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ELi Asks: What Are You Excited About in ELPS? ^[1]

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By:

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In an effort to provide the community of East Lansing a closer look at candidates running for School Board in the upcoming November 4 elections, ELi gave every candidate the opportunity to answer a list of questions regarding their goals and ideas for improving education in East Lansing. Candidates were provided a 200-word limit per question and ELi's publisher selected the order in which their answers appear through a random drawing of names.

The answers to ELi's previous questions can be found in these articles:

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What are your views on diversity? [7]

A total of eight candidates will vie for four seats on the East Lansing School Board, each with a four-year term attached. While every candidate was provided the opportunity to participate, Jeffrey C. Wray did not respond to ELi's invitation.

What about education in the East Lansing School District excites you the most?

Response from Nell Kuhnmuench:

My work on the Board has provided insight to how education has changed in the few years since our two sons were in ELPS schools. I have gained a deeper understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of our school system and of the broader world of education policy and funding. These experiences have fueled a robust personal commitment to encourage more thoughtful development of the educational parameters in our school system to ensure open, creative, challenging, unique learning will occur for each of our students in a welcoming, safe, sustaining place. To its greatest credit, public education ? free to all ? is the very basis of our successful democracy and successful world community. I have been, and remain, committed through my work on the Board, to bring the best of my thinking and energies to the improvement of our system, right here at home.

It is an honor, privilege and huge responsibility to serve on this Board in a community grounded in the foundations of MSU, where fewer than 15% of all households have a child under age 18, yet a community that values public education and continues to support our schools and the work done in them.

Response from Kate Powers:

What excites me most about the ELPS is the chance to celebrate our unique attributes; all types of diversity, walkable schools, great educational opportunities and so much to be proud of!

Response from Yasmina Bouraoui:

East Lansing competes academically with all of the neighboring districts. I have watched our students be admitted to and enroll in the most prestigious colleges and universities our country has to offer ? public, private, Ivy-league and Historically Black colleges and universities (HCBU?s) alike. We need to maintain, strengthen and improve our academic reputation in order to retain and attract students and families in the district. We can do better. We state that we strive to provide every student with exemplary instruction in equitable learning environments designed to educate the whole child. We need to identify the institutional policies which shape our achievement outcomes and which we can impact for improvement, such as teacher pedagogy and practice, tracking/ability grouping, extended learning time, time-on-task in the classroom, differentiated instruction techniques, multi-tiered systems of support, and culturally responsive teachers who will retain high performance standards for all of our students. We can do that through focused professional development, and by coming together as a community to support

teachers and families. We also need to address school culture and climate issues, as it can affect student achievement ? whether students feel part of a school community and what measures are in place to promote those [200 word limit reached]

Response from Karen Hoene:

My husband and I chose to return to East Lansing to raise our children because we consider this to be one of the most diverse, progressive and dynamic school districts we have ever encountered. The friendships that my children have made and maintained with students from around the world have contributed to their open minds, their commitment to justice and their celebration of diversity. This is what excites me the most about the educational climate in East Lansing and why I seek to serve on the board.

Response from Joe Borgstrom:

I think the past, present and future of the East Lansing schools is exciting. I believe ELPS has an amazing history of alumni from Google's Larry Page to famed author and mathematician Nate Silver (among others) that can and should be celebrated so our kids know that people who've gone on to change the world have sat, literally, where they sit. I believe there are many activities going on in our schools this year, from diversity celebrations to academic achievement, which can and should be celebrated within our community. And I believe that the future of ELPS is bright if we continue to move forward and all have a desire to improve our academics, continue to increase diversity and inclusive activities.

Response from David Gott:

The ELPS excites me because of the opportunity that we have to be excellent again. I find the staff, administration, and students to be a wonderful. I look forward to collaboratively working with all groups to move the District forward and achieve excellence for ALL students.

Response from Kyle Guerrant:

I am hopeful in the new leadership of the district, Superintendent Dr. Robyne Thompson who recently started in July of 2014. She has a strong track record as an educational leader in her previous roles, and I'm excited by her enthusiasm for the district students, and her collaborative perspective.

Disclosure: Rebecca J. McAndrews has two children who attend East Lansing Public Schools and is a substitute teacher for the district.

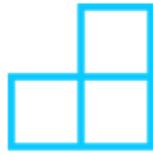
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