

School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

Delaware Twp.

1. Name TONY BAGATO

2. Why did you decide to run for the school board this year? I HAVE THREE YOUNG KIDS IN THE DISTRICT AND GIVEN MY EXPERIENCE AS A CITY PLANNER, I CAN HELP THE DISTRICT PLAN FOR FUTURE GROWTH. I AM RUNNING THIS YEAR TO INVEST IN MY KIDS, AND ALL KIDS EDUCATION

1. What is your educational background and relevant experience? I HAVE A DEGREE IN CITY PLANNING, AND I HAVE SERVED ON A BOARD FOR MY JUNIOR COLLEGE.

2. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system? FINANCIAL FUTURE BASED ON THE REDUCED ENROLLMENT, AND REFERENDUM. KEEPING THE BOARD NON-POLITICAL. REPLACEMENT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, AND FUTURE GROWTH.

3. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district? I KNOW THAT THE DISTRICT HAS HIRED A CHIEF EQUITY & INCLUSION OFFICER AND OFFER TRAINING FOR CERTAIN STAFF. ALSO THE DISTRICT HAS A MENTAL HEALTH & SCHOOL COUNSELING COORDINATOR TO ADDRESS SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

4. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy? YES

School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. Name
  - a. Sarah Donsbach
  
2. Why did you decide to run for school board this year?
  - a. I decided to run for school board this year because I was unhappy with the choices of the current representative in our township. I have five children who attend or have attended HSE schools and the beliefs of our current board representative did not represent the beliefs of my family.
  
3. What is your educational background and relevant experience?
  - a. I have lived in Hamilton County for most of my life. I attended Carmel schools K-12 and have a bachelor's degree from Purdue University. I graduated from Purdue in 2004 and went to work for the Mitch Daniels Campaign through the Indiana State Republican Party. I worked for the Daniels Administration for seven years and during that time I worked in legislative affairs for the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), the Criminal Justice Institute (ICJI) and the BMV. I have experience working with different stakeholder groups, bringing them together for a common goal and fostering compromises to achieve the best outcome for all.
  
4. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?
  - a. Mental/Social/Emotional health of our students and staff
  - b. Continued discussions on diversity.
  - c. Repairing the massive fracture in our community that has developed due to the pandemic.
  - d. Potential selection of a new superintendent to lead our district.
  - e. District Funding due to the decreased enrollment in the 2020-2021
  - f. Funding for continued renovations of outdated buildings vs funding for new construction to adapt to the growing population of our city.
  - g. Lastly, the one thing no one wants to discuss but given the rapid rate at which the east side of our city is growing and the number of housing developments that have been approved the evil word of redistricting cannot be ignored.
  
5. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district?
  - a. I know that we hired a chief equity officer in 2017 and that the school board added specific protections in 2018 to state that stated that LTBTQ+ students and staff are a "protected class". I also know as someone who grew up and attended school in hamilton county for k-12 that there are still large and deep-rooted issues when it comes to equity and diversity acceptance in our community.
  
6. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?
  - a. I do support the current policy.

School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. Name Amanda J Shera

2. Why did you decide to run for the school board this year?

to support constituents in HSE & have their voices heard

1. What is your educational background and relevant experience?

Bachelor of Science, Indiana University, accounting  
December 1991

2. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?

- Academic declension from COVID closure
- Financial impact of economic down-turn

3. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district?

- Students had discussions the first 5 days of class about gender identity, preferred pronouns

4. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?

As a board member, I am to support all policy that has passed, in accordance w/ ISBA.

Fall Creek  
Township

Jason Arnold

declined to participate

Chauna Leigh Holder - School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. Name
  - a. Chauna Leigh Holder
2. Why did you decide to run for the school board this year?
  - a. I am passionate about quality public education for ALL students and believe that my knowledge and experiences as an educator and professional nurse would be beneficial to the HSE School Board. As a native Hoosier that moved to Fishers specifically for the educational opportunities afforded by the district, I am invested in the continued success of the district for ALL students. As a person of color, I am uniquely positioned to champion equitable, diverse, and inclusive policies for ALL children in the district to effect optimal educational outcomes.
1. What is your educational background and relevant experience?
  - a. I possess several degrees and am currently pursuing a terminal degree and nurse practitioner credentials from Marian University (anticipated December 2021). I earned my Bachelor of Liberal Arts from DePauw University (1996), Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Indiana University Purdue University at Indianapolis (2000), Master of Science in Nursing (2008) and graduate certificate in Public Health (2010) from Indiana University. I have been a professional nurse for over twenty years, serving in a variety of settings including school administration, program creation and development, secondary and adult education, and a variety of leadership roles. I have served on the board of trustees for the Emerging Pearls Foundation, Center of Wellness for Urban Women, and the Warren Adult Education Advisory Board. I am actively engaged in community service through my international sorority where I serve as an officer and voting delegate.
2. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?
  - a. Although we have yet to realize the true impact of COVID-19, the challenges presented in its management and mitigation are showcasing our strengths as a society and highlighting important challenges to be reconciled. I entered nursing trained and prepared to meet the needs of people, no matter what those needs are. Especially during this season, I expect to leverage my training and experiences, so that healthy classrooms meet the needs of all students while protecting the health and wellness of our staff and educators.
  - b. In addition to COVID-19, I believe there are opportunities for HSE to improve in several areas including:
    - i. Increasing the diversity of teachers and administrators to better reflect the populations served by the District
    - ii. Planning for coordinated school and community growth, remodeling, and reinvestment in physical structures, redistricting to anticipate District needs
    - iii. Communication and Transparency in Leadership
    - iv. Security of both physical and virtual environments and the need for contingency planning to mitigate emergency responses

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- v. Fiscal Equity & Responsibility to eliminate differences in amenities and opportunities between schools in the same district based on the student population (i.e. free/reduced lunch population, exceptional learners, etc.)
3. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district?
- a. I am encouraged by the opportunities afforded by some leaders as evidenced by the climate and culture of particular buildings. A challenge for the HSE Board is to replicate and disseminate those ideas that build community while also eliminating systems and structures that impede the pursuit of safe, inclusive learning environments that welcome and support ALL students.
4. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?
- a. Absolutely. The school board is tasked with developing policies to impact the quality education provided to ALL students. Our children deserve safe spaces to explore with support while learning about themselves and their peers in preparation for becoming leaders in a diverse, global economy.

## School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. **Name** – Matt Stolle (candidate for Fall Creek Township)

2. **Why did you decide to run for school board this year?**

For the past 8 years, I have seen poor planning within the district that resulted in flawed building decisions, flawed redistricting and swollen classrooms. I would like to bring some business and planning acumen to the School Board to bring about a better decision making process within the district.

3. **What is your educational background and relevant experience?**

I graduated from Butler University in 1995 with a degree in Finance and minor in Philosophy. I have worked in the financial service industry for over 25 years. My primary focus has been institutional management and planning. I have served on the Hamilton Southeastern Schools Foundation Board as well as the Finance Committee for Early Learning Indiana (formerly Day Nursery). I currently sit on the board for the Southeastern Swim Club. I ran for School Board 6 years ago.

4. **Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?**

In the next four years, I expect some of the biggest challenges we will face are a Superintendent search, redistricting to accommodate continued growth, the potential debate around expanding our high schools versus building a third high school, additional school buildings (depending on growth), referendum renewal and community partnerships. Another challenge for our school system will be the continued work to address racism, achievement gaps, and offering resources for students who learn differently.

5. **What do you know about the current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district?**

It has been good to witness some of the SEL that our students are experiencing. This is very important relative to mental health, especially in the current pandemic. It is very apparent that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training is being done with teachers and administration. This is a good first step, but I think it can improve to be more inclusive of other student groups.

6. **Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?** Yes

No  Yes

Fall Creek  
Township

Suzanne Thomas

declined to participate



School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. Clint Wilson
2. I have a passion for service and a desire to see our amazing school district continue on the path of excellence. In the past 14 months, I've had an opportunity to see so many amazing things in the HSE district and I want to be a part of supporting that work. I have also seen some opportunities to improve the district and I want to be a part of that as well.
1. Telecommunications (News/Broadcast Journalism) Degree from Ball State University. I attended public schools in Indiana (South Bend K-7 and Goshen 8-12) as well. For the past 15 years I have served as an agent and in leadership roles with State Farm Insurance. I have been a Fishers resident since 2013 and a small business owner in Fishers since June of last year.
2. There are several issues that I think are worthy of focus in the next few years:
  - a. Maintaining/Decreasing class sizes and expanding enrichment opportunities like the programs at Conner Prairie and Ritchey Woods. I don't think we should be focused on the upcoming referendum per se, but we should be advertising what the referendum does for our students. It's critical we begin to regain trust from the community and build support for the work that is done with referendum funds.
  - b. Communication has been a challenge with parents and staff. While it has improved somewhat during COVID, there is a need for additional modes of communication and more frequent communication. If there are good things going on in the district, parents shouldn't have to hunt to find it. When there are challenging issues, communication needs to be open... a podcast and other venues for sharing more detailed information should be considered. For staff, I do not believe the communication from the district to staff over the summer was sufficient. By the surveys completed by the HSEA, it is clear that there are way too many unanswered questions, some of which should and could have been clearly answered.
  - c. Redistricting is never easy, but it is an opportunity to take a step back and see if everything is being done in the best way to educate children. I believe as the Wayne Township building is opened, we should be looking at all of our buildings and developing a vision for how they will be used now and into the future. This is also an opportunity to determine what would be required to establish a feeder system and if there is an acceptable solution, it should absolutely be pursued.
3. I've learned quite a bit about the plans to provide both an equitable and a safe education experience for students. All students should feel safe and welcomed in the classroom. All educators should feel supported in offering a safe and equitable classroom experience. There is work to be done in this area, especially in regards to race relations.
4. Wholeheartedly.

School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

Wayne Twp.

1. Name

Sarah Parks-Reese

2. Why did you decide to run for the school board this year?

I was concerned about statements made by the current Wayne Township representative at multiple 2019 meetings. I believe in being the change you want to see in your community.

1. What is your educational background and relevant experience?

I have worked in early care and education settings for over 20 years. I have a Masters Degree in Education from Ball State University.

2. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?

Equity still seems to be a challenge, but appreciate the strides Dr. Buchanan has made. The schedule switch continues to be a topic to explore. Redistricting with new Wayne Township Elementary - working to create true feeder systems for all. Communication, Financial CONCERNS.

3. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district? I'm aware of the District Equity Team of administrators across the district who work to discuss how or if HSE is meeting the needs of all students. Additionally, I know the building level Equity Coaches devise strategies and goals around the five focus areas of the Inclusive Excellence Model.

4. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?

Yes absolutely - I participated in the HSEqual group that raised our voices to the board for inclusive language.

Wayne Township

Tiffany Pascoe

declined to participate

## School Board Candidate Questionnaire 2020

1. **Name:** Dr. Ron Thieme
2. **Why did you decide to run for the school board this year?**

I am passionate about seeing people grow to their full potential, no matter their current station in life. I am passionate about Hamilton Southeastern Schools, as my entire family is a product of the HSE system (in some sense I owe my life to HSE, because I met my wife of 36 years while we were in high school!). I am passionate about bringing people together to work through difficult issues on behalf of our students. And I'm passionate about leading with vision. This is why I'm running for HSE School Board.

1. **What is your educational background and relevant experience?**

My educational background could be described as "from Durbin to Doctorate." I attended Durbin Elementary School for grades 1-6 and graduated from Hamilton Southeastern High School in 1979. I earned bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from Purdue University. My career experience spans consulting for organizations large and small; starting and scaling companies; and serving as senior executive for organizations in the technology, life sciences, and healthcare sectors. I've also had the pleasure of serving on several boards of directors, many of which are focused on providing services to children, including the Indiana 4-H Foundation, Lutheran Child and Family Services, and Community Health Network. Through these experiences I have developed particular skills in caring for all people, managing multi-billion dollar budgets, setting strategy, and governing and leading with vision.

In my most recent role as Chief Experience Officer for Community Health Network, a 16,000-employee organization, I cultivated and ensured exceptional experiences for both customers and employees—a concept that is highly applicable for education as well. The way our teachers experience their work on a day-to-day basis is just as important as creating an environment of positive experiences for students. In fact, the teacher experience is primary—without that as our first focus we will be hobbled in creating the experiences our students so richly deserve.

I have worked with executive teams and boards of directors to help them deal with difficult issues productively and responsibly, because a well-functioning board is critical to the success of the entire organization. I understand the importance of creating a shared vision and communicating it well to the entire organization. When people catch the vision, they can more easily rise to meet challenges that will come their way.

Finally, my wife and I are passionate about seeing young people grow in knowledge and maturity. For example, we have formed a close relationship with the HSE FFA Chapter, and enjoy supporting that organization in many ways, including hosting their events at

our farm and helping individual students develop their leadership skills in their own ways.

**2. Other than pandemic issues, what do you perceive to be the biggest challenges facing our school system?**

Aside from how to respond to unprecedented circumstances caused by the pandemic, HSE will face several challenges over the next few years. Given the state of the economy, the district's funding from the state may be in question. Additionally, the operating referendum passed a few years ago expires in a couple years. HSE will need to cope with these financial challenges as it addresses continued growth. It is also possible that Dr. Bourff will retire, necessitating a leadership transition. Hamilton County is not insulated from societal issues that are causing unrest around the country and increased polarization and division here at home. On behalf of and for the good of our students and teachers, the board needs to lead through these and other challenges with an atmosphere of open inquiry, collegiality, and mutual respect. We must demonstrate civil discourse and statesmanship for our students.

**3. What do you know about current plans to provide an equitable and safe education experience for students in our district?**

HSE has taken some important steps in this regard. The Social Emotional Learning process and #WeGotThis campaign are necessary to connect the whole person to the learning environment. HSE's Mental Health emphasis is to be commended, as these issues are increasingly prominent in our school system. The work of our Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer is vital, particularly given the racial tensions that are now escalating around the country. The challenge is how to move these conversations forward given a pervasive societal atmosphere of highly-charged emotions and incomplete data. We must learn together. HSE also addresses physical safety through safe visitor and volunteer processes, the use of school resource officers, anti-bullying programs, and others.

**4. Do you support the existing non-discrimination board policy?**

Yes.