



League of Women Voters of Saratoga

## Voter Guide School Board Elections

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# Saratoga County School Districts May 2014

## Saratoga Springs Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Saratoga Springs City School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes nine unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Three board seats are up for election this year. You must be Registered to vote. Absentee Ballots are available. Contact District. District telephone number is 693-1450. Polls are open from 7 AM to 9 PM

### Candidates (choose 3):



#### Brian Farr

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** bf1step@gmail.com

**Education:** SUNY Plattsburgh Masters Degree in Education

**Community Involvement:** Saratoga County Prevention Council Executive Board Member, Dorothy Nolan School Odyssey of the Mind Coordinator/Coach, Wilton Youth NBA League Coach

**Experience and Qualifications:** Hudson Valley Community College Chemical Dependency Program Supervisor/Instructor, St. Peter's Addiction Recovery Centers NYS Credentialed Substance Abuse Counselor, Former BOCES Young Scholars Instructor - this program was aimed at educating children identified as gifted/talented and was discontinued due to lack of funding -

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a substance abuse counselor in the Saratoga region for the last 15 years, I have witnessed many challenges and issues facing our youth. One of my main goals as a community member, parent, and school board member is doing everything we can to increase character education and assist students to learn the skills necessary to work cooperatively and respectfully with each other throughout their educational process. My experiences as a counselor have shown the devastating impact on children who do not feel accepted, liked, or safe during their years in school. I believe that we all share the responsibility to guarantee every child a safe, nurturing, supportive environment from the first day in Kindergarten until High School graduation day. As a school board member, I am fully committed to working towards this goal for every student within our district.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** The Common Core State Standards Initiative is, in theory, an assessment tool in the areas of English Language Arts and Mathematics. I do not completely oppose the Common Core Standards, and I do believe that we need a means of effective guidelines and assessment to assist students as

they prepare for life in a fast moving, competitive and complicated world. The issues I see with the current Common Core Standards are based on how effective they are in this preparation process. I believe that changes need to be made within the current structure and standards that are based on feedback from parents, teachers, and school administrators in order to streamline this initiative. I strongly believe that critical thinking skills are an essential component towards achievement for our future leaders, and this is an area that needs to begin with early childhood education and continue throughout school. Foreign languages, music, arts, and clubs such as Odyssey of the Mind are all valuable tools

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** I am not campaigning with a set agenda to reduce money in any specific area of the school budget and/or to increase a definite area. I do believe that the school board, the administrators, and all school staff have an obligation to be honest and responsible stewards with the funds that are allocated to us in order to provide our students with the best educational experience possible. To this end, I would be dedicated to frequent reviews in all areas of the budget, and to ensuring that taxpayer revenues are always being spent in areas and ways that reflect sound, considerate judgment and the best interests of our students, staff, and community.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** In my term(s) on the school board, I would like to continue learning about all aspects of running and maintaining the excellent educational system that Saratoga has come to depend on in educating our children. My primary goal as a school board member is to guarantee every student in our district a safe, nurturing, tolerant environment in which to grow, and learn, and challenge themselves educationally in order to achieve success and happiness throughout their lives.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I look forward to serving on the Saratoga School Board and I encourage further discussion or questions on any issues that are of concern to you. I hope that in these brief answers I have shown my sincere desire to serve the interests of our children, the school staff, and our community to the best of my ability. I thank you all for considering me for this prestigious and important position.

## **Chip Locke**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Community Involvement:** Previous President Greenfield Elementary HSA (4 years), Board of Ed. Saratoga Springs City School district past 3 years, Greenfield Elementary School shared decision making team (5 years), Volunteer coach for Greenfield Rec. program (4 years), Volunteer coach Saratoga Miss Softball (4 years), Registered Volunteer for Girl Scouts of America, Junior Achievement Volunteer (3 years), Volunteer for Code Blue Saratoga.

**Experience and Qualifications:** 3 Years Board of Education Trustee, 1 year Board of Education Vice President, 5 Years Greenfield Elementary School Shared decision making team.

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** Along with 3 years as a Trustee on the Board of Education, I bring the knowledge of a very involved parent in our school system. I have two children in our school district, a son at Greenfield School and a daughter at Maple Avenue Middle School, and I see the stellar work that is being done by the administrators and faculty. I am also the son of a retired teacher from the school district. These three factors give me the unique ability to look at the business of the district from different perspectives when making decisions.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Our district is already well on it's way to being a leader in preparing our students for the future. We already offer programs in robotics and have a 21st Century Academy. Our district's "Vision 2018" is our plan for the future in which every student has: Access and Opportunity, Lifetime skills, Personalization, Innovation and Creativity, and Community. We currently do and always have supported programs in foreign language, arts and music, and sports. My goal is for this to continue as these programs are very important to the education of our children. Although the Common Core was officially implemented state wide this year, most of our students are in their 2nd year and our pilot students are in their 3rd year thanks to our District's forward thinking. We are not seeing the

struggles of other district's that waited until this year to implement. As a volunteer in the schools, it is great to see the same type of rigor being used in Social Studies, Science, and even art and music.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Over the past few years, we have seen a change in where school district's funding comes from. The majority of our funding now comes from the local tax payers rather than the state. Our district has been very fortunate to have a great Administrative Cabinet to help guide us as to where money is better spent. I am proud to be a part of the team that has brought zero layoffs with a minimal increase to the tax levy, while other local districts are not fairing as well. You can not go into the budget process with specific spending priorities or possible reductions in mind. Each year, every program and every expense needs to be evaluated for possible cost saving, not necessarily to eliminate the program, but to run it more efficiently.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I would like to see our district continue to be a leader in the public school system. I want to help ensure that every student has access to a quality education. We need to continue to make sure every student has a safe, nurturing environment in which to learn and become our future leaders.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I look forward to continuing to serve on our School Board. My involvement in our school system shows my passion for the education of our children. Thank you for your consideration as I ask for your vote.

## **Mia Pfitzer**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Education:** Associates in Science from Northeastern University

**Community Involvement:** Previous HSA volunteer and president Dorothy Nolan Elementary school. Previous Religious Ed teacher St. Clements. Board of Ed Saratoga Springs City School district past 15 years. Ballston Spa Community Band member.

**Experience and Qualifications:** I have been on the Board in Saratoga for the past 15 years. I am also newly elected to the BOCES Board.

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** First, I would bring 15 years of experience to the Board. This is my 15th year as a Trustee of the Saratoga Springs City School District. I have been on the Board through renovation projects, very strenuous fiscal times, and changes in Administration. I am interested in moving our district forward in a fiscally responsible way towards our Vision 18 Goals.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** I have recently attended the National School Boards Conference. One thing I learned that interests me is not just STEM education, but STEAM, being sure to add the Arts to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Saratoga has a Vision 18 goal that includes this Power Standard for creativity and innovation. We are well on our way to helping our students compete and learn 21st century skills. We have to be. It is already 2014! I am always proud of our district and all that we are able to offer our students. We have programs from robotics to 21st Century Academy, from teacher continuing ed. to grants from our Education Foundation. We support Drama Clubs to Robotics Clubs to Dance/Move clubs. Our students excel in many aspects of Art and Music. The Common Core (implemented this year) will assist us in getting to our long term goals. Our long distance learning will aid in allowing more language experiences along with many other subjects.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** I am interested in continuing programming as appropriate. We need to continually monitor what is working and has good enrollment and what is not. We need to be reactive and proactive. We need to listen to teachers and students in this regard. I am very aware of continuing our district in a positive student driven curriculum while being mindful of the costs. The State has gone from contributing to almost half of our budget to now less than one quarter in the 15 years I have been on the Board. Our taxpayers deserve a 21st Century school district with as limited a tax increase as possible. We are blessed, in Saratoga, to have an exemplary Administrative Cabinet to guide us in making budget and

programming determinations. We have been able to go forward with a zero percent increase a few of my years on the Board. That is why reevaluating constantly is imperative.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I would like to work with other districts and learn how other districts make decisions and do research. What programs or cost saving measures work in other places that perhaps we could implement in Saratoga Springs. I am also always very proud to let other districts know what we are offering and how we accomplish our goals.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** As a member of the WSWHE Board of Education I am excited to bring new thought and experiences to the Saratoga Springs Board. I am always learning and would be very thankful to add another three years of service to our district.

## **Stephen Verral**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Education:** Bachelors of Arts University of Michigan, Masters of Public Health University of Illinois, Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine AT Still University

**Community Involvement:** Medical Director Glens Falls Hospital Free Skin Cancer Screening Program, Dermatology Sponsor Sun Shade Grant Program Division Street Elementary, Sponsor Division Street STEM Lab, Curriculum Development Committee Division Street STEM Lab,

**Experience and Qualifications:** Successful business owner for last 8 years working in a field similar to public education which is highly regulated with numerous unfunded mandates.

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a father of two children in the Saratoga Springs School District, I have a vested interest in the continued success of our public school system. I am a successful physician who was educated through the public school system with an advanced degree in statistics. I can offer unique advice on the benefits and pitfalls in this age of increasing data collection, assessment and reliance on standardized testing to evaluate students and teachers. I understand the difficulties to being successful in a highly government regulated field with numerous unfunded mandates. I can offer creative ideas in meeting these mandates in a cost effective way that still offers a superior educational experience.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Saratogs Springs School District has embraced the Common Core Standards and I agree that this approach can better prepare our students for a global economy. Individual school districts need to take a more proactive role in the implementation of the Common Core Standards in a way that fits with local community concerns but still meets the State of New York requirements. Unfortunately, the current approach to meeting the State requirements has focused so much on ELA and math that we have lost focus on the importance of science, history, foreign language, arts, and music. Exposure to all of these fields of study, especially at young ages, is crucial for critical thinking, problem solving and civic engagement.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** It is difficult to discuss spending priorities when I don't have all available information. I will need to collect data and immerse myself in all aspects of the budget in order to fully appreciate all the challenges involved. I will do this, however, being guided always with an eye towards providing the best education for the students, inherent in which are the best resources, the best educators and the best facilities. I will lean heavily towards allocating funding for that which is evidence-based, moving us towards what experience and science tells us is successful.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** As a member of the board, I hope to share my expertise and knowledge to help Saratoga Springs School District be a leading public school in New York. To that end, during my term on the school board I will strive to find ways to preserve and enhance opportunities for our students to engage in learning that fosters creativity; I hope to ensure better communication between the school board and the community; and I would like to seek out ways in which we can help our students flourish academically and excel as a school system.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** There are numerous changes occurring within the public education system. A board made up of diverse, educated and open minded individuals is needed to successfully guide our school system. Trying to follow the safe path and maintaining the old standards will guarantee that we will fail and our students will suffer because of it. Our students deserve the best we have to offer and I am prepared to provide that to them.

## Ballston Spa Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Ballston Spa Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Two board seats are up for election this year. Polls are open from 7 am to 9 pm, You must be a registered voter to vote. Absentee ballots are available Contact District to obtain one. District telephone is 884-7195

### Candidates (choose 2):



#### Tony Leva

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** tleva13@gmail.com

**Education:** BS Marketing & Management - Siena College

**Community Involvement:** Alzheimer's Association of Northeastern New York - coach/volunteer, Academy for Character Education at the Sage Colleges - Board Member, Capital District Youth Rugby - coach/volunteer

**Experience and Qualifications:** A brief bio: Tony Leva, Kimberly Leva - wife and Coordinator of the Counseling Center at Colonie Central HS, kids Christian and Caroline 9th and 7th grades at Ballston Spa, lives at 205 Drummond Drive, Ballston Spa since 2001. A life long resident of the area graduating from BHBL in 1986, Siena College in 1990 with a BS Marketing & Management degree and has been in the Marketing, Enterprise Technology and Software industry for the past 24 years. Passions include family, ending Alzheimer's by supporting the Alzheimer's Association of NENY, the Academy for Character Education at the Sage Colleges as part of the Community Advisory Board and the development of youth rugby in the Capital District. My goal in running for School Board is to make a unique contribution to our students, families and community. Through my business experience, effort and commitment, I will strive for excellence in all aspects of our students' education.

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I have worked with both public and private sector businesses and with public/private partnerships in NYS for the past 24 years. My expertise in enterprise marketing, technology and software development brings a unique set of eyes to the decision making process for the board. Additionally my interest in Character Education and giving back through community service will be an asset to the board.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** I feel Ballston Spa Central School District is prepared for providing the 21st century skills our students will need and we can tap into our past by engaging the parents and community to further prepare our students.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Child safety and education

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** Create a connected district where educating everybody takes everybody

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Go Scottie's!



## Jeanne Obermayer

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** jmobermayer@gmail.com

**Education:** Master of Arts, Bowling Green State University; Bachelor of Arts, Duquesne University

**Community Involvement:** Ballston Spa Board of Education, 2005-present, currently President; Brookside Museum/Saratoga County Historical Society Board of Trustees, 2006 - present, currently Board President; YMCA Camp Chingachgook Board of Advisors, 2012-present, currently Secretary; Religious Education Teacher, 2001-2013

**Experience and Qualifications:** 9 years on the Ballston Spa Central School District Board of Education serving on the Finance and Audit Committees, Policy Committee, Facilities Committee, District Safety Committee and Executive Committee. 30 years working in Higher Education

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a prior college Dean of Students, I know what students need to be successful in college (and what makes them unsuccessful) and while not all students go to college; I believe my insight and knowledge have helped Ballston Spa identify in our mission what we need to prepare our students for the work force and future education. I have also developed student learning outcomes and assessments to measure whether those objectives are being met. Serving on the Board for the past nine years, I've learned how important it is to engage the community in what is happening in the district. I know how vital on-going communication, two-way communication, is between the district personnel (administration, teachers, staff and board) and parents and students. On a different note, in my current position at Siena, I am dealing with much of the same legislative and regulatory mandates affecting K-12 public education. I have to ensure our compliance at Siena and know what it takes.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Have a mission statement that outlines what the district sees as critical for 21st century success. Then revisit that mission statement. Tie all that is done in the district to how it supports achieving that mission. Talk about the mission so that everyone knows what they should be doing and how it fits into the daily operations. With all the distractions bearing down on districts personnel from the state and federal governments, it can be easy to lose sight of what we're really trying to achieve. That mission keeps everyone grounded and moving in the same direction - forward. I would retain literacy. Literacy is the foundation for success in STEM, foreign languages, the arts, critical thinking. Students have to be able to READ AND COMPREHEND in order to do today's math problems, program software, study the sciences. I support a common set of standards (the common core itself can be compared to the AP exam - a common set of skills) that are implemented with common sense.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** My spending priorities in the school budget process are those that support the mission as outlined by the district. How does the budget support furthering our mission? Those items/areas with the broadest and/or most direct impact on mission would be those I consider off-limits for reductions. I would always look to increase efficiencies and maximize capacity when looking to tighten up the budget. How can we do our business better, differently by reorganizing, reallocating to squeeze the most for the budget. If we had to make cuts, I would look to those areas with the least impact on student learning.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I would like to see Ballston Spa continue to grow. We have accomplished so much for our students in the nine years I've been on the Board. We implemented the first International Baccalaureate program in the suburban council, initiated Robotics team(s) - winning Robotics teams, I might add; created an Early College High School with partners at TEC-SMART; Ballston Spa High School was recognized as one of "America's Best High Schools" by Newsweek Magazine, by the Washington Post and by US News and World Report. The Ballston Spa High School received the National AP Achievement Award from the College Board for increasing access to AP coursework while maintaining achievement levels. We engaged our community members in a year long facilities review and they developed a master plan resulting capital improvements to our existing buildings and a new school. I

want to keep this momentum moving forward for our students and continue thinking outside the box despite the distractions.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I truly believe in giving back to the community. My family has lived in the district since 1990 and both my children attended district schools. My son graduated in 2011 and my daughter will graduate this year from the high school. When I first ran for the Board of Education, I did so because my background and expertise seemed to be a natural fit, a place I could contribute. I hope I have contributed in some small way and would really appreciate the opportunity to continue to make Ballston Spa a district our families, taxpayers and students can be proud of and one looked to by others as a leader in education.



## **Dorothy Sellers**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** sellersdot@yahoo.com

**Education:** NYS Licensed Practical Nurse, Associates Degree in General Studies from Harford Community College, MD Bachelors Degree in Management from the University of Maryland University College

**Community Involvement:** Board member Ballston Area Community Center, Upper Elementary Sunday School Teacher, Past Board Member of the Ballston Spa Education Foundation, Past Board Secretary and Member of the Ballston Spa Middle School PTA, Saratoga County Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Program

**Experience and Qualifications:** Active community volunteer; Served in the Army for 24 years; Bachelors in Management

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I have a diverse background of working with many different people throughout my career. I have worked with hospital budgets and military school budgets. My husband and I both have a vested interest in this community through our volunteer work. I feel my years of experience through the military and working with diverse populations provides me with the experience needed to make sound decisions. I will bring this experience and a sound commitment to the Board of Education.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Our students need a solid foundation of the basic core subjects along with science, technology and social media skills to start with and then highlight this foundation with additional focuses in AP classes, IB classes, Clean Technologies & Sustainable Industries Early College High School (ECHS), and various BOCES programs. Employers today want someone that is dynamic with critical-thinking skills, problem-solving skills and a creative mind. I think the Ballston Spa Central School District provides this education. They have multiple different levels of education that offer many exciting opportunities for our children. Foreign languages, arts and music, extra-curricular activities, clubs, and sports provide the student with a diverse background that employers are looking for.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Our priority are our children and their education. The responsibility of the Board of Education is to provide goals to support this education. Each child is different, learns different and will follow a different path through life. With that said, it would be unfair of me to say I would agree with reductions in any departments as I have not worked with this budget in the past. I feel all areas are important. Core classes, AP classes, IB classes, and other upper level classes should never be cut. Technology and business is very important. We live in a technical world. Our children must be ready for this ever changing world no matter what field they chose to follow. Extra-curricular activities are what makes a well-rounded child.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I want to be a good representative to our school district which is comprised of our community residents both nonparents and parents of past, current and future students of the Ballston Spa Central School District. I want the community to know that as a board member, I will make the best decisions possible through open communication after hearing all points of view. This district has always had

transparency with the community and I want to keep it that way. I want to make sure that our students and our staff continue to go to a safe and thriving school.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Our children and their success is my focus. We have over 4,400 students in the Ballston Spa Central School District and each and every one of them deserves to succeed in their own future. It doesn't matter if they are the top student in the class or struggling to get by, each and every one of them deserves our support and a quality education. That is what we are here for. I hope to be a strong advocate for the children and their families if elected to the Board of Education.

## **Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Board of Education**

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Three board seats are up for election this year. You must be Registered in order to vote. Absentee Ballots are available. Voting hours are 7 am to 9 pm in the HS Gym. Contact District. District telephone number is 399-9141 x85017.

### **Candidates (choose 3):**



#### **John Blowers**

**Biographical Info:**

**Education:** MBA - Kelley School of Business at Indiana University, BS - University of Phoenix

**Community Involvement:** Board Chair - Junior Achievement, CYO Basketball Coach

**Experience and Qualifications:** Area Native, BH-BL Graduate, 8 Years Board of Education - BH-BL, 20+ Years HR Professional

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I am an area native, a graduate of the district and have 3 children currently attending Burnt Hills. My training as a Black Belt in Six Sigma discipline allows me to assist the district in long-range planning by identifying key variables to focus on. As the talent acquisition leader for one of the area's largest employers, I am familiar with the skills employers are looking for and how to create lasting partnerships between schools and the private sector. As the Board Chair for Junior Achievement I also have an appreciation for the criticality of educational partnerships to complement district-delivered curriculum. I am also the product of both distance learning and blended curriculum advanced degrees, which gives me first-hand knowledge of the pros and cons of these emerging delivery methods and how they can apply to Burnt Hills. I also understand and respect the district's commitment to shared decision making as a guiding force for building consensus.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** The workforce today demands greater critical thinking, stronger non-fiction writing skills and greater teamwork capabilities. When I first debated for a board seat in 2006, I identified two changes I felt we should adopt: full day kindergarten and earlier world language study. One of the first lessons I learned as a board member is personal agendas need to be subverted for the greater good of the district. The district was ready to explore full day kindergarten last year and, after significant public discussion, the decision was made to begin full day kindergarten. We have made some progress regarding world languages as well. Currently there are a variety of opinions regarding the Common Core Learning Standards, including what it is and what it is not. Our role in school governance is not to overreact, but rather to listen to the various viewpoints, remain factual and make the best decisions to enhance learning opportunities so each of our students can achieve their potential.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** I have actively participated in the development of the last 8 budgets for the district and the priority for me has always been how to operate the district more efficiently so a greater percentage of the

budget can be devoted toward student-facing investments. Our current budget includes the lowest tax increase in 40 years with no reduction to program or service offerings. Sometimes we can just do things a little differently to free up much needed resources. Examples of this include offering more cost effective health insurance options, financing our debt smarter, and digitizing paper-intensive activities. Going forward I would like to see us go more paperless by opening the parent portal at the elementary level, reducing textbook purchases by leveraging our 1-to-1 technology initiative and continuing to optimize our transportation options. I would be reluctant to support a reduction in our commitment to technology or professional development.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** Board service at Burnt Hills has never been about personal agendas. It is about enabling the district to provide opportunities for all learners to achieve their potential. One of the items I would like for the district to accomplish during the next 3 years is to complete the ambitious 1-to-1 technology initiative. Another accomplishment important to the district is delivering on-time, on-budget with regards to the referendum approved by the voters this past fall. I would also like to see the district crystallize its approach to distance and blended learning delivery. Another accomplishment important to the district is to remain vigilant with its commitment to long-range, strategic planning. At Meet the Candidates in 2008, I responded to a resident asking about education in 2020 by predicting 25% of our graduates would have a year of college credit by 2020. We need to accelerate our ability to deliver on this. A student delegate role on the board should also be both defined and filled.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** It's a great time to be a Spartan. Burnt Hills remains a destination district for families and educators. We are ranked #5 of 85 area districts. Our district is in sound financial shape. Our commitment to the whole child is alive and well as evidenced by significant student achievement in academics as well as music, theater, science and athletics. We have weathered numerous administrative changes and emerged with a talented and vibrant administration ready to lead the district forward. Exciting expansion plans to remodel buildings throughout the district will help us during our second century of instruction. My goal as a board member is to do everything I can to improve student achievement while controlling non-instructional spending. I am also committed to focusing on what unites us versus what divides us regarding Common Core Learning Standards through education and communication. BH has a rich history of involving the community in active discussion to navigate challenging times.



## **Will Farmer**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Web Site:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Will-Farmer-for-BH-BL-School-Board/113085698720513>

**Campaign Email:** willfarmerforbhbl@gmail.com

**Education:** BS in Communications Management Ithaca College

**Community Involvement:** Parent Advocates for Education

**Experience and Qualifications:** Former board member 2010 - 2013

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a partner in a local, growing marketing firm, I bring leadership and management qualities as well as an understanding of the skills required of our current students in order to be successful. As a parent of a fifth and ninth grader, I know the challenges our children and teachers face on a daily basis. And having completed my first term on the board during tough economic times, I gained valuable experience on balancing quality programs with fiscal responsibility. In addition to the standard work of the board, I've participated in training sessions and attended the state School Board Conference for three years in an effort to further my knowledge to better serve the community. This last year, I have actively spoken out against the NYS Reform Agenda including speaking at Commissioner King's Common Core Forums and at BHBL school board meetings via privilege of the floor.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** When it comes to foreign languages, arts and music, they should be as high a priority as standard classes. In regards to Common Core, Ze'ev Wurman, a former federal education official said "They may be higher than some state standards, but they are certainly lower than the best of them." The only two content experts on the Common Core validation committee, Stanford professor of mathematics James Milgram and Sandra Stotsky, a University of Arkansas professor who developed Massachusetts's widely praised English Language Arts standards, refused to sign off on the standards. The Alliance for Childhood with over 500 professionals has expressed concern about developmentally inappropriate material. 140 college professors called the program, "Standard workforce preparation." Finally, Diane Ravitch's warns, "We are a nation of guinea pigs, almost all trying an unknown new program at the same time." Let's listen to the experts and get rid of Common Core.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Unfortunately, with the many mandates required at the state and national level limiting the options of the board, it makes it difficult to rule out any specific area for cuts if they are required. This is one reason I led the effort on a Board Resolution against unfunded mandates as local districts need greater control over educational decisions. Decisions must be based on what's best for all students. This past year, cuts were not part of the process and with the recently passed bond, the district has opportunities to make improvements. My opinion on spending priorities is offering a well rounded program. Academic options must be available for all abilities as well as art, music, athletics and the myriad of other interests enhancing the overall school experience for the students.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I am seeking a term on the school board to get our schools back on track, rid them of the new Reform Agenda including Common Core, save our children's future and save the taxpayer from this huge unfunded mandated. It will be my goal to not only develop a resolution to withdraw from the Race to the Top Initiative but to see it through as a reality. We need the school board and administration to take a leadership role against the reform agenda rather than the current "wait and see" what happens approach. Currently, I know the teachers in our district are individually doing what they can to get around the curriculum as dictated so our kids actually learn. My greatest fear is the future teachers will be trained under this new system and they will only know how to prepare our kids for "standard workforce preparation". We need to take action now and if elected to the board, I will speak up and encourage others to join me fight back.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I am running because based on current polls, over 60% of the public are basically unaware of Common Core standards and the changes they are bringing. Our board and administration must lead the effort to educate and inform the public about the negative aspects of this reform agenda. Up to this point, they have not. I am running because teachers right here in our district our telling parents how common core is undermining their teaching, hurting students, how the testing is flawed and secretive, how they wish things were different. But when you ask them to speak publicly, they beg you not to mention their name. They can't speak out, whether real or imagined, as they have a great fear of repercussions. I have seen this first hand and it's a real problem. I am running because our kids need the highest quality education they can get and we are failing them. If elected, my goal is to speak for the teachers, the parents and most importantly the kids. Please vote Farmer on May 20.



## **John Kelch**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Web Site:** <http://BHBLCitizen.com>

**Campaign Email:** [advocate@BHBLCitizen.com](mailto:advocate@BHBLCitizen.com)

**Education:** Some college; US Army Security Agency 1969 - 1972; many management courses and collaborations

**Community Involvement:** Governor's Public Broadband Initiative, various PTA's and BHBL Building Councils, 2014 Renovation Bond Committee

**Experience and Qualifications:** Engineer, Area Svc Mgr, Reg. Gov. Mgr, Global Consulting Mgr. - Digital Equip Corp; NA Bus. Dev Mgr. - Compaq Computer Corp.; New York Gov. Mgr. - Time Warner Cable

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a Customer Mgr. with Digital Equipment Corp, I managed a high-performance engineering team to support (1200) corporations and public entities, including public schools and university's, to enable their organizational goals. In various positions I have spent a year in Ethiopia as well as conducting business in a majority of our States, and more than (20) foreign countries. In all of my endeavors, honesty and integrity have been paramount to ensure long-term trust, and I think those values are the bedrock of our public schools. I am a creative thinker, and work to enable the ideas of others to bring out the best in an organization. I am known for tackling tough issues and pursuing them wherever they lead in order to solve them. Education's first priority is not to meet the needs of government or staff, it's first priority is to meet the needs and interests of those for which it exists - our kids, parents, and community members. That needs to be reflected in its decisions.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** BHBL's uniqueness has been in it's culture, both within our school district and within the community, as well as our ability to attract and encourage committed and excellent talent. We have superb, dedicated teachers that invest in what they do and in their craft, as well as a best-in-class sports program with many internal and external committed coaches. I would certainly want to retain all of that. I am staunchly against Common Core on multiple levels, starting with the fact that it is premised on the lie that it is justified, that reducing schools, teachers and kids to a "baseline" is a 'step-forward', and that we suffer from "lousy teachers". But beyond that, the agenda is to remove kids from the last vestige of "family", as "full-day, full-year, womb-to-adulthood" conscription of kids is imposed on entire families. And for what? A "crisis" that doesn't exist except in the self-interests of government-actors. This is the worst thing to be imposed on education in my lifetime

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

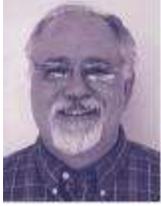
**A:** Money is finite and increasingly harder for families and retirees to come by, and we need to address rapidly rising costs, but education does not have to be reduced to an "either/or". Instead we have to engage staff in the appropriate uses of technology to augment and enhance (and, "yes", improve the "efficiencies" of) education. Technology will never replace teachers - only teachers can inspire, can bring the diversity and human qualities to the table that encourage and guide students to learn, but currently our teachers are rejecting appropriate uses out of fear that it will supplant them, and that needs to be overcome by demonstrating we are looking to engage, not replace them. Our investments in sports have huge returns, and I would look to maintain them. Aside from the pride and community commitment, sports teach kids, teamwork, tenacity, work ethic, and how to fail and recover - all things that are essential in life.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** With now the time and interest, I have been heavily engaged in our District over the past (6) years, and concerned about its decision making. Our Board and Administration have taken to misrepresentations and withholding key information from the community to co-opt decisions that are self-interested. Internal decisions are often made to the detriment of kids and parents. A plethora of fees are being charged illegally, kids graded on their payment, with the Administration using kids and parents as a "free-enterprise zone" in violation to the State Constitution. Decisions are being made that are detrimental to kids well-being by staff. I would work to stop all of that, to put kids, parents and taxpayers first in decisions, to provide them with all key info, and to poll them for what they want in our schools pro-actively. I would also ask students and parents for feedback mid-stream and at the end of each year. And I would work vigorously to kill most of the Common Core agenda.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** In the height of a very active career, I too failed to take the time to understand what went on in our schools. Now, with the time to do so, and feeling that it is my time to "give-back", I have the interest to do so, the experiences of a very full and diverse life to add to the ideas and decision-making, and many years of management experience to guide decisions that I feel will be honest and in the best interests of the communities constituencies. Unfortunately, there is a large internal bloc that finds "balance" less in its interests, and that bloc has been able to dominate elections (and decisions) when only 15% of eligible voters turn out. That means, that if kids, parents, and nearly 2/3 of our community that are not current parents want someone advocating for them, they'll need to vote. See more at BHBLCitizen.com and BHBLCitizen Facebook.



## Joe Pericone

### Biographical Info:

**Education:** Bachelors degree in Mechanical Engineer

**Community Involvement:** I have worked for General Electric for 37 years, including the past 15 years as an instructor at the GE Learning Center. I helped develop the Pathways Program, which introduces middle and high school students to engineering by bringing them to the Learning Center for hands-on lessons. A former Lakehill Soccer coach, he has been active with both Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts. I and my wife have been district residents in Glenville for more than 20 years. We have four children all are BH-BL graduates.

**Experience and Qualifications:** I joined the board in 2006 and have served as both board president and vice president.

### Questions:

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** For the last 8 years I have had the privilege of serving on the board. In that time the school has gone more into the electronic age. This was done using the finances the district already had without asking for an increase on the budget and it was done mostly because of the input of the board members. Also this year I was a Chairman of the Board and I am very proud of the fact that this year's budget was the lowest increase in it ever asked for. This was done while also maintaining both programs and staff.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** The school district is continuing to advance the skills the students need. The board has not thrown money at the subject but thought through what was needed. Access to the internet was crucial. This has been done through creating investment in the district. Chrome books are being made available to all students from the 3rd to the 8th grade. This needs to be continued but with the pace of technology, we need to be able to be able to respond without wasting the tax payer's money. We are doing that right now with the present board. I am also a big proponent of learning a second language, especially for me this is Spanish. More and more of our population is Spanish speaking and this should be stressed even more so in the early years and on to the high school.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** My priorities in the budget are to maintain programs for the students. The district cannot just offer the minimum courses for graduation but needs to make sure that our student are able to succeed beyond high school by offering as many variety of classes as possible, making them a well-rounded citizen of the community. The district still needs to make sure the taxpayers money is spent wisely. Layoffs, for me, are not always acceptable. The district is the largest employer in the area, if we were to release people from their jobs we would have devastated a community that has shown they willingly support education. The budget needs to be approached with these ideas in mind.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** In the next three years I would like to make sure the school district continues at the high rate of excellence that we have seen in the past. Students who achieve their best in whatever area they pursue. We are considered destination district because of our high graduation rate, because of the diversity of our students both on the field and in the arts program we presently have.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I thank the resident of the district for allowing me to serve them for the past 8 years. I ask they come out to vote on May 20 and continue to support education in the way they done so the entire time I have been on the board.



## Peter Sawyer

### Biographical Info:

**Campaign Email:** ptrsawyer@gmail.com

**Education:** Ph.D. in Social Sciences, Syracuse University; M.A. in Sociology, Syracuse University; M.Ed. in Student Development and Higher Education Administration, The University of Vermont; B.A. in Urban Affairs, American University; A.A. in Liberal Arts, Hudson Valley Community College; High School Diploma from Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake

Central Schools

**Community Involvement:** Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Rotary; Town of Ballston Park and Recreation Committee

**Experience and Qualifications:** 26 years working in higher education as an instructor and administrator; experience supervising and teaching college in the high school courses

### Questions:

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** My background in higher education is substantial and includes 26 years in various roles. As an administrator, I am familiar with budgeting, grant writing, mediation, effective meeting management, teacher development, student development, career development, experiential learning (service learning, internships, etc.), the high school to college transition, and, of course, organization and leadership. As an academic, I have taught in a variety of settings, including online, ITV, and College in the High School. In my research, I have focused primarily on the development of effective citizenship. I believe strongly in the need for civic engagement and have written grants and books on how to encourage that in our citizenry. Lastly, I think that my knowledge of this community, having been raised here and raising my own kids here as well, is important to the role of a board member.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** I believe that the BH-BL 21st Century Framework Themes are appropriate and useful in the guidance of where we go as a district. I believe that intellectual curiosity and a desire to learn is critical as future generations face the challenges ahead. I know that students will need strong character, a clear sense of values, creativity, and leadership/group skills as they engage in the shaping and reshaping of the organizations and institutions of tomorrow. Incorporating the common core into our curriculum, from a learning outcomes perspective, reflects much of the 21st Century Framework and will clearly define specific learning outcomes based on grade. It is important, however, to leave teachers the ability to meet these learning objectives using creative, dynamic and engaging approaches. It is also important to provide effective, meaningful, and appropriate assessment of teaching as well. It is not clear to me that the current use of common core testing reflects this.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** I am not coming to the board with a preset agenda. I do not have programs I want to cut and certainly do not want to raise taxes more than necessary. I do believe, however, that the district needs to make responsible decisions that directly relate to the learning and developmental goals we have identified for our students.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I believe that I have a strong sense of the higher education environment is about, having taught and worked at several colleges and universities. I am hoping that I can help Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools to enrich the opportunities for students to take higher education courses and to assure their ability to be successful at the next level.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I look forward to serving my community in the capacity of a school board member. I believe that effective schools are at the heart of a strong community and that all benefit from such a system. I would also like to say that I am open to ideas and criticism but not to a lack of civility. I believe that, in public life, there will and ought to be disagreement from time to time, but, at no time, is a lack of civility or a practice of disrespect appropriate.



## Matthew Schultz

### Biographical Info:

**Education:** Graduating in June from Brunt Hills

**Experience and Qualifications:** Work at family business, Student

### Questions:

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** What I bring to the board is my 13 year of experience directly involved in the daily workings of the BH-BL CSD. this new perspective will enable the BOE to see how there decisions directly affect students. In addition I am also involved in my family's business Schultz Garden Center where I am a manager. My managerial skills will help me with affective problem solving and competent communicator regarding district issues.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Students will need excellent communication, problem-solving, analytical and technical skills to succeed in the 21st Century world. Our district already has an excellent foundation for helping students develop these skills. As we turn our eyes to the future, we need to support programs that develop these skills such as STEM/STEAM, school-to-work corporative programs and college-readiness activates.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** The main priority for spending is support for classes and programs for the students. The purpose of a school district is to prepare students to be future leaders. I will keep this idea in mind when making decisions about spending. Before considering cuts, I would request that supervisors look at the possibility of reallocating our resources. I would ask supervisors to make sure there is no duplication of services or materials. this would be a way to look at reducing cost. If cuts had to be made I would avoid classes, programs and teachers. this is because we have great classes that offer a wide variety of studies to prepare our students for the work force.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** What I want to accomplish in my term on the board is keep the high standards that Brunt Hills has. I would also like to control spending but add new classes when possible that will give our students more opportunities in the work force.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Some people may have concerns about voting for me because of my age. They feel because I am 18, I can't possible have a lot to bring to the board of education. My response would be that my age actually makes me a better candidate for several reasons. One reason is my fresh perspective I have been directly involved in daily school operations for the past 13 years. I understand the impact decisions will have on students. A second reason to vote for me is because as a student I have developed the ability to observe and make assessments based on these observation. I practice this regularly in my classes and in my position as manager of Schultz Garden Center. I know when to speak and I know when to listen, I know what kind of language will help improve a situation and which will be divisive. In order to effectively run a school district, the community needs a BOE that interacts with each other and its constituents in a manner that pushes everyone toward a common goal.

## Corinth Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Corinth Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of five years each. Two board seats are up for election this year. Polls are open from 7 am to 8:30 pm. Absentee ballots are available. You do not have to be registered to vote in order to vote in this election. District telephone number is 654-9005.

## Candidates (choose 2):

### Susan Falkenbury

The Candidate has not responded



### Celia Lockhart

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** locksox@adelphia.net

**Education:** Bachelors degree in German to English translation.

**Community Involvement:** past PTSA member. Volunteered at Hole in the Woods Ranch in Lake Luzerne Volunteered at Silks & Stars events in Saratoga.

**Experience and Qualifications:** Served on the Corinth School Board since 2004 in various positions including Vice-President and President of the Board. Longtime resident of Corinth. Parent for 3 Corinth Central students

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** Some of the qualities that I bring to the Board member are that I work well within a team environment, I am matriculate and consider all options before making my decisions. I am resourceful and have a genuine interest to be informed which drives me to research the topics on hand on my own so that I can make an informed decision when it is time to vote. I am very interested in public education and student achievement.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Every school district should have a strategic plan in place to prepare their students for the 21 st century to ensure that we are on track and are truly preparing our students entering college as well as our students entering the workforce after high school. I think the principal theory behind common core educational standards has a great deal of merit. There is no doubt in my mind that we need to change our method of teaching by incorporating more project based learning methods to improve critical thinking. The issue is how is it being implemented. I believe that it should be up to each individual district in collaboration with the parents to decide how to apply common core. Early childhood education is crucial to the success of our students however it cannot be mandated on to the districts without proper funding. I support foreign language as well as arts and music and sports as i think it is important to teach the whole child.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Times have been tough for school districts especially in the past 6+ years. I don't think that there is any one item that can be categorized as "off- limits". Certainly there are items that are less painful to cut than others but in these difficult times, everything needs to be reevaluated. We have a responsibility to the taxpayers as well as the students and the teachers. We need to keep programs that promote student learning and student involvement as we prepare them for a global workforce. We need to keep fairly small class sizes and provide our teachers with the most efficient tools for teaching our kids and preparing them for college and the workforce. We need to negotiate all district contracts fairly but with the taxpayers in mind.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** My purpose for running for school board member is to serve my community, to keep school taxes low, to oversee the operations of the school district and to contribute to student achievement. My hope is that we can improve high school graduation rate to as close to 100% as possible. From a legislative standpoint, I would like to see the number of unfunded mandates reduced and more programs such as Universal Pre-K have enough funding so that all children have the opportunity to attend Pre-K.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Being a school board member is a volunteer position that requires an extended time commitment and a lot of work but, to me, there is nothing more rewarding than to know that I am making a

difference and contributing towards a better public education for the students of New York. I welcome any questions/comments from the readers.



## Louis Lueck

### Biographical Info:

**Education:** 1984 graduate of Corinth high school, some college, U.S. Navy advanced electronics.

**Community Involvement:** Current school board member, Adirondack Repertory Dance board member, active elder Corinth Presbyterian Church, work with the youth group, volunteering at Word of Life in Pottersville.

**Experience and Qualifications:** 5 years on the Corinth school board, leadership position for the last 7 years at the Saratoga hospital and for 5 of my 9 1/2 years in the Navy.

### Questions:

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** After graduating in 1984 I spent the next 13 years traveling and living in different areas. That gave me the experience of working with many different people which in turn has given me insight on their beliefs and cultures. The last 18 years I have worked at Saratoga hospital where I have interactions with almost every department as well as patients. All of my positions, even when in leadership, have been "service" ones. One of my beliefs is that service to others is a top priority. I feel that these life experiences have given me the ability to successfully relate to and understand most people. Before making decisions I believe it is very important to first try and understand all the points of view. This time around I also come with five years of school board experience.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** I have participated in the districts strategic planning processes which brings together community members, teachers, and administrators to look at and plan five year blocks which does just this. We look to the future looking to change what does not work, make better what works good, and be ever vigilant of all new issues, technology, and processes. I would like to see this continue. Over all I am not a big fan of the common core. Every student is different, they have different strengths and weaknesses, and they best learn utilizing different methods. I do not think it would serve our students best by trying to make all of them learn everything the same way. I believe in early childhood education, but I do not feel it has to be the responsibility of the public education system. Especially if it is at the expense of anything we already have. I strongly advocate for the arts and music.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Core courses, elective courses, teachers to support these courses, support staff, sports. I do not want to see anything cut.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** More parental and community involvement. Elimination of most if not all books with the introduction of laptops and/or tablets.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I very much enjoy working with the youth whether it is my middle school daughter and her friends or the youth group from our church and their friends. Although I try to balance community, staff, finance, and student needs the students will always come first. I would greatly appreciate your support for another term. If you have any questions please feel free to send me an e-mail and I will respond as soon as I can.

## Edinburg Board of Trustees

**Description:** The Board of Trustees for the Edinburg Common School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes three unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. One board seat is up for election this year. Polls are open from 12 pm to 8 pm. District telephone number is 863-8412

## Candidates (choose 1):

### Jacqueline Nichols

The Candidate has not responded

## Galway Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Galway Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of four years each. Two board seats are up for election this year, one for one year and one for four years. You must be a Registered voter to vote. Polls are open from 10 am to 9 pm in the Auditorium Lobby. Absentee ballots are available. District telephone number is 882-1033.

## Candidates (choose 2):

### Anita Crawford

The Candidate has not responded



### Cathryn Hunt

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** hunt4galwayboardofed@gmail.com

**Education:** B.F.A. from University of North Carolina at Greensboro M.Ed. From College of St. Rose in Albany

**Experience and Qualifications:** \* 6 years as Elementary Art Teacher at Schenectady City School District. \* Parent of 10 year old who will be going into 6th grade at Galway next year.

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I am an art teacher who is certified K-12th grade, therefore I have a unique perspective of education at every grade level, including understanding needs and developmental levels of curriculum and instruction for each age group and cognitive level. I have taught special education art classes of many types such as life skills and behavioral management groups and understand all that is entailed in the IDEA ACT of 2004 that protects our special education students and our schools. Additionally, I understand the needs of the teachers so that they may give our children their best foot forward. In my 6 years as a teacher I have also seen and supported all the hard work put in by the other support staff and volunteers that help make a good school great; and would continue to do so as a board member. Also as a teacher and a parent I have been following closely the federal and state education programs over the past several years, including No Child Left Behind, Race the Top and Common Core.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** I think Galway is already on the right track with their plan for 21st Century skills with their STEM programs and computer labs. I would like to see more iPads in use in classrooms as budgets allow and I would like to see STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) to become STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) . The critical thinking and innovation that comes with the Arts will enhance a students experience in the other four areas. Without it, it will be harder for students to achieve that thinking outside the box skill needed to really achieve in the next newest industry and field. With that in mind however, I am greatly concerned that students also no longer know how to do things with their hands. My hope is that a balance will be found in between the two types of skill sets. Common Core is a concern for me. The ideology behind it is good, however the methodology behind its implementation has not been in our children's best interest.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** My priority for the school budget is to maintain a full well-rounded program for students. We are NOT creating clones, we are educating a diverse group of young people who have diverse interests and a diverse way of learning. This is why multiple intelligences are so strongly taught and stressed to teachers when they first enter the field. It is irresponsible of us to try to fit everyone in the same mold. I feel it is the Boards duty to protect that diversity to the best of their ability. I might consider reductions to the budget in teacher professional development and possibly a reduction on substituting costs and perhaps even ending the contract with OLAS for for searching for teacher candidates. It seems in this climate of education that there are other avenues for finding teachers when it's needed at a more reasonable rate. However, before I make any final decision on budget reductions I would listen and weigh the desires of the community, after all I would here to serve you.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** During my term, I hope to help the district and community navigate through the uncertainty of the Common Core programs and to address any concerns from parents and teachers about the state programs if there are any. I also intend to keep addressing the inequity of funding by the state for smaller districts. I know we received some more funding this year than was initially planned, but we need to keep on them to make sure that we end up with correct amount that is due to our kids. Also at the latest Board of Ed meeting I attended I heard that there are study hall classes being held in the cafeteria. Another candidate actually brought it up and I whole heartedly agree with her that student classes of any kind are not conducive to a space like a cafeteria. I can speak from personal experience having taught in two separate cafeterias. It is disrespectful to our kids and our teachers to expect them to perform at their best in such an environment.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** In addition to my teaching career, I also had an 8 year career in marketing and graphic design, most recently at The Michaels Group in Malta ending in 2006. During that time I was responsible for managing a \$250,000 a year marketing budget. A small amount compared to the school budget, but I am certainly used to dividing up monies and making priority spending decisions. Also I became very good at bidding out jobs and finding the best person for the best price to get things done. I have continued using those skills as. Teacher with my Art supply budget and arranging field trips for my classes and could easily translate those skills to to being a Board of Ed. Member for the community.

## **Andrew McPherson**

The Candidate has not responded

## **Joan Slagle**

The Candidate has not responded

## **Hadley-Luzerne Board of Education**

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Hadley-Luzerne Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes five unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. One board seat is up for election this year. Polls are open from 12pm to 8 pm. You must be a Registered Voter. Absentee Ballots are available. To contact the district, telephone 696-2378 ext 108.

### **Candidates (choose 1):**

#### **Eddie Joe Moulton**

The Candidate has not responded.

#### **Karl Othmer**

The Candidate has not responded.

## Mechanicville Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Mechanicville City School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Two board seats are up for election this year. You must be a Registered Voter in order to vote. Absentee ballots are available. Polls are open from 12 pm to 9 pm in the Jr. Sr. HS Gym Foyer. District telephone number is 664-5727

### Candidates (choose 2):

#### Kimberly Dunn

The Candidate has not responded.

#### Pat Greenhall

The Candidate has not responded.

#### Frank Grimaldi

The Candidate has not responded.

#### Anthony Sylvester

The Candidate has not responded.

## Schuylerville Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Schuylerville Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of five years each. Two board seats are up for election this year. You do not need to be a registered voter to vote. Absentee ballots are available. Polls are open from 12 pm to 9 pm at the Elementary School Foyer. District telephone number is 695-3255

### Candidates (choose 2):



#### Rebecca King

**Biographical Info:**

**Education:** - Bachelors of Science Cornell University Business Management and Marketing - Masters Special Education College of St. Rose

**Community Involvement:** - Past Board Member Schuylerville Chamber of Commerce, Bacon Hill Reformed Church, and American Dairy Association Vacation Bible School volunteer and past director Bacon Hill Reformed Church Saratoga County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom literacy volunteer Saratoga County Agriculture Promotion Volunteer

2016 National Holstein Convention Chairperson School volunteer including FFA, concession, book fair and classroom volunteer

**Experience and Qualifications:** Past Special Education Teacher Corinth Central School Business Owner, Financial and Office Manager 5 year Schuylerville Board of Education Member, 2 years Vice-president

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** Having been a board member on several different boards and going through many versions of board training, I understand what it takes to be an effective board member. It is not about bringing your own agenda to the table, rather it is about working as a team to effectively set and work towards broader goals. My past experience in the public school system and my current career as a family business owner gives me a unique combination of skills and knowledge to understand the difficult task

that districts face when balancing educational opportunities and fiscal responsibility. My past 5 years as a Schuylerville Board of Education member has given me a solid foundation to continue my contributions to the district.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** It is important for districts to make necessary shifts in curriculum, course offerings, and extra curricular offerings as our society continues to shift. It is important to understand the ever changing world around us and what a graduating student needs to look like to be college and/or career ready. As we increase the rigor of our curriculum and infuse more technology into the day we need to be keenly aware of continuing to give our students the basic life skills that are essential to success. Common Core curriculum may currently be a controversial topic, however as districts we are obligated to provide our educators and parents with the resources and training they need to be successful in giving our students the critical thinking and problem solving skills they need for the 21st century.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** When looking at our school budget, I take a balanced approach to spending and to reductions when needed. In my opinion there is no one area of priority or area that is off limits when looking at our district as a whole. In my past five years on the board I have been a part of some very difficult decision making as the district has faced decreased funding combined with the tax cap. It is important to keep in mind an overall goal of giving our students as well rounded of an education as financially possible. This includes not only academic opportunities, but extra curricular clubs and athletics, music and the arts, opportunities for enrichment and opportunities for students in need.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** As a board of education member I would aim to accomplish much of what I have already stated above. I would like to continue to work at the balance of giving our students as much opportunity as we can while being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers. The most important goal to me is to have Schuylerville continue to be a district in which we are proud to send our children to, in which staff is proud come to work at, and in which the community is supportive and proud of.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** - no response -



## **Jack Macica**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Education:** Business Management degree from SUNY Adirondack

**Community Involvement:** Music ministry St. Clements of Saratoga United Way Special Olympics

**Experience and Qualifications:** 30 year member of the Schuylerville Board of Education. Past President and Vice President of the Schuylerville School BOE as well as the Saratoga County School Board Association. Currently the school board member

representative of the WSWHE health insurance consortium.

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** During my lengthy tenure, I have helped oversee several major capital projects, renovation projects and contract negotiations, as well as improving educational opportunities for district students through creation and implementation of new programs. As a part of a seven member board, it's very important to work closely with all the members to find the best solutions for all of our students, taxpayers and employees. The worst thing a board can have is special interests. We need to work together as one body to provide for the interests of all.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Society has changed so much even in the years of my tenure, that schools have become so much more than a house of education. Besides providing the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, our schools and employees provide safety, guidance and nurturing to the highest levels ever. Along with that, we work hard within the confines of the funding we have to provide a well rounded education

including the arts, athletics and extra curriculars. With the increased influence of government, it's a challenge to develop the critical thinking skills our kids need. As well intentioned as Common Core is, the approach is flawed at best. Kids are over tested and being forced to deal with undue pressure. And the tests themselves are ridiculously difficult. Not exactly the best way to improve student or teacher performance.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Everything is a spending priority. The key to success is balance. Priorities are always programs for the kids that lead to success. It's important that our staff is paid fairly too. It's very true that you get what you pay for. Our staff is far from being the highest paid, but I feel they are second to none which is good for the kids. As for off-limits? Nothing is off limits. Again the key is balance. You need to balance everything with the funding you have. If the state were to cut aid in half tomorrow, it would be devastating, but we would still be charged with educating our kids and that would come from balance.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** With decreasing funding and increasing mandates, it's becoming increasingly challenging to maintain the quality of education that our students and taxpayers deserve and have become accustomed to. If we can make it through the next five years without losing any of that quality and at the same time find a way to increase our kids educational experience, I will be very satisfied. This district has turned 180 degrees since I was first elected and I am very proud of that. I'd hate to see that change and intend to work very hard to see that it doesn't.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I am so proud that the taxpayers of the Schuylerville school district have trusted me to represent them as a trustee of their children and of their tax dollars. Our district is one that we can all be very proud of and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve them for another term.



## **Susan Palmer**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Education:** I earned an associate's degree in business from Dutchess County Community College and an associate's degree in humanities from Adirondack Community College. I also attended SUNY Albany, where I took Ethics in Education and special education classes.

**Community Involvement:** My thirteen years of volunteer work at Schuylerville has included the Elementary School's parent volunteer organization, Parents as Education Partners (PEP), for more than a decade, serving as PEP's president for two years and the fundraising chairperson for four years. I founded the group's Family Fun Day and Family Movie Night; the latter program is a community outreach program benefitting the local food pantry. In addition, I served on Schuylerville Elementary School's Effective Schools Team for three years, the Middle School Building Team for one year, the Professional Development Planning Committee for four years and the District-Wide Planning Committee for one year.

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** . I have been employed as an aide for children with disabilities and serve as a volunteer advocate for individuals with disabilities around the capital region. I make a point to advocate for all students by attending various activities at the school. I have a diverse background which includes retail management, banking, editing and managing my own business. I have attended board meeting regularly for the last six years and try to keep up on district news and decisions

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** . Education needs to be more diverse. Students have their own unique talents, abilities and aspirations. A "one size fits all" program does not address the needs of all students. Although Common Core operates under the assumption that all students are able to work at the same accelerated level of performance, as a district we must seek avenues in which to address the individual needs of all students. As our district grows, I hope to maintain the climate of a small

community. I support all phases of education including art, music, athletics and any extra-curricular programs addressing the interests and needs of the students.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** . My priority is education first. I feel the district needs to make every effort to maintain the existing curricular and extra-curricular programs, however when fiscal constraints arise, difficult decisions will need to be made. My years of volunteering with students and teachers in all three buildings for the last decade gives me a unique perspective regarding the needs of teachers and students. Therefore, I feel confident that I can make the necessary decisions

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I would like to see all students leave our school district with the education and/or training/skills to prepare them for higher education and 21st century jobs. I would like see our curriculum expanded to include more offerings for STEM courses starting at the lower grade levels and expanding up through graduation.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I have always been proud of Schuylerville schools and feel that my children have received the best education I could ask for. The teachers and staff have provided excellent educational experiences. I would be honored to serve on the board and be part of a team that looks to the future of our children in a positive way.

## Shenendehowa Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Shenendehowa Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes seven unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Three board seats are up for election this year, two are for three year terms and one is for a two year term. You do not need to be registered in order to vote. Absentee ballots are available. Polls are open from 7 am to 9 pm in the Gowana MS Gymnasium. District telephone number is 881-0600.

### Candidates (choose 3):



#### Mary Blaauboer

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** blaamary@shenet.org

**Education:** BA Public Administration, Stonehill College, North Easton, MA

**Community Involvement:** President, Shenendehowa Board of Education, Member, Friends of the Clifton Park Halfmoon Public Library, Eucharistic Minister, Church of St. Edward the Confessor

**Experience and Qualifications:** Please see below

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I believe a deep commitment to the quality programs at Shenendehowa is important. Over the course of my tenure, I have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to the success of the students at Shenendehowa. In order to learn more about the character and personality each building offers, I have made it a priority to attend at least one PTA meeting in each school building annually. In addition to my building liaison duties, I have served on multiple District committees as well as terms on the BOE as both Vice President and President. I have also been honored with the NYS PTA Honorary Life Membership and Distinguished Service awards as well as the NYSSBA Board Achievement award. All of my efforts are focused on learning as much as I can about the needs of the school district in order to drive the best possible decisions at the BOE table. Coupled with my willingness to listen to diverse viewpoints, I believe my experience as a Board member qualifies me for continued service.

**Q:** How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?

**A:** The educational climate and expectations are rapidly changing. In the past several years, I have come to understand that open-mindedness, flexibility and planning are critical components of success in schools. I have also come to appreciate the importance of "circling the wagons" around the students so the din of political discussion regarding topics such as common core, teacher evaluation and assessments are kept away from their learning environment. It has always been important that learning be fun and engaging and that students be encouraged. All of it is still true. Learning must also be diverse and balanced. It would be a disservice to students to concentrate on one academic area over another, as if one could be a successful Engineer with only math skills and no literary competence, for example. School districts can no longer predict what skill sets students will ultimately need for successful careers so they must instill in students a life long desire to learn.

**Q:** What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?

**A:** Shen has persevered through some very difficult financial times. I'm proud of our commitment to preserve programs and enhance them where possible. We will continue to do so, as resources permit. While the national financial crisis may thankfully be behind us, the economic climate is still fragile. It remains incumbent on Boards of Education and school administrators to continue to be active stewards of district resources and balance the needs of the school community with the capacity of the greater community's support. Our Board and administration has been successful with a thoughtful, holistic budget planning process. The key focus is not on the question of "What can we cut"? The focus has been and continues to be "How can we preserve and enhance?"

**Q:** What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?

**A:** There are three primary objectives: Enhancing capacity for the future – The Shenendehowa Central School District is well positioned for the future and opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning continue to develop. It is important that program offerings evolve so that student needs are met well. Infrastructure development and the ongoing efforts to sell/purchase land parcels also support capacity. Investment in diverse staff development opportunities will enhance programs. Fiscal stewardship – The District's financial profile is favorable. Budget development and management has been increasingly challenging with the state adoption of tax levy limits and increases in governmental mandates. The focused balance of student need with taxpayer support is a key element to success. Community connections – Relationship – building strengthens both our school district and our community. Great things happen when the contributions of all stakeholders are welcomed and valued.

**Q:** Do you have any additional comments?

**A:** Thank you for considering my candidacy. Please remember to vote on May 20th.



## **Bill Casey**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Email:** rcasey1@nycap.rr.com

**Education:** BA in Political Science from SUNY Plattsburgh, Graduate work in Public Administration from SUNY Albany

**Community Involvement:** 9+ year Board of Education member, Shenendehowa Schools, 20 year member CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services Board, Founding Co-Chair of CAPTAIN Executive Advisory Board, Secretary of Shenendehowa Educational Foundation, Moderator of Board of Elders, Grace Chapel of Clifton Park, PTA and Partnership Team member at Tesago and Orenda Elementary Schools

**Experience and Qualifications:** Current sitting BOE member with 9+years BOE experience, Former BOE President and Vice President,

### **Questions:**

**Q:** A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?

**A:** My 35 year career as a NYS Administrator provided me many diverse experiences....from overseeing over \$1 billion in building design and construction contracts, to negotiating and managing multiple consultant and personal services contracts, to overseeing a staff of over 2200 employees as the First Deputy Commissioner of the NYS Office of General Services. In addition I have served as interim Executive Director of CAPTAIN Youth and Family Services and have been a 20+ year board

member. I have also served on numerous community service volunteer boards and have lived in the Shenendehowa School District for almost 45 years---9 of which I have served on the school Board. I have been an involved, committed community member who values public education, but also one who seeks value from our local schools.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** It is clear that the ability to communicate one on one---and in teams---continue to be critical skills for our students...and they will be in the future, although keeping up with the challenges of exploding technological innovations will need to be a focus of our education efforts. Add to that the great diversity in the student body caused by globalization and it is clear that an increased emphasis on cultural awareness and languages is essential. For students in the United States to compete in the global marketplace, the use of higher standards for learning are an essential element. Although the roll out of the Common Core standard has been hurried and flawed by lack of necessary time to fully prepare our teachers, I believe that our schools and teachers have fully risen to the challenge and we are making great strides in meeting the higher standards. The continued attention to the impacts of globalization and technology advances will provide greatest challenges going forward.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** The spending priorities must focus on classroom education, but in a manner that fully allows for mastery of changing technology. The challenge will be particularly straining for those students who need extra services to meet the higher graduation (and life!) standards. Clearly this is an area that I think needs to be "off limits" as budgets are squeezed. At the same time, while much responsibility falls on parents and the home, it is my belief that we must continue to put emphasis on the teaching of values and citizenship, as we prepare our students not only for post high school graduation, but for being useful, productive members of our society. If I were looking for areas of possible reduction in costs, I would start with gaining efficiencies from the broader use of technology and perhaps by participating in more distance or on-line learning. Given the great reduction in state aid over the last 7 years, and the resultant reductions in budgets, I'm not sure where else to cut.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I hope my next term will be as productive as the others I have served since my original term in 1988-1991. I strive to stay on top of educational issues, to stay involved in the school and greater Southern Saratoga County community, and to be available at all times to talk with people who have school concerns. I hope to continue to help grow the Shenendehowa Educational Foundation to provide more off budget support for our educational programs, and I want to be a voice of reason, compromise, and consensus building as we strengthen Shenendehowa education opportunities. As a grandfather of two boys who will be Shenendehowa students, I want to ensure that we have programs in place to prepare them for a post graduation life that is even hard to imagine at this point...likewise, as a retiree, I do want to continue to search for value and effectiveness in every aspect of our school system.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Serving on the Shenendehowa School Board is the greatest honor I could achieve at this stage in my life and If elected I promise to continue to be an open minded, involved and hard working representative of the entire Shenendehowa community.



## **Scott Johnson**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Education:** B.A. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN; M.B.A. - Accounting, University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, MN

**Community Involvement:** Cub Scout Den Leader; CP Youth Baseball Assistant Coach (All Stars)

**Experience and Qualifications:** Served on the Board of Education of Schenectady's Brown School as Treasurer and Vice Chair

### **Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** My skill set includes strong business acumen, and analytical and critical reasoning skills. I am a CPA (inactive) with a Masters of Business Administration in Accounting and have, whether in public accounting at PricewaterhouseCoopers or at GE, provided complicated US federal tax opinions, planning, reporting, audit defense and project leadership to the largest industrial and financial companies in the United States.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Forward leaning, we are becoming an economy of ideas and the goal of school districts should be to prepare children to compete globally, embrace an ever constant changing environment, appreciate diversity and think critically. In my opinion, the biggest obstacle hindering our children's development and opportunity for success is Common Core, and its byproduct of high-stakes testing, preparation and administration.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Spending priorities are straightforward. In general, spending should be focused on safety, instruction (including the arts) and athletics. With respect to reductions in spending, the District should re-think everything it does to drive change and leverage scale to make the District more efficient, and effective to meet the three hereinabove spending priorities.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** In addition to controlling taxes, Common Core and high-stakes standardized testing, whether for funding, teacher evaluations or development of future testing, should be minimized, if not eliminated.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Unlike the other candidates for the Shenendehowa Board of Education, I am not a current member of the Board and I have young children attending Shenendehowa. Thus, I have skin in the game. Moreover, as an outsider, I have an advantage over the other candidates; because, I have no pre-determined view regarding every issue. Accordingly, I feel I'm in a much better position to be open-minded to everyone's ideas.



## **James Trainor**

### **Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Web Site:** <http://www.trainorforshenboard.com>

**Campaign Email:** [jamest@ctclawfirm.com](mailto:jamest@ctclawfirm.com)

**Education:** \* BS Engineering - US Military Academy, West Point, NY (1981) \* MS Business Administration - Boston University (1985) \* JD Fordham Law School - NY, NY (1990) \* US Army Command and General Staff College (1993)

**Community Involvement:** \* Member, Shenendehowa Board of Education • Trustee, CDYMCA • Chairman and Member, SSYMCA Board of Managers • Town Board Attorney - Stillwater • Town Board Attorney - Clifton Park • Director of Finance C.P. Babe Ruth World Series • C.P. Baseball League Board of Directors • St. Edwards Church Finance Committee • Treasurer, West Point Society of the CDNY • Congressional Liaison for US Rep. Sweeney, Gillibrand, Murphy and Gibson's Academy Review Board • Long-time member of Knights of Columbus and American Legion Post 1450

**Experience and Qualifications:** SUMMARY OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: \* Member of Shenendehowa Board of Education \* Parent of 4 Shenendehowa educated young adults who have succeeded in college and are beginning productive careers serving others. \* Officer and Counselor on municipal and volunteer Boards of Directors charged with developing and communicating organizational standards and policy. \* Mentor entrusted with coaching and guiding male and female athletes, soldiers and college prospects through all phases of instruction to help them maximize their talents and capabilities. \* Manager and Logistician directly responsible for the budgeting, maintenance and optimization of millions of dollars of facilities, equipment and supplies by leveraging manpower and technology. \* Leader of successful businesses, not-for-profit enterprises and military organizations responsible for supervising, training and motivating hundreds of people to accomplish organizational objectives. \* Attorney in private practice and government service familiar with all aspects of board governance, tax assessment and collection, real estate regulation, arbitration and litigation.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: \* Private Legal Practice (1991-present) Cutler, Trainor & Cutler, LLP, Malta, NY; Trainor Law Firm, Clifton Park, NY; Tate, Bishko & Wasson, Albany, NY; Carter, Conboy et al, Albany, NY \* Municipal Attorney, Part-time (1995-present) Town of Stillwater and Town of Clifton

Park, New York \* Lieutenant Colonel, US Army and US Army Reserve (1981-2009); Northeast Regional Trial Defense Counsel (JAGC); Aviation AIT Company Commander and Operations Officer (USAR); Aviation Maintenance/Logistics Officer and Test Pilot; Armor Officer and Attack Helicopter Pilot (Germany)

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** As a returning board member, I would continue to bring: • Almost a year of on the job training as a Shen Board of Education member. • 26 years' experience as a parent of 4, taxpayer and community leader in the District. • 33 years' experience leading people, managing resources and mentoring young adults. • An extensive education and practical experience as a town attorney and business owner. • A genuine attitude of selfless service and dedicated volunteerism. Additionally, I am the only candidate and current board member who is a practicing attorney, college admission representative and Army Reserve officer. These unique perspectives certainly help to inform my decision making and diversify the Board.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Shen is equipping students for the 21st century by prioritizing STEM, robotics, BYOD, and by having wireless, IPADS and chromebooks available throughout our school buildings. I would retain from the past as much face-to-face interaction and verbal communication practice as possible as these will continue to be core skills needed in the 21st century. Common Core – along with APPR, our educators and administrators have done a tremendous job making these successful in a professional manner and within a short time frame. Early childhood education – our community is blessed with high quality preschool programs for the transition to kindergarten. Foreign languages - Shen students speak 30+ languages – we want to support our ESL learners and enrich our robust foreign language program. Arts and music – creative expression reinforces classroom learning – e.g. literature, history, languages – and should continue to be encouraged. Critical thinking - essential for lifetime learners.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** In my estimation, the biggest budgetary challenge facing the Shenendehowa CSD today is to successfully implement Common Core and APPR while at the same time responsibly allocating resources to continue our success in all areas. In general, I feel that assessing our students' progress against rigorous standards is a valuable method to gauge both progress and needs. As far as cost reductions, Shen is well on its way to realizing savings by reducing our paper-based footprint and transitioning to a more digital model. As state aid and the economy fluctuate from year to year, it is difficult to say what, if anything, would be "off-limits" in the future. Certainly, the "raison d'être" of educational funding is to at least maintain, and hopefully improve, the quality of the educational experience in the classroom each year. Our global competition is not sitting still, and we shouldn't be either.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** I am a candidate this year primarily to assist the Shen community to continue its great track record and its upward trajectory of success in providing quality education for our students at a reasonable cost to taxpayers. Specifically, I would like to accomplish the following in my next term on the Shen Board of Education: a. Work hard to continue the educational and financial success we as district, and our past and present education professionals, have built over the last 60+ years. b. Develop pathways for emerging leaders to serve the Shen community as volunteers on the Board of Education. c. More fully engage the district's constituent communities in the Shen educational experience. We currently have a great group of Shen Board members that collaborates well due in large part to the leadership provided by Mary Blaauboer and I would like to continue to serve as part of the team!

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** I am proud to say that Shen has a number of strengths and among these are: • The "whole person" quality of our graduates; • The professionalism of our educators and administrators; and • The high value that our parents, voters and community leaders place on education in general and on the Shen approach in particular. As a current Shen Board of Education member, I am encouraged by the Budget we have proposed to the voters for passage on May 20th – it contains a responsible allocation of our resources toward the priorities we as a District have identified as critical. As a parent and taxpayer, I encourage our voters to capitalize on the years of Shen Board of Education experience

our three incumbents bring to the table by electing Mary Blaauboer, Bill Casey and Jim Trainor to another term this year!

## South Glens Falls Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the South Glens Falls Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes nine unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Three board seats are up for election this year. Polls are open from 8 am to 8 pm, with voting at the Winch MS and Ballard Elementary School. You must be a registered voter, and there is a district Voter Registration Day on Wed. May 7<sup>th</sup>. Absentee ballots are available, contact district. District telephone number is 793-9617

### Candidates (choose 2):

#### Grace Davison

The Candidate has not responded.

#### William Elder

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Web Site:** <http://sgfallssd.org>

**Education:** South Glens Falls Central School District SUNY Cobleskill

**Community Involvement:** South Glens Falls Education Foundation Advisory Board, Southside Cemetery Association Board Member, Church of the Messiah Vestry Member.

**Experience and Qualifications:** SGF Board of Education Service (1985-1998) and (2011-2014), have served as Board President past and presently.

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** Sixteen years of Board of Education experience. Prior to my retirement May of 2010, I was the Director of Information Technology for the Bassett Healthcare Network, responsible for a \$15million budget. closely monitoring/developing my department budget as well as my interest with technology. In addition I wish to work within the constructs of our school budget issues to provide opportunities for our students whether they see themselves as college or career focused.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** By embracing the ongoing changes and challenges in our global world and provide educational and other opportunities for our students to help them become well rounded citizens. Can we further leverage relationships with colleges and the business community as well as the opportunities offered by our local BOCES. Locally to look to further implement advanced placement courses and distance learning opportunities. Essentially to challenge our students all while maintaining an efficient budget that can be supported by our community. Where the students interests lie look to build and/or enhance existing programs.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** South Glens Falls like other school districts has and continues to look as to where we can be and become as efficient as possible. To continue to work with our school community to encourage our legislators to eliminate the Gap Elimination Adjustment, more equitable funding for school districts as well as no more unfunded mandates with an eye for the reduction of some of the existing mandates. With reductions school districts most often have to look to programs.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** To continue to provide opportunities for all our students regardless as to whether they are planning to go on to college, the work force or military. To work with our BOE and Administration as we develop and implement a Capital Improvement Plan, as highlighted by our recent building study. Also to continue to engage our community in our budget process as we work to develop budgets that can

support our school and that can and will also be supported by our community. To participate in the development/updating of our district technology plan.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** Just that I consider it a privilege to be able to serve on the SGF Board of Education.

## Stillwater Board of Education

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Stillwater Central School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. The Board includes nine unsalaried citizens elected to serve overlapping terms of three years each. Three board seats are up for election this year. You must be registered with the District to vote. Absentee Ballots are available. Polls are open from 12 pm to 9 pm in the old MS Gym. District telephone number is 373-6100

### Candidates (choose 3):

#### John Butler

The Candidate has not responded.



#### Tom Coffinger

**Biographical Info:**

**Campaign Web Site:** <http://tom.coffinger.com>

**Campaign Email:** [boe.scsd.tom.coffinger@gmail.com](mailto:boe.scsd.tom.coffinger@gmail.com)

**Education:** Regents Diploma and 2 Year Electronic from BOCES. Navy Nuclear Power School. Numerous technical and trade courses from the U.S. Navy and other schools. Numerous Management courses from the MGM Grand. Microsoft Certified Professional.

**Community Involvement:** Cub Scout Leader, Battle Football Board Member, Stillwater Educational Foundation Board Member.

**Experience and Qualifications:** Experience - Over 5 years experience on Boards. 8 years experience with Non-Profit Boards. Opened the largest casino in the world, MGM Grand Las Vegas, as a member of management. Opened The Monte Carlo Casino as a member of upper management. \* Independent \* Dedicated \* Common Sense \* Responsible \* Integrity \* Out Spoken

**Questions:**

**Q:** *A good board is made up of interested citizens bringing diverse qualities that they can apply to decision making. What special expertise, knowledge or interest would you bring to the board?*

**A:** I am a truly independent person who will work hard to ensure board actions and decisions are in the best interests of our children and community. I will work hard to ensure that The Board will move forward with new initiatives, strengthen existing initiatives that are working, and end initiatives that are not. I feel that while there needs to be continued focus on making students college ready, I feel we need to re-energize the education of a work force and the preparation of our children for life.

**Q:** *How can school districts plan for the 21st century skills their students will need? What would you retain from the past? Do you have any comments about issues such as the common core, early childhood education, foreign languages, arts and music, critical thinking?*

**A:** Curriculum must be created that increases the students' desire to read, ability to think and reason, ability to learn. Focus must be removed from testing, and placed more on creating learners with life skills.

**Q:** *What are your spending priorities in the school budget? In what areas might reductions be considered and what would you consider off-limits for budget reductions?*

**A:** Learning resources are the highest priorities. Classrooms and materials that enhance the learning environment must be maintained.

**Q:** *What would you like to accomplish in your term on the school board?*

**A:** Improved Board functionality. Improved communications and relations between The Board and parents, staff and students. Refocusing of energy.

**Q:** *Do you have any additional comments?*

**A:** - no response -

**Lauren Kirkwood**

The Candidate has not responded.

**Brian McNeil**

The Candidate has not responded.

**Rachel Mincher**

The Candidate has not responded.

**Cheryl Richardson**

The Candidate has not responded.

## **Waterford-Halfmoon Board of Education**

**Description:** The Board of Education for the Waterford-Halfmoon Union Free School District is responsible for the general supervision of the schools. Three seats are up for election this year. Polls are open from 12 pm to 8 pm. Voters must be registered. District telephone number is 237-0800.

### **Candidates (choose 3):**

**Richard Charron**

The Candidate has not responded.

**David Lee**

The Candidate has not responded.

**Jaimie Maloney**

The Candidate has not responded.