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Ravinia Neighbors Association Candidate Forum March 2, 2017

1. State your reasons for seeking a position on the District 112 Board of Education.

My primary goal in seeking a position on the Board of Education is to enhance the current high level of performance in NSSD112. I was born and raised in Highland Park and attended Braeside, Edgewood and Highland Park High School. I now reside near Elm Place with my wife, Wendy Bloom, and two children, a 4th grader at Indian Trail and a 7th grader at Elm Place. Wendy serves on the 112 Foundation and is President of the Indian Trail PTO. Following the failure of last year's school referendum, I was asked by District 112 to help launch the Reconfiguration 2.0 Community Team. I have served on its Steering, Communications, Facilities and Reconfiguration Committees. As you can see, I have a high personal investment in this community and I want to see it thrive. Because of my involvement in the Reconfiguration 2.0 Community Team, I have learned a tremendous amount about the District's educational and facility challenges and can put that knowledge to further use for the District.

2. Write a brief job description of your view of this position, including the time commitment required.

The Board of Education acts as an oversight committee to the professional educators whose job it is to run the District. The professionals should determine what is best from an educational perspective for the kids in the district but in doing so, they need the input from the board to bring the community voice into the process of decision making. Therefore, I see the Board as the mouthpiece of the community to aid in dialogue with the administration. I feel that the Board should be involved in the general policy direction and put in place the appropriate metrics to ensure things are on the right track. The Board also has a very important role to hire the administration and approve contracts. In the upcoming term we will be hiring a new Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and negotiating a union contract with our teachers. Based on conversations with current Board members, I expect this role to require approximately 10 hours of work per week.

3. What do you feel are the most important issues facing District 112 and how would you address those issues?

We need to fix our financial issues and fill our vacant positions with great administrators so that we can restore stability and refocus on providing world-class education. Despite high reserves, current projections show that the costs

associated with operating 12 buildings will deplete our reserves in 2018. Excess capacity in our schools has caused some class sizes to become too small to be educationally and socially practical for students. Additionally, small numbers of classes in most of our schools have prevented the type of teacher collaboration that is vital to the delivery of education today in which teachers are asked to take a larger role in lesson planning. The district's financial challenges have caused us to fall behind virtually all of our surrounding districts in implementing things such as full day kindergarten, facility improvements, and needed classroom renovations. We have cut programs that we once offered like world languages in the elementary schools and have been slow to update our curriculum. If elected, I would work to get us beyond our facility and financial issues so that we can address these other challenges.

4. Describe the skills, talents and experiences you would contribute to your position.

My work on the 2.0 Committee has made me deeply aware of all of the challenges and opportunities that are facing NSSD112. In addition to the nitty gritty of the district's financial and educational issues, my work on this committee has given me the opportunity to work with people from all sides of the issues facing the district. In addition to the work on the 2.0 committee, I serve as the President of the Board of Directors for a non-profit medical research foundation. Prior to becoming the foundation's president, I served on the board for a number of years. This board experience has been invaluable in understanding how board's operate, or in some circumstances, how they could operate better. After graduating from Colgate, I earned my MBA from Northwestern and work as a small business owner and operator. This educational and professional experience has trained me to work productively in small groups. People tell me that I am consensus builder. This does not mean I am willing to compromise my beliefs, but I feel it is important on a board to be able to bridge gaps, find common ground, and bring people along when necessary.

5. How would you reach out and engage all members of the community.

I would like to see the Board engage with the community in open sessions where people can ask questions and get answers from both the Board and the administration. This would go a long way to opening the lines of communication. In addition, I believe the public comment period at the BOE meeting should function in a way more like public comment at City Council meetings, where the Councilmen actually reply to the concerns of citizen's. This would allow the BOE to better explain their positions and in turn, promote a more constructive dialogue between the board and the community. I believe that this dialogue will go a long way to building confidence and credibility with the community.