about our district and hope I can continue to contribute and learn.

Name: Sarah Hunt

Occupation: Educational Assistant

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

While working for ISD #15 for the last couple years I have had some concerns that drove my desire to work for the school district as a board member.

The first was the seemingly lack of communication between administration and staff. I also felt like the school board as it stands now, is unaware of what is going on with the day to day situations in our schools. There is also a shortage of substitutes in this district causing for less than ideal learning environments as well as at times dangerous situations for staff members. I want to be the voice for our students and educators.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

I have three children enrolled in ISD #15, two girls in high school, and one boy in middle school.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

I have worked for ISD #15 for two years, and before that had been involved in local school activities. I have been to the State Capital on various occasions seeking change in funding for pre-k and kindergarten education. I have a strong commitment to serving my community and am very open minded as to team solving any situation that may arise for our school district. I believe that I have my finger on the pulse of what our students and parents need to feel successful.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

As a school board member I believe that we are serving as a liaison of sorts between citizens, students and staff members. Speaking more literally about the position of a school board member, our responsibilities are, but not limited to; approving and monitoring the budget, working on district contracts, hiring and evaluating the superintendent and other administrative staff, and assisting with developing curriculum.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

Our school district needs to continue to focus on keeping families involved, and maintaining fantastic communication with them. We need to maintain high expectations for our students, consciously and continually raising the bar.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

I live in the city of St. Francis and there is a huge outcry at how expensive it is at this time to be a resident here. So, it would be my last resort to implement a tax levy on ISD#15 residents. I would like to try to utilize grants and possibly find other creative ways to fund our district. I certainly would not find myself voting to increase the wages of board members or administration during my time on the board.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

The issue of classroom size has always been of great concern to me. As classroom sizes began to rise, my oldest daughter began to get lost, and her studies began to fall behind. I do not want this for anyone's child.

It has been well researched that for grades K-3 best achievement is reached when class sizes are 18 or less. Grades 4-8 should not have more than 20 students, while high school grades 9-12 could have classes with a maximum of 25 students. If class sizes need to be larger, then there should be an assistant assigned to those rooms.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

I would like to see more mandated curriculum that prepares our students for life outside of high school; career readiness, money management, how to handle credit appropriately, and tax returns, etc. An increase in cultural diversity education is another area that I believe ISD #15 needs to put more emphasis on.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

I would like to see more programming implemented in our school district; however, increasing our fund balance is of great importance. School fund balances increase a school district's bond rating. They also provide financial stability to protect current programs as well as for unanticipated costs.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

ISD #15 has some amazing educators with many areas of expertise. I would like to see all areas within our school district begin to work collaboratively to find the best solutions for our students. Administrators need to have an open door policy in order for their staff to feel comfortable voicing their visions and concerns for their students. The school district needs to continue to make a concerted effort to communicate more effectively.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

I believe that one of the biggest challenges in Minnesota as a whole is the lack of parent and community involvement, and the rising cost and cutting of extra curricular activities. In our district more specifically is the lack of communication between administration and staff, as well teacher and support staff shortage.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Name: Alicia Johnson

Occupation: Registered Nurse

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

In the past 10 years, science and engineering jobs have grown 1.4% while the workforce has only seen a 0.2% growth. Other school districts in the region have taken notice and have created a strong STEM program in a variety of settings. ISD 15 needs more enriching STEM opportunities for children of all ages. Other issues would include teacher retention, reducing focus on standardized testing, and implementing best practice based on research.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

I have a daughter who will be attending 1st grade at ECBS and a 4 year old son that will be going to preschool again at LLC. Both children are enrolled in the Just for Kids and Kids Connection programs.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

The ability to collaborate, organize, and advocate are strengths I use daily as a Registered Nurse. I feel these key strengths would enable me to work with parents, teachers, other school board members, and stakeholders to bring improvements to our district.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

I perceive the role to be complex as it encompasses policy setting, public engagement, and public-education advocacy. Other tasks may include budgeting, goal setting, and serving the community.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

Improving our district could come in the form of more STEM opportunities, promoting public involvement, setting more concise goals, and using evidence based research to drive our decisions that improve our schools. Studies continue to show that the best schools find the best people to become teachers; they foster the development of those instructors and then maintain support for those roles so that children can benefit from a high-quality education.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

An answer to this question would require knowledge of the current budget. Research on current successful education trends would drive my decision. I see my most important goal is to do what is best for the community based on current education trends and staff and public feedback.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

Studies have a tendency to correlate class size with student success. From what I have reviewed, evidence shows younger classes (K-5) should have smaller class sizes as this can effect long-term

educational achievement, reduces the number of school drop-outs, and reduces costs overall. So, with that being said, I can't specify a particular student to pupil ratio but I would prefer to see smaller class sizes as the research indicates it is more successful.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

I would like to see more STEM opportunities for children of all ages.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

I believe what is more important at this time is adjusting programming but not necessarily increasing it. Removing programs that are not cost effective, have low attendance, and low interest would allow for creating new programs that are more current and can help students achieve a higher level of success.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

The voices of our educators should drive our budget, goals, and programs. Much like nurses, they are the ones that see the effects of our choices as policy makers first hand. Their knowledge and ideas should be heard and appreciated. I will make myself as available as possible to listen and collaborate with our educators and find ways to distribute these ideas to other groups. An open door policy for board meetings is invaluable to ensuring their voices are heard.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

The greatest challenge facing education in Minnesota and our district is maintaining a balanced budget that allows for high performing research based programs for students, teacher retention, and small class sizes.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Thank you for reading. I will leave you all with this - "Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world." -Nelson Mandela

Name: Amy Kelly

Occupation: Hair Stylist

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

I decided to run for school board in 2003 with the strong belief that our school district is the foundation and strength of our community! I still believe that today!

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

I have four children who have graduated from St. Francis High School the last of which received his diploma in 2012. I have no children currently but in a few years I will have grand children attending! :)

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

I have served for almost 13 years and have missed 2 school board meetings. If elected for another term I will continue to be a dependable school board member while serving the community of ISD 15.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

The hiring of a Supt. to run and manage the school district, approve spending, review and approve policy and to set a vision for the school district!

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

Continuing to improve technology for our staff and students! ISD 15 has invested heavily into PLCs with the later start times and the once a month 90 minute late start allowing our educators time to collaborate by sharing effective methods of teaching and evaluating the various forms of student data. I am excited and support this concept and strongly believe this will improve the public education system in ISD 15.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

All of the options listed above are reviewed and discussed at the board level. If the need arises for a levy referendum it is important to find out what the community can afford to pay and what they are willing to support. Levies in school districts with low property wealth like ISD 15 are very expensive! In a perfect world a levy would pass to avoid cuts to staff and programs although many times the financial needs of the school district are only partially met due to the high cost to taxpayers. Cuts in staff and program changes may occur to avoid deficit spending. The school board can then approve a balanced budget.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

When the last teacher contract was being negotiated there was concern from the school board and administration that was clearly stated to teacher negotiators during the meetings informing them that

this contract would impact class sizes causing a slight increase. We heard very little concern from teacher negotiators regarding the cost of the new contract and its impact on class sizes. There is a book called Visible Learning by John Hattie. In the book he outlines strategies that have the most effect on student learning. Number 1 was student self reporting grades, number 3 was teachers providing formative evaluations, homework came in 88 and class size was ranked 106. Class size was 106 out of 138. I am committed to keeping class sizes as small as financially possible but there are many factors that affect class size such as negotiated contracts and school boundaries. Board members are being asked if they are willing to commit to "certain" class sizes. The next fair question would be are the teachers willing commit to "certain" class sizes during the next round of contract negotiations? As a school board member we are responsible to all the stakeholders including the taxpayers and they expect ISD 15 to have a balanced budget!

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

Curriculum is what some would say the heartbeat of a school district! It changes and should align with MN. standards. ISD 15 LAC analyzes, compares and pilots curriculum on a 9 year cycle. After the school district purchases curriculum materials, monitoring and adjustments are made to ensure our students are learning the MN. standards. I think the PLCs will be an asset in evaluating curriculum as they meet daily and every month for 90 minutes collaborating and sharing what is happening in their classrooms with regards to student learning.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

Recently ISD 15 was able to adhere to policy 601.2 Fund Balances Policy in which it states the school district will strive to maintain a minimum fund balance of not less than 5%. The majority of these funds were one time dollars that came from the insurance holiday premium. Spending one time dollars on ongoing expenses like programming would be irresponsible and is how school districts get into financial trouble.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

Educators should play a role in the decision making process. Currently ISD 15 has SMCs at each of the schools. The policy and finance committee is reviewing policy 201 Shared Decision Making, Site-Based Management. Staff from the schools were invited and some have attended the policy committee meetings to ensure that any changes made to the policy reflect current practices while keeping the intent of the policy. SMCs are a valued decision making body that ensure that our educators voices are heard!

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

The greatest challenge for public education in Minnesota has always been funding! Electing individuals who value fair and equitable funding is vital. Funding gets to be a bigger challenge in our school district. We are low property wealth district which means we do not have enough big industry and business's to offset the tax burden of local operating and bond referendum. Adjusting the

equalization factors for inflation will help to provide a tax system that is fair and equitable for our school district , community and our taxpayers. I will continue to push for fairness with regards to this issue!

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

I was raised in a family of educators. I believe the greatest investment we can make is in our children and their education! I would love to continue serving the community of ISD 15.

Name: Rob Schoenrock

Occupation: Self employed, I own a small sign company

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

I chose to run to get more involved in the community that I live. I was born and raised with parents that are very active in the community that we lived in. Mom is a first responder (20+ years), Dad is a member of the local Lions Club (35+ years), and served on the School Board for 32 years plus other organizations. I would like to continue my family's legacy in this community, it's in my blood to be active in the community.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

Yes, I have a son (5th Grade) and daughter (2nd Grade) enrolled at Cedar Creek. Plus I have Twin daughters enrolled at Life Long Learning Center.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

One of my strengths is that I have run a small business for the past 15 years, so I am able to handle budgets, make sound decisions and I'm goal oriented. I'm also able to listen to all sides and come to neutral decision.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

The Role of School Board members is to be part of a collaborative team that makes decisions that are in the best interest of our district, students, teachers and community.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

The best way to improve the public education system is to make sure that every student feels like they matter and are valued. I would also seek insight from the parents and students to address any feedback or concerns.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

Depending on the situation and the information presented to the board, I would support what is best for the district at that time.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

I don't feel comfortable committing to a specific number of students per class. As much as I don't like seeing class sizes increase, I do not yet understand what the cause of this increase is. I will try to keep class sizes as low as possible. I am also committed to looking into why there has been an upward trend. Is it due to lack of hiring, space or something else? These are questions I am committed to looking into if I am elected.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

My oldest child is going into 4th grade so I haven't had too much interaction with the curriculum for any grades above that, but I have been very happy with the teachers and how they have taught the curriculum up to this point. I would be willing to sit down with any teachers, students, parents, administrators to discuss any changes they feel necessary to the curriculum.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

This is a tough question and there isn't an easy answer. Having run a small business the past 15 years, I know the importance of having money in the bank to make it through tough times. I also know that if you don't invest portions of that money you cannot grow as a company. If we don't invest in our students we won't grow as a community and we also need to have money in the bank. If elected, I would try to find the perfect balance between the two; keep a fund balance and maintain programming for our students.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

The best way to make sure your voice is heard and a part of the decision making process is to be willing to approach any board member with your thoughts and ideas. New ideas and solutions to current problems can be shared by: attending board meetings, contacting a board member or inviting a board member into your work environment to discuss or observe the items calling for decision making. I am very deliberate about being someone that is easily approachable and willing to listen to educators to ensure that students can be successful.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

I feel that our image is the greatest challenge we face in ISD 15. My business has allowed me to have contact with many people in and outside of our district. I have heard all too often about ISD 15 and the "negative" image that people have. I feel that people outside of our district view us in a negative light. Through the use of the strategic plan I believe that we can change our image. We also need to earn the trust and respect of our community. It seems like district support has been fading over the years. ~~We need to rebuild the trust and respect within our community. A flourishing community is possible when everyone comes together and everyone matters. All voices need to be heard and I am committed to listening to anyone who approaches me.~~

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

Here's a little bit about me. I've been married to a wonderful woman, Andrea, for the past 16 years. We moved to the district about 13 years ago. We have 4 beautiful children (Caleb, Emily, Haley & Sophie). I've been a volunteer coach for my kids basketball teams the past 5 years, and I'm the Vice President of the St. Francis Basketball Association, and Andrea is the Vice president of the PTO at Cedar Creek.

Name: Mike Starr

Occupation: Retired Military, Sub Teacher ISD15, Small Business owner Blue Star Kettle Corn.

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

The \$867,822 dollar pay out for the Superintendent contract and pay back to the state last year. The current school board failed to ask the correct questions and to ask for documentation from the state to verify if on line students can be counted for state payments. Because of this major financial blunder to ISD 15, it is time for new board members who can ask the right questions. When I have asked questions from the school board during consideration of visitors I have had to wait up to two months for an answer and there was no follow up from any school member to find out if my concern has been taken care of. I will gurantee all speakers after consideration of visitors, will receive follow up calls to make sure their issue/concerns has been taken care of or keep them up to date on the status of their question(s)!

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

No, our sons, my nephews and necies have all graduated from ISD 15

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

I served on ISD 15 school board from 2001-2005 when we had to pay back to the state over \$4 million dollars because the previous school board did not ask questions. I left the school board because I became a contract trainer for Fred Pryor Seminars as a seminar presenter for many of his courses of information. I traveled for 5 years and conducted leadership, management, communications, safety and security in the work place, OSHA, and many, many, other seminars in 47 states for the company. I learned a lot from these seminars from our course book and from the attendees which I will use as a school board member. As a former graduate of St. Francis H.S. and current sub teacher for our district, I care about the future of our district. Caring, compassion and the willingness to TALK and LISTEN to our tax payers, employees, and students, is my strength and qualifications.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

To devolope trust with all full time administators of the school district, to set polices and direction for the district, to plan 3-5 years out for the future of the school district, to attend training classes to contiune to learn how to be a better school board member, to visit with all full staff personal by stopping into their work space to get their ideas on issues, to return ALL phone calls, to greet and talk with people who attend school board meetings, and to make the Hard, Right, Decisions when they have to be made!! To support and promote our school distiet at all times by letting people know what we have have to offer our students.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

By staying on top of the best learning methods, to have the best teachers and staff, to have the equipment and space to help our students to learn, to keep our school buildings up to date and a safe

place to attend classes. To make sure parents know our school district will always have the best interest of their child in mind when they attend our schools. To let people know if we made a mistake we will admit it, make corrections and move forward. To show that we Care about our students.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

Levies are for Learning, levies help to buy books, and equipment for the students, program changes, to what level will have to be looked at and to what level and what is the impact of the cut on students and staff? cuts in staff will be a last resort.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

K-5 18 to 20, 6-8 20-25, 9-12 25-28 depending on the type of class also helps to set limits. For example the metal shop only has so many pieces of equipment to work on during class, too many students and kids are waiting to complete projects.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

Auto shop, wood shop, metal shop, cooking classes, need to be improved. We need to expand these type of courses, why not allow them two hours in class to really work on a project? Job shadow, I would like for our Jr's/Sr's to spend time with the people who do the job everyday to find out, is this the job I really want to do? Grade school, more recess time, you can only learn so much sitting in a chair even middle and HS students can learn so much in a sit down lecture learning mode. Get up move about to work on projects keep them interested and on task.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

To stay on top of what is needed after graduation up to date programming and equipment is very important. We need to stay on top of what is the business world looking for from our students when they enter the workforce? Are we talking with them to make sure our students have the skills needed to go to work. The discussion we need to have with our federal/state elected officials and with the parents is, "This is what we need for our students and this is the cost to provide it, are you willing to help foot the bill for our students?"

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

Local level decisions is the best for our students. What is needed in our school district is different than another district. Two way communications is so important. Teachers, what do you see is needed, principals what do you see is needed, superintendent what do you see is needed. I firmly believe all voices need to be heard. Real story: Hotel management has an employee meeting. All were told they will be layed off for 5-6 months while an elevator will be installed for the first time in their building. For safety, dust, dirt and consrtuction they will have to shut down the hotel. Maint speaks up and ask why can't the elevator be built on the outside of the hotel? Engineers were brought in, looked at it again and said yes. Everyone kept their jobs and the hotel stayed open. Keep it local.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

Funding, Funding, Funding. Mandates from the state and federal elected officials with little or no funding. Yet because it is an mandate we have to do it and we are stuck with how to fund it, what do we cut? or how much does the local home/business owners have to pay to support the mandates.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

I ask for your support and vote to be elected to our school board. I do not shy away from hard work and really enjoy being part of the decision makers to make things happen. 25 years in the military, 5 years with Fred Pryor as a contract trainer, I have picked up many skills to help me as a school board member. I look forward to help our school district to become a magnet school where students and parents want to attend because of our teachers and programs.

Name: Sean Sullivan

Occupation: Economic Development Professional

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

Improving the ISD 15 image, need more leadership on the school board and better communication all around. I feel ISD 15 is viewed negatively from many people inside and outside of the district. Poor decisions made by district leadership have led to financial challenges moving forward. Strong leadership, a willingness to listen to and implement new ideas, and a history of being fiscally conservative is needed by the board to lead effectively and I believe I have those attributes. The way we improve image is with positive results and doing a better job celebrating positive student and athlete achievements.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

Yes, a Senior and a Sophomore at Saint Francis High School.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

Leadership, experience and strong fiscal management experience. I have held multiple elected, appointed positions at various levels of government (planning commission, Oak Grove City Council, Soil and Water Board). I know how to build consensus, analyze complex problems and to manage budgets that maximize every public dollar spent.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

A good board member needs to be actively involved in the district working to make it better for the students and community. Providing guidance, developing policy, and representing the interests of the community, students and teachers that provide a safe and effective learning environment is key. I want our district to be a leader in education.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

Improve safety and remove drugs from our busses and schools. Provide the tools and resources (technology, textbooks, teachers and facilities) necessary to give students an equitable opportunity to learn.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

Reallocating resources to achieve priority district goals would be my first course of action. If reallocation of resources does not provide the funds necessary, I would consider supporting a targeted levy that would make achieving priority district goals possible. I believe that our students deserve the same opportunity and quality of education as other districts and if a levy is needed I would be willing to send it out to the taxpayers for a vote to decide.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

Low student to faculty ratios are always preferred but it is a matter of budgeting to maximize dollars. I personally believe better student to faculty ratios are more important in the k-5 and 6-8 grade levels to assure we don't leave kids behind. I don't have a specific number I would recommend for each grade level but would be interested in hearing from teachers and management on what sizes are most cost effective and are norms within Minnesota.

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

Athletic participation in Varsity and JV level sports should satisfy at least one of the 3 required Gym credits. If it is not done on a one to one level I want to have a waiver system in place that would allow for students to take a STEM class instead of a Gym class as long as they have participated in a JV or higher physically active sport. Need continued support and introduction of students to Tech and industrial programs to expose student to these fields – college isn't for everyone and we need to do a better job preparing our students for varying employment options.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

Both are important. Balance between programming and good fiscal management is key. At the end of the day our School and Community need our kids to graduate with the tools and skills to secure employment or to prepare them for post-secondary education opportunities or certificate programs.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

It depends on the decisions being made. The board needs input from educators on policy and curriculum. The board also needs honest dialogue with educators and management staff so that the board can evaluate and implement changes that are needed. The board needs complete un biased information to make decisions that are going to best in the best interest of the kids Planning needs to be done better on facility management to avoid big ticket fix items that could be avoided with yearly maintenance. For example, the locker rooms are in need of major renovation now due to a lack of general maintenance on an annual basis. We need to budget for items that need maintenance.

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

District reliance on the local property tax system is a challenge. Some districts are richer than others based on the amount of commercial tax base they have in the district boundary. This enables the passage of levies for core facilities, technology, staff and faculty to be easier in richer districts. Open enrollment also is troublesome as it reduces the amount of money that comes to our district. We need more IB, AP and CIS classes at High School so that we are able to keep kids in the district. We lose that school spirit when some of our best and brightest students leave for their Junior and Senior years. If our district improves there will be more investment by businesses in our communities.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

I am excited at the opportunity to give back to my community. I think I have the skills and experience needed to be a great board member and leader in our community. I have raised my family in this

school district and am proud of my school district and the changes that are being made to improve it. There is still more work to be done and I want to be an active participant.

Name: Laura Waterworth

Occupation: Project Manager for Aveda Global Education

What issues caused you to run for the school board?

Having young children in the district means that I have a vested interest in the future of our schools and community. I want my children to be proud of where they grew up and their community. I want them to see that you build the world around you by being part of it. The value of public education can be priceless when all parties involved work together for the betterment of community.

Do you currently have any children enrolled in ISD #15 schools?

Yes, I have two children who attend East Bethel Community School and are starting kindergarten and first grade. Last year, I had the opportunity to volunteer in my daughter's classroom and attend various school events. I was so impressed with the teachers and staff that I met during those experiences.

What are your strengths or qualifications for school board?

I am collaborative and understand the value of establishing productive working relationships with individuals and groups of people. As a project manager I am constantly in situations that require me to bring people together to get a job done effectively, despite challenges and constraints that arise along the way. I am confident that my experience will translate well to working collaboratively with school board members, district leaders and the community. I am a great listener and problem solver; I have a talent for understanding a needs and finding appropriate solutions. I am able to identify the resources required and make thoughtful and informed decisions.

How do you perceive the role of school board members?

Our school board should consist of members who are ready to strengthen the relationship between the district and the community it serves. They should focus their efforts on building relationships by listening and keeping an open mind on all issues, and their decisions should be made in the best interest of the students.

How do you feel we could improve the public education system in our district?

I believe that enforcing the strategic plan that is currently in place, specifically building trust and facilitating engagement with all ISD 15 stakeholders, would improve the public education system in our district. One way to achieve this is to improve communication throughout the district and the community. Additionally, I think the district would see improvements if there were stronger connections among the various buildings and administration within each building. Teachers and administration sharing best practices from their classrooms/buildings could help their counterparts and peers improve efficiency, streamline processes, encourage creativity and ensure students are cared for emotionally and academically.

In the event the district is lacking financial resources, what would you recommend? (Levy referendum? Cuts in staff? Program changes?)

I am approaching this opportunity with no pre-conceived plan or agenda for financial decisions. That said, I know that managing the finances of any school district can be challenging. If presented with a scenario in which financial decisions would need to be made, my approach would be to listen to all sides, explore and research various solutions and thoughtfully and carefully assess every viable option to make an informed decision that supports the students of ISD 15.

As a member of the school board, what class size would you be committed to maintain for children in grades K-5? 6-8? 9-12?

Class sizes need to remain low, preferably under 24, so teachers can give attention to the specific needs of every student.

Our teachers are well-trained and talented, and with the right help, they are able to do a lot with growing class size. However, at a certain point, the education gets lost in the task of simply managing students. Every student in our district has his or her specific needs, and they can only be addressed when teachers have the space to reach them individually. Keeping class size low would be an issue I would try to commit to and ~~not budge on when faced with financial decisions.~~

Are there any areas in the curriculum that you feel need to be changed, improved, or see increased emphasis? If so, what are they?

I don't believe it is the role of the school board to determine the curriculum for the district. The environment our students will enter when they leave ISD 15 is constantly changing. Staying educated on what our students will need in that environment and keeping our curriculum current is the responsibility of our teachers and administration. Classroom teachers are on the front line of education, participating in professional development activities and bringing best practices back to their classrooms. The district should rely on these experts who have been trained to advise on curriculum decisions.

Which do you think is more important to a school district, increasing fund balance or increasing programming? Why?

It's important to have a reasonable balance, just like a household, for emergencies, etc. However, our students are the number one priority and it's our job to ensure they have a quality public education. I believe we can find a balance between resources and what is best for the students in our district and the future of our community.

What role do you think educators should play in the decisions made at the local schools?

Our educators are important. They spend so much time with our children. We need to listen to their concerns and recommendations and address them quickly. The learning environment is always changing, and we need to be agile so we can continue to prepare our children for the environment they will be stepping into when they graduate.

It is the responsibility of the school board to listen to our educators and administration and keep an open mind when evaluating and finding solutions for the challenges facing them. They are smart, qualified people, and we need to trust that they are making ~~the best decisions for our students.~~ The ~~strategic plan, which calls us to align and support all educational programs and services to achieve~~

~~the district's mission. Building this relationship with the educators and the administration is the only way to meet this goal.~~

In the next five years, what are the greatest challenges facing public education in Minnesota? In our district?

Predicting future challenges is difficult. Some research shows that issues like funding, poverty and technology will become common in many public schools. I see our local challenges being similar, and potentially including outdated classrooms and other facilities, teacher and administration turnover and lack of community support.

Do you have any other thoughts that you would like to share?

One of my greatest joys as a parent is watching my children experience the world and knowing they can be anything they want to be. I believe that every child should have this same opportunity, which is why I am excited and honored to be running for a seat on the ISD 15 School Board. Their mission is to provide quality education that enables all students to realize their full potential and make a positive impact on the world, and I want to join them by dedicating my time and talents to further the success of our students and schools. ~~If elected, I will lead with integrity, listen well, strive for collaboration and work hard for every student, parent, teacher, administrator and resident. I respectfully ask for your vote on November 8!~~