

What is your motivation for returning/running for School Board?

As a lifelong resident and York graduate, I am deeply invested in our community and committed to giving back. Throughout my 14 years of volunteer work for our schools, my goal has always been to make a difference and help enhance the D205 experience for our students and staff.

I was a member of the committee that helped pass the referendum in 2018 to improve our facilities for learning and teaching. Through careful oversight, we have seen the successful implementation of our projects to date. I am motivated to be on the school board again to be sure the plan for our facilities keeps moving in the right direction and that **all** projects are completed. That means completed on time, within budget, to the standards of our community and while incorporating input from the people who utilize these spaces every day.

In my first term, I have been a part of creating a strategic plan that ensures we as a district are moving forward with the same goals and that the decisions to make any adjustments are thoughtful and data driven. Thanks to the high level of engagement with all stakeholders, I believe this plan is a true reflection of what our D205 community would like to see for our organization. I am very motivated to continue on with the valuable work being done through this plan not only because I know it will set our students up for success and will elevate our schools even more, but because it creates a foundation and a culture that will keep our district moving forward with systems that make sense now and for the future.

The collaboration with our community and staff on both the facility projects and the Strategic Plan as well as during the hiring processes for Dr. Campbell and our new principals, has been fantastic. We obtained valuable input and feedback which helps us make decisions with ALL of our stakeholders in mind. I will always ask the questions that ensure a collaborative organization with thoughtful and thorough communication. Our schools are a pillar of our community, we are best when we work together and when the mission and vision of the district are clear.

In your opinion, what are the strengths and weaknesses of our school district?

One of the strengths of District 205 is the opportunities and experiences that are available to our students and staff. I am grateful for the dedicated staff who initiate and grow programs that change children's lives. Being a part of amazing opportunities such as speech team, Project Lead the Way, award winning music and fine arts programs, top ranked sports teams, the Business Incubator, Best Buddies, manufacturing lab, La Brigade, and many other diverse & unique hands on classroom experiences give our students the opportunity to learn more about themselves, build relationships and hone skills that they will use for a lifetime.

In the past few years, the increase in both the quality and quantity of learning opportunities for our staff has become a strength of our District. I applaud the dedication of our staff to both participate in the professional development and to provide feedback to ensure the opportunities are meaningful and support growth in our classrooms.

One of District 205's weaknesses right now is staff turnover. Consistency day to day is essential to supporting and improving student success. Turnover is disruptive and slows progress within the organization and most importantly for students. Monitoring and addressing staff turnover at both the building level and the District level is a component of the Strategic Plan in order to improve in this area.

In order to build on our strengths and strengthen our weaknesses, I will continue to be a constant advocate for good communication and collaboration across our buildings and levels in order for our teachers and staff to consistently have the supports and professional development they need day to day to create and strengthen the learning and teaching spaces necessary for student growth.

If elected, what would be your top three priorities?

One of my top priorities is to continue upholding the commitments of the referendum. We must keep our promise to our taxpayers to complete all of the projects outlined in the master facility plan. This work must be completed in a thoughtful and fiscally responsible way, with continued input from staff and students who are in our buildings.

Another is to maintain careful oversight of the strategic plan and all of its components. It's important that action steps are thoughtfully put in place, monitored, measured and adjusted as needed. I am dedicated to the ongoing evaluation of data and outcomes to ensure we are steadily moving toward our goals in areas of increased student success and academic achievement, learning environments, financial & operational effectiveness and community outreach & engagement.

Finally, I am committed to nurturing a culture of collaboration and communication. Continuous improvement and growth can only happen if we as a community and organization work closely together to achieve common goals for the betterment of our students. Creating and sustaining a culture where our teachers, staff and students are surrounded by a growth mindset, opportunities for success and a clearly defined path to obtain that success will lead us to the level of excellence we strive for.

The single most pressing issue facing the school board is _____ and this is what I intend to do about it?

The single most pressing challenge we face as a school board is to ensure that we are addressing the needs of each of our students to ensure growth for all of our students. This is a huge job, but it's the most important job we do. Since the beginning of my term, we have been hyper focused and fully committed to increasing growth and improving outcomes for all students. I am running for re-election to continue this work.

As a current Board member, I understand that it is not one single action that improves growth for all of our students. It takes many actions to address their needs. Hiring a Superintendent who is skilled at improving student outcomes, creating a strategic plan that establishes goals and measures progress for students and the district, having tools and systems in place that provide real time responses to students who need help academically or socially, adopting

additional curriculum resources to address gaps, auditing our math program K-12 to identify weaknesses, providing students with increased access for AP/ACP classes and SAT prep, and supporting additional professional development for staff are just some of the actions I have supported during my term to support our students' growth and success.

This is just the tip of the iceberg in the work being done, and I know that our strategic plan and leadership under Dr. Campbell will lead us to even more improved outcomes for students, while enhancing the already stellar educational experience that our students are receiving by being a part of D205. I am running to ensure the impactful work for students continues and that the metrics we have set are both monitored and improved.

What are the critical differences between you and the other candidates seeking this post?

One of the critical differences between me and the other candidates is my long standing connection and commitment to this community. I was raised in Elmhurst and attended D205 schools including Roosevelt, Emerson, Churchville, and York. My mother and my husband also grew up here and are York alumni. We have many family members who live in Elmhurst and we have three children, two of which are still attending D205 schools.

I take great pride in the Elmhurst community and as a school board member, I consider it a great honor and responsibility to be a representative for our entire community. I believe that my experiences and connections give me a broad perspective which means my decision making considers the many values and priorities of Elmhurst residents.

As a former D205 student, I understand the student perspective. As a product of D205 schools, I feel a connection to our students through our shared experience. I understand the importance of a well-rounded education and how students truly benefit from the opportunities offered in and out of the classroom.

As a D205 parent, having three children who have gone through all levels in our district, while simultaneously volunteering on the school board, PTA & other organizations, I can relate to parents and the journey they are on with their children. I understand that it can be both rewarding and at times stressful.

As a D205 volunteer for over 14 years, the work of our teachers, administrators, and staff is vital to implement our plans and achieve the outcomes we desire. In my volunteer work, I have worked closely with many of them and understand the challenges they face everyday. I have used that understanding to drive positive change and enhance the school experience.

As a D205 community member, having a close network of friends, neighbors and family living here in Elmhurst, many of whom do not have students in D205 schools, helps me stay connected with varying viewpoints throughout the community. My work on the referendum committee allowed me to interact one on one with so many community members and I learned a lot about their viewpoints. I believe these experiences and connections make me uniquely qualified as a school board member and have been an asset in my first term decision-making. Listening and truly understanding those who elect me is essential to the work I do for District 205.

What accomplishments in your past would you cite as evidence you can handle this job?

Over the past 14 years that I have been volunteering in D205, I have proven that I can work together with many different entities to accomplish great things for our students.

My work as a member of the school board began 4 years ago and I was immediately committed to the role. During my first term, we established a good working relationship with the City of Elmhurst. We collaborated on a storm water management project & turf field at York HS that benefits both our students and residents. Through a partnership with the Elmhurst Park District we also opened the “Bridges” Transition Center. A much needed permanent facility for our 18-22 year old special education students. Strong relationships with other Elmhurst organizations is vital and helps us work together to meet challenges and create new possibilities for all of our residents.

My dedication as a member of the team to help pass the referendum in 2018 shows my willingness to show up and do hard work for our community in order to accomplish great things for our schools. As a result of the referendum, we have already built the new Lincoln Elementary School, and Field Elementary will be completed by the fall. All our buildings have state of the art safe and secure entrances, All Day Kindergarten is available in all schools and many of our facilities are receiving substantial renovations to improve and expand learning spaces. All this has been done while being good stewards of our taxpayers’ money.

My commitment to strong leadership, the establishment of a strategic plan that both monitors and elevates the core areas of the district (academic achievement, learning environments, finances and collaboration with our community) and the hard work of collaboration to solve problems and achieve growth is setting the district up for continued success.

My willingness to attend more than just the regular Board meetings is exceptional. I sit on the policy committee and on the SASED board which is a co-op for special education, I am the IASB delegate to represent our board and I regularly attend events across our district and visit our schools to see the amazing work being done by our students, teachers, staff and parents. Additionally, I participated in learning opportunities that helped our D205 board be one of only 33 districts to earn the IASB School Board Governance Award in 2022. I have the knowledge, experience and commitment to do this job well.

The best advice ever shared with me was:

Before I ran for the school board in 2019, someone told me to always “fully understand the job, before you commit to it.” They encouraged me, before submitting my paperwork, to take a little more time to delve into the role of a school board member in Elmhurst D205 and what the time commitment would be if elected. This was great advice so I did more research. What I found is that there were many things that I already knew from being very involved in our schools, but I learned a lot too. Including the extensive time commitment required in this volunteer role. Being thoughtful in making the decision to run helped me to come onto the board understanding the expectations and being prepared to work. I was not caught off guard by the time commitment and I understood that sometimes, you must devote more time when unexpected things come up that need to be addressed. It was advice I appreciated and that I have passed on to others running for office.

What else would you like voters to know yourself and your positions?

As a D205 School Board member, my focus is always, first and foremost, on kids.

It's vital that we give them every opportunity to thrive, both while they are part of D205, and after they graduate.

I believe the more opportunities we give students to explore different career paths, the easier it is for them to hone in on their passion. That's why I support ways for students to fit more exploratory electives into their schedule, earlier in their academic journey.

There are many ways we can promote this. One would be to add capacity to work/study programs so more kids have the opportunity to experience hands-on learning. This gives them exposure to different professions and helps them make connections in the community. We can also find more opportunities to bring professionals into our schools to connect with students which would allow our kids to ask questions about different careers and the paths they can take to get there. Finally, offering more of these types of experiences in middle school and younger gives us a a district more ways to offer them.

I strongly believe that giving students access to all their options to better prepare them for life after graduation is one way we can set them up for success.