

Voters Guide 2022

Braham Board of Education

(Vote for 3)

Darrin Davis

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "Professionally, I've worked on numerous boards throughout my career. Non-profits, financial,



Darrin Davis

hospita type boards, troubled youth boards in the Twin Cities, primarily in a financial role. I've been in banking my entire career. It has given me exposure to hundreds of businesses where I feel I've learned a great deal and some best practices and how they run their businesses. I've tried to bring some of this experience into the school, many or some may say you can't run a school like a business. I, for one, don't think you can afford not to."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "Regarding opportunities based on some meaningful improvement to the financial position of the district we've had in the past four year. We've had the opportunity to bring back quality staff, educators, custodians, food service personnel, and secretaries. Challenges for me continue to be enrollment and funding."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "The single most important thing I think we can do is give as much to our kids academically as many options, to broaden their education experience as we can. Same goals for athletics, fine arts, whatever activities that these kids want to be in that we can offer as many of those as we can. That goes a very, very long way in attracting students to the district."

Connie Gelle

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "I moved here 35 years ago with our four children and almost immediately was hired as a



Connie Gelle

substitute secretary in the school district. I was fortunate enough to work there for 31 years and I think that's the experience that will help me serve on the board."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "Our enrollment is down. It is up this year somewhat and that was exciting for me to see. I think that the challenges of not just getting good teachers and employees, it's not just about teachers. You can't run a school without secretaries and custodians and food staff. Without them, you don't have a school either."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "We need to be listening and hearing what the community is saying. I've been surprised and of course because I worked there, that long, I know how few people attend the meetings. ... The Braham school board need to be part of a team. It's a team decision when you come up with those answers that you need."

Dakota Hill

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "I have served and advocated for educational needs for our community's children for two



Dakota Hill

years as a special ed para and a tier one para for the school district. Now I work for the Isanti County Sheriff's Office as a courtroom security officer and Kanabec County Sherriff's Office as a correctional officer, and I am also a Braham Police Reserve."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "A key issue for our district is creating a long-term vision, mapping a course that provides the necessary opportunities that students need to reach their full potential. ... We also need to rebuild trust. Trust between parents and the school board. Trust between administration and staff. Trust between the school district and the community."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "One of the main things I want to worry about is safety of our children. Getting a school resource officer in our district would be a great thing for the school. Cambridge has three school resource officers and they are paid 100% by the school district. Rush City schools have one. Ogilvie and Mora have one that bounces between the schools and that was federally granted by a national grant program. ... Are we waiting for something to happen to finally take action?"

Angela Lee

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "My background is in corporate retail. It's financial planning. It's negotiating and troubleshooting.



Angela Lee

I work with a wide variety of people and on a wide variety of problems every single day. Basically my career is cross-functional collaboration."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "We have rising costs, we have supplies on back order and shortages. And we have that everyday fatigue of the breaking news now that continues to come day after day. Our kindergarten enrollment is something like 68 students last I heard. ... As more and more families find this wonderful district and consider enrolling their children, we face some of the stuff Allison talked about. How do we have supplies for them? How do we keep our amazing teachers that we have right now and recruit additional teachers so that we don't have outrageous class sizes? I think all of those are the day to day challenges Braham School District faces."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "One thing that I think has changed over the last 10 years is accessibility. So certainly school violence has played into that. Schools all over the country have had to make protocol changes and then we were hit with the pandemic and many, many things changed. It feels like it's harder and harder to have a voice really in anything lately. ... I feel like I want to be on this board for a number of reasons but one of them so that there is a friendly person."

Allison Londgren

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "I have had the privilege running Braham Youth Football under Shawn Kuhnke. And while



Allison Londgren

working with him were able to work with surrounding communities to create the East Central Football League."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "Some of the challenges I see are trying to keep our buildings sustainable. We have aging buildings and our recent levy is a wonderful start to try to answer some of those issues that need to be fixed, but it's not a complete answer of what we need to do."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "Our children deserve an education. We need to continue to maintain good teachers and employees and improve our classrooms while maintaining smaller sizes. ... If we continue to operate within our budget and keep an eye on our budget on a monthly basis, we can continue to build our fund balance."

John Swanson

What experiences do you have that would be beneficial as a school board member? "The most important thing is actually what I learned from my parents. For me it's the principles



John Swanson

they taught me. The honesty, integrity, hard-working whatever you commit yourself to, give 110% to do the best job you can. That is what you will get from me as a school board member."

What do you see as opportunities and challenges currently facing Braham School Board? "I think one of the biggest challenges moving forward is maintaining and finding good people...The other thing is similar with what the other candidates have said, watching the rising cost of everything we deal with in our lives. I'm really concerned the challenges we're going to have with budgets."

What school or community issue matters most to you? "For me it's a matter of it's about the kids. I want to make sure that our students are well taken care of and I just decided that I wanted to donate my time and skills to help take care of that situation. I have no issues with our current board. ... I don't consider myself a confrontational person but I'm also the kind of person that in the middle of a meeting, if there are concerns or there are issues, I'm not scared to raise my voice and say, 'Hey, I think there's something wrong and we need to address that issue.'"



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