

School Board Director Candidates – 2017

Good day. We are Southwest Washington Education (www.swwededucation.org). We focus on reporting on and discussion of K-12 education issues in SWW. We are interested in learning about your views regarding various topics around education as you run for a school director position. If you choose to share your thoughts we will post them on the blog. We have set up a special section for this upcoming election so people can easily find your answers.

You can email your responses to: swwededucation@gmail.com

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Email: llafet4@gmail.com

Campaign website:

School District: Evergreen SD

Position: District 5

Resume/CV: (please attach to your email to us):

Why are you the best candidate for the school board position?

I have been involved with my children's education as a parent on the PTO board at Ellsworth Elementary (president 3 years), Wy'Easy Middle School (president 2 years) & with Evergreen School District Foundation Board in the capacity of VP of Fundraising 4 years. These leadership experiences have allowed me to work closely with teachers and administrators in providing much needed resources in the classroom. I too have personally experienced the result of a great educational experience in that my daughter who has gone through the Evergreen SD as a kindergartner will be graduating this year from Mountain View HS! My son is a sophomore t Mountain View HS.

What are your positions on:

ESSA: Every Student Succeeds Act passed during the Obama Administration was a bi-partisan effort to help alleviate some of the restrictions of the NCLB and the re-authorization of NCLB which had expired. Education practices, like health reform, will be constantly revisited by partisan efforts and education laws will become subjective under each administration. My position/ response on these education law changes will be how do we shield or keep a static culture for our children? Each of these act must maintain a set of steadfast standards and the our lawmakers must be accountable in keeping a set consistent practices.

Common Core: There is a saying, "The man with the gold makes the rules." The idea of a system wide national/state standardized testing seems like a good idea especially in regards to the perceived notion that college freshman are in need of remedial help in the common core of freshman classes. What is at the crux of this controversial plan, was the speed in which it was adopted and implemented, the lure of much needed dollars in cash strapped educational areas, equalization of standard education across state lines, more efficient use of time for the college freshman and the multi state game called Race to the Top.

Again, my position and posture is that we urge our educators and state lawmakers to make careful and analytical decisions before jumping onto the newest trend of educational reform. We must involve the stakeholders at all cost meaning parents should be allowed time to examine, evaluate and give input back to their child's teachers, school boards and local legislator. Again, we are one's who have to deal with the

aftermath of yet another method of teaching our students who are already feeling the stress of higher graduation rates and more test.

SBAC (and other high stakes testing): Since SBAC- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium- and the other similar “high stakes testing” are being rolled out, one needs to wonder what is the 1) amount of money being spent on “digitalization” to support these test 2) the amount of professional development time for teachers to be acquainted with these methods 3) the confusion and anxiety for students and parents to deal with these at home? The core question of accountability is how then do you do punish/reward the child and more importantly how do we reward the educator and thusly the administrator? I do support streamlining the educational process, I am cautiously skeptical of yet another set of test to measure these competencies. Again, one has to ask what is the end result? The end result should be that our students can demonstrate a core of knowledge based skills in which they can pursue either a trade or a professional career.

Gender identify training: In the 2017/2018 OSPI is planning on requiring all school districts to teach “gender identity” starting in kindergarten. Do you support this? Yes No (You can add comments)

No, I do not support “gender identity training” beginning in kindergarten. In my opinion OPSI is simply following a populist ideology. I have had conversations with kindergarten teaches who are having to deal with their students lack of being able to tie their shoes, zip up their pants and do not know where they live. Kindergarten students are expected to understand the alphabet, numbers, colors and shapes. So not only are these teachers having to teach basic social and personal hygiene skills they are dealing with a whole host of behavioral issues, so the question we need to be asking OSPI is when are they supposed to teach lifestyle choices when they can’t even tie their shoes. More importantly we need to be laying the basic framework of acceptance, respect, compassion and values at the kindergarten level. The tides of trends will always change but the “golden rule” will never.

Bathrooms/Showers – Currently Washington State requires school districts to allow a student to use any facility based on the gender they identify with rather than their biological function. What’s your position?

I do not believe that children should be using restrooms and or showers of the opposite sex. But this being said we are to be in compliance with the RCW 49.60 law which has been in place since 2006.

What’s your position on school vouchers? These mechanisms for alternative education is yet to be tested?

Can alternative schools work, yes I believe they can. The concept/practice of the “voucher system” still lies with the parent involvement, alternative school oversight by local or state education boards, and what are achievable result expectations? Our district has done a great job of trying to keep the cost of education down. Our district has partnered with community groups who have conducted school supply drives to help equip young students with their school supply needs. (I have led this effort personally with others for three of those years when I served on the Evergreen School District Foundation Board.) Do, I believe in choice yes, but what happens when that para- education model fails? The students is then is forced back to public school. Precious resources are expended in determining where they are academically and socially. I am in favor of the investment in public education but remain cautiously optimistic at looking at alternative learning centers models.

What’s your position on Charter schools? Charter Schools compared to the Evergreen SD – no comparison.

That being said, some would reason that alternatives learning centers are good. Competition is good, this is the American way. Again, when you view the OPSI results for our district you will find that we are achieving very good results. The data would suggest charter schools do not perform as well as the public school, management of the charter school seems to be somewhat unstructured to that of the public school, charter schools have employed educators who have lost their license and a whole host of other problems. Yet, there is

an example of a charter school in Oregon that had about sixty some high school students. This charter school was funded by a few of the trade unions; electrical, carpenter, and pipe fitter to name a few. This charter had a graduation rate which was in the mid 90s, a student could graduate into the journeyman program, thus within a few short years was earning a way of \$60,000-\$80,000 a year. The only prerequisite was that you had to pass a drug test. This program was sadly killed by the district that oversaw it. Children and their parent should not be the unwitting pawns in this game of educational choice but demands clear policies and governance from the state and local school boards.

What are your views about teacher's unions? I believe our teachers deserve to be paid a fair and prevailing wage. We have been fortunate to have union personnel who have worked with the school board in determining those salaries. I believe when unions become aggressive and ask for more than what we economically can afford we then begin to teeter on a slippery slope of large budget shortfalls. We only have so many dollars that we can spend. When the unions threaten to strike and we are at risk of fragmenting the community, then perhaps we need to take a step back and re-evaluate our positions.

What does "fully fund education" mean to you? It has been clear through the McCleary decision that the state of Washington "fully fund" basic education has met the "school bus transportation," funding materials and operation cost but seems to be stalled on teacher and other school employee salaries. Our district through a series of levies have successfully funded all day kindergarten, lower class sizes, extra curricular activities, sports and more. We are doing a very good job at funding basic education. The Evergreen SD has been recognized for keeping one of the lowest administration and central office cost in the state.

What are the top three (3) issues in your school district and what will you do to address them?

- 1) Committing to raising and closing the literacy gap in our elementary and middle schools. Successful graduation rates depend on these feeder schools. I see my job in understanding the issues by talking with teachers and parents and getting them the resources that they need.
- 2) Opening more opportunities for students to exploring different pathways to a successful life. College is one pathway but there are other pathways such as trade schools or specialized institutes. We must expose students to these different ideas of career paths. When have focused much of our efforts on standardized testing of intellect/knowledge yet have done very little in testing the student's emotional and temperament IQ. Our job should be to truly give students the tools they need so they can function and live a fulfilled life in the community of their choosing.
- 3) Strengthening the relationships between teachers, administrators, school board and most importantly the families that we serve. To many times the bonds of mistrust have splintered our community. One group feels that they are superior to another. One of the ways elected school board members can bring an environment of cohesion is to craft policy which governs the superintendent who affects the district.

Campaign statement (max 100 words) - I am the product of a quality public education, my children have received a quality education and I desire that the "furthest child" receive a quality and positive educational experience. My years as a volunteer leader on parent teacher organizations, working alongside teachers and administrators has given me the opportunity to enhance those lives by providing much needed resources for their classroom. I believe my creative insight, leadership experiences, and the ability to build consensus as a board member will help me to have a positive impact for the district, the voters, and most importantly the children of SW Washington.

Other comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to share a few thoughts regarding education and its impact on children.