



WINONA AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2022 CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

School Board

Michael Hanratty

1. What is your background:

a. What is your employment history?

I spent five years in the Army National Guard. Following that, I worked in various for-profit businesses. I currently work at Catholic Charities of Southern Minnesota, where I am the program director for the Adult Advocacy Program.

b. What is your educational background?

I graduated from Royall High School in Elroy Wisconsin. I have an Associate's degree from Vermillion Community College in Ely, MN. I then earned a Bachelor's of Art in Social Science from Metropolitan State University in Saint Paul. I currently am a National Certified Guardian.

c. Why are you running/what is your motivation for candidacy?

I am a parent of three Children and they are my main motivation for running for re-election. In addition, I feel the board has made a lot of positive change to the district and my hope is to continue the positive change.

2. What is the most pressing issue facing the Winona School Board after this election? How should this be addressed?

I commend the administration for prioritizing a strategic vision for the district this past spring. The vision will be vital in addressing the direction our district will go in many different areas, including student achievement, student support, staff support, communication and diversity, equity and inclusion.

3. What is the School Board member's role in the daily operation of the district?

A board member should listen to constituents' concerns and ideas and advocate for students and community members. The school board's main role is the budget and policies, as well as overseeing the Superintendent.

4. What role does the school district have to setting students on a path to career/work exploration?

I think there can be room for improvement in collaboration between the school district and area businesses and higher education facilities to ensure our student are trained and certified in skilled positions when they graduate. The proposed upcoming referendum aims at improving career/work paths.

5. What is your opinion about state mandated testing for measuring student success? How should WAPS respond to these tests and scores?

Standardized testing, when used appropriately can be a metric used to assess a student's strength's and weaknesses; however, it should not be the only metric. The district should strive for higher test scores, but the scores should be used to individualize further teaching and learning, not the end goal.

6. According to the MN School Board Association, 95% of school districts in Minnesota are led by school boards elected under district-wide at-large seats. What are your thoughts regarding WAPS moving to an all at-large school board seat election process and away from the current system of election by wards?

I would be disappointed to see an all at-large school board. We have a very large district, made up of many rural areas. An all at-large board would restrict those rural voices. The individual districts' representatives on the board have done an outstanding job speaking for the constituents and for the entire district. Equal representation is vital to our democracy.

7. Winona's school district has had significant turnover of staff and leadership and many students have transferred into the private sector. Furthermore, in recent years, the district has not received the most positive press in the media. This has had a negative effect on our community's ability to attract qualified workforce talent as other communities may have better public-school systems for their families. What steps do you believe need to be taken to create a healthy culture of leadership and unity within the district?

The district's strategic plan aims to support all of our staff.

8. Questions regarding the Winona School District's methods of discipline and safety of students have often appeared in the media. How would you, as a school board member, promote and encourage a healthy atmosphere of discipline while balancing the safety needs of the students?

The district's strategic plan aims to support all of our students.