

Candidate Questions for March 2, 2017 – Steven Welhouse Answers

1. State your reasons for seeking a position on North Shore School District 112 School Board.

I will have three children attending school in the District this fall and as a taxpayer and property owner, I want to serve on the Board to help the District navigate and come to the best possible resolution for this financially challenging time and review our curriculum to increase our students' educational performance. My experience, education and temperament are well-suited to serve as an effective Board member. I will support a solution to the current budget issues focused on the community and students. I will oppose any plan similar to a 2.0 version of the failed Referendum or that has a nine-figure price tag.

I also want to help the Board regain the District community's trust and support and serve as its advocate. As it stands, based on the failed Referendum and actions taken in its aftermath, many of the District's residents are distrustful of the Board and Administration and continue to struggle with trusting its decision-making. Regaining trust will require open communications and clear decision-making, as opposed to how BDR3 was kept in place after the failure of the Referendum and formation of the 2.0 Committee.

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

To start, I bring an independent voice to the Board. While I voted "no" to the Referendum, I am not in any of the "camps" in the District that have taken one side or another in the Reconfiguration battle. I was not part of the team who devised and advocated for the failed Referendum plan. Nor am I running on behalf of a single school or

neighborhood. The Board needs an independent voice in the Reconfiguration process who will dissent if it again ignores the community's voice.

As a real estate and construction litigation attorney, my job requires me to have strong conflict resolution, negotiation, research and analytical skills. While I have not served on the 2.0 Committee, I have kept abreast of its developments, educated myself on the salient issues, reviewed the pertinent information and will exercise judgment that gives voice to the entire community, not slices of it or the Administration.

I possess humility to see the best possible way forward for a goal larger than my personal gain, ability to perform and recognize hard work, emotional intelligence to appreciate others' feelings and understand how such feelings may inform their positions, and a desire for fairness in my dealings with others. I value hard work, candor and honesty and expect the same from colleagues. If Board members approach disputes with these things in mind, we can resolve any conflict.

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

A Board member serves to represent the community and works to maximize the education of the community's children. The Board does not represent individual schools, the Administration, teachers, or neighborhoods. The Board brings the community's views into how the District's children are educated. The Board should be accessible to the public and be held accountable for the District's schools' performance. The time commitment required to do all this is significant. I am prepared to put in as much time as it takes to be an effective Board member for the community.

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

There are two: (1) reconfiguration of District 112's schools and (2) curriculum and/or educational philosophy problems. The first, Reconfiguration, is the main subject of discussion in the District right now. I would support closing 1 or 2 schools, at most, if doing so would appreciably ease the District's financial picture and bring some beneficial efficiencies. Review of the 2.0 Financial Model, improved Estimated Assessed Values (EAV) for the District (which will bring increased revenues for the first time since before the 2008 recession), and knowing that school closures decrease property values (thereby decreasing property tax revenue) all support keeping most of our schools open.

Second, our curriculum and/or educational philosophy should change. District 112 is a special place. It has a great family-focused culture, business talent and beautiful neighborhoods. However, its education at this point is mediocre, at best. This fact is plainly illustrated by the Illinois State Board of Education's Report Card for District 112 and our individual school rankings. We need to take a hard look at our curriculum and education philosophy to determine how changing them can bring better performance for our students. Some have argued that District 112's low-income students contribute to lower District-wide performance. Not only does this touch on some type of bigotry, but it points up the District's failure to address this situation. As a Board member, I will advocate for a complete review of the curriculum and philosophy to determine how we can teach all our children more effectively.

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

I will use social media, the web and as much personal outreach as possible to engage members of our community. Some community members find internet-based engagement more efficient and familiar, while others, including many seniors, prefer actual, person-to-

person conversation. I will make myself available to meet in places of worship, community centers and anywhere else convenient for people. I will not engage in social media flame wars. I will talk to people in person whenever and wherever we can get together.

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