

03/02/2023 League of Women Voters of Illinois

1. What skills, experience and qualities would you bring to this office?

I've been a D64 board member since 2019: I was secretary and a policy committee member for the 1st 2 years. I'm currently the vice president and on the student services action plan committee. I've been a D64 parent for 9 years and have lived in Park Ridge for almost 4 decades. During my time on the board, I've espoused the qualities of humility, service, and commitment. I'm able to consider the input of experts in the field, ask questions, and respect the needs of all stakeholders. I'm grateful to be able to serve in this capacity and take the responsibility of being a board member seriously by devoting the necessary time to board matters. The skills I've honed as an attorney translate well into board service. My job is to read, research, write, negotiate, and counsel clients in order to solve their problems and help people make well-reasoned decisions. I was selected as a Leading Lawyer for the past three years and an Emerging Lawyer for the prior two. In law school I was a Distinguished Scholar Award recipient and Law Review lead articles editor. In college I was a member of the Marquette University Honors Program and obtained an honors degree. Thus, I truly see the value of a good education.

2. What are the most pressing issues facing this office? How do you propose to address them?

Learning loss, behavior issues, and allocation of resources while maintaining sound financial practices are the most pressing issues. I plan to continue supporting the strategic plan, including improving staffing and ensuring consistency for all students with MTSS, 504 plans, and special education. I want to make sure that our teachers, TAs, and staff feel supported. I plan to rejoin the policy committee to focus our work as board members. The policies should encompass the district's goals. I also want to make sure the board pursues inquiries and makes sure that the information received is timely and thorough. We need to seek and follow the advice of our counsel and discuss important issues that affect students. Finally, I hope to improve communication. When people are informed that the board has a certain position, then the statement should be something that the board has actually discussed. When something involving legal consequences occurs, we should hear about it from within and then communicate it effectively to the public. When parents have concerns about what's going on in the schools, then we should listen with the goal of helping.

3. What is your understanding of social emotional learning and its inclusion in the curriculum for D64 schools?

The board unanimously approved (and I continue to support) the strategic plan that was recommended by the committee in April of 2021. Improving the SEL program is part of the plan goal of exploring program expansion. Board Policy 6:65 requires SEL to be incorporated into the curriculum and other educational programs.

4. What is your experience with inclusion and what do you think our school district can do to increase inclusive practices?

Enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is one of the goals of the strategic plan. I supported these efforts by serving as a member of D64's Equity Leadership Team. The district can follow the Equity Action Plan that the committee prepared and presented to the board to increase inclusive practices.

5. What do you think it means for students to be supported in the 'least restrictive environment'? Do you think D64 provides adequate accommodations?

The least restrictive environment is a continuum in which a student is placed in the most appropriate setting for that student, but also with nondisabled peers to the greatest extent possible. D64 provides adequate accommodations in many instances, but it also has much room for improvement. Such issues were described more fully in the audit that was presented to the board in May of 2022. I was a member of the Student Services Action Plan Committee, which prepared goals and objectives to help the district continue to move in the right direction.