

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BROWN COUNTY

Questionnaire for School Board Candidates

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Please return no later than **September 14, 2016**

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Please type/print your responses.

1. Please describe the occupations, training and experience that qualify you for this office.

I have broad experience in both for-profit and non-profit organizations. I co-founded a for-profit software company and I have had responsibilities for marketing, sales, operations and financial oversight. Currently, I serve on two non-profit boards -- president of The Sycamore Foundation, which has raised more than \$1 million for dozens of central Indiana non-profits; and co-founder and board treasurer of the Indiana Healthcare Supply Chain Association, (IHSCA) an industry professional non-profit organization. My previous non-profit experience includes board president of the Central Indiana Council on Aging (CIOCA) Foundation, co-founder and board president of Broad Ripple Inroads, and a board member of the Brown County Community Foundation.

When our family moved to Brown County in 2006, I became involved in our school district as a parent. Our children at that time were in 5th, 3rd and 1st grades at Sprunica Elementary. Over the past 10 years, I have experienced both the positive of Brown County Schools and clearly seen areas for improvement. Our children have participated and benefited not only from fabulous teachers, but also from the breadth of extra-curricular activities from academic teams to sports teams to theatre and the arts. Two of our children are currently in college and both started significantly ahead of their peers in both college hours earned in high school as well as in classroom skills that have allowed them to excel in their higher education pursuits. Our youngest is currently a junior at Brown County High School.

I also have had significant involvement as a volunteer in our district over the past 10 years. I have served on our Gifted and Talented Task Force, on the District Accreditation Team, on the PL221 High School Committee, as a member of the BCS Marketing Committee, and most recently as an appointed school board member. In my time as a board member, I see our two greatest accomplishments as hiring Dr. Laura Hammack as our new superintendent and passing the referendum to help grow teacher and staff salaries to keep and attract the highest quality educators to our district.

2. What are your primary concerns for the next four years?

My primary concern is Brown County Schools' declining enrollment and its impact on the general fund. This is putting significant pressure on our budget, since state funding is on a per-pupil basis. At the same time we are experiencing a decline in enrollment, we as a school board are committed to making our teacher salaries more competitive. We are currently actively looking at ways to run the district more efficiently and to reduce costs in ways that don't negatively affect the education of our students.

Another concern I have is better preparing students for life after graduation from high school. This includes expanding both career and college readiness as well as continuing to develop a high-quality alternative program for students to obtain their high school diplomas outside a traditional school format.

As part of our superintendent search process, we identified four specific district concerns and prioritized experience in these areas as part of our candidate selection criteria. Dr. Hammack has already taken these areas of concern, lent her experience and created community-wide collaborative teams. The teams include strategic planning, college and career readiness, marketing, curriculum and technology integration and math thinking and problem solving. These teams are open to all community members, and I would encourage each of you who have a passion or experience in one of these areas to join a team. The meeting information is available on the Brown County Schools website.

3. Are there academic areas where you believe our schools could improve or expand their current offerings?

There are three primary areas where we need to improve and expand our current offerings. First, integrating technology into the delivery of our 21st-century instruction. Second, intentionally aligning our curriculum across and between grade levels so we adequately prepare our students to be competitive in a global society. And finally, adding an agriculture track for our students.

Our first opportunity is to better integrate technology. Since technology alone is not a solution, we need to share with our teachers best practices for integrating technology into their classrooms. We then need to provide professional development time to give our teachers growth opportunities. This will allow them to best understand a balanced approach to implementing technology in their classroom. Only then will our students be able to take full advantage of this learning opportunity.

Secondly, our students are being asked to think and problem-solve in ways they have not been required to do before. Our instruction needs to match the new higher-order thinking and problem solving that is being demanded in the workplace and on the new assessment standards and tests.

Third, we need to explore the opportunity to create an agricultural science track at Brown County Schools. It is an excellent track for both college opportunities as well as career opportunities upon high school graduation.

4. We are rightfully proud of our BC schools. What can/should the School Board do to better advertise and attract families to live here?

In 2012 I participated in an assessment of marketing opportunities as part of a marketing discussion kicked off by Matt Stark, our former high school principal. We recognized that we were offering a world-class education in a small-school setting but that message was not being as effectively communicated to our constituents. We identified several simple initiatives, including updating the corporation website, re-designing letterhead, updating our corporate brochure, and initiating media relations in the surrounding area and Indianapolis markets. We also identified more aggressive marketing opportunities to directly promote our "small-school" district opportunities to homeschool students, Bartholomew and Monroe County students including K-8 private school students, and surrounding area corporate relocation teams. We are currently investigating a combined countywide marketing program among the school district, Town of Nashville, local realtors to area corporate relocation teams. We look forward to the new marketing collaboration team evaluating some of these identified opportunities as well as developing and implementing new initiatives. Again, if you are interested participating on this team please check the Brown County Schools web site and join us!

5. Do you support expanding the school voucher program? Why or why not?

We already have school choice in our public schools. Students can choose to go to any public school they prefer. We have students in the northern part of Brown County who have chosen to go to Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson schools because their parents work in Indianapolis and it is easier for them to participate in their children's school activities. Unfortunately, with school choice comes the responsibility of the family to handle transportation. For many families that is difficult or impossible. That is why it is incumbent upon Brown County Schools to provide the best possible education so ALL students have the ability to benefit from a quality education without having to leave Brown County.

6. How do you see the School Board's relationship with the School Corporation and senior management?

The role of a school board member is to insure that students get the best possible education. This starts by making sure the school district has a vision of high expectations, which in our case is being developed through our new strategic planning collaboration team. Accountability to that strategic plan needs to be measured and we will do that through a variety of "dashboards" to track and measure outcomes against our strategic plan. The board and superintendent will hold themselves and other administrators accountable to achieving the outcomes articulated in these plans. We maximize these outcomes, making sure we have collaborative relationships with staff and the community knowing that it's going to take all of our efforts to achieve our district goals. Our new superintendent is committed to this process, and in her short time here, has made great strides to put the process in place.