

**Please provide some personal background information: Name, Occupation, Community activities.**

Mallory Schneider Birschbach; Full-time parent and community volunteer; 2022-Current: President of Shapiro Whirlwinds PTO (parent-teacher organization affiliated with Shapiro STEM Academy). Volunteer: I spend time attending or watching government meetings for the city, county, and school board. I stay informed on current issues in order to inform and mobilize community members. Mutual Aid: I'm a supporter and promoter to unconditionally share resources in the community.

**1. What do you see as the Board's primary responsibility? If elected, what will be your most important objective in your first year?**

Advocating for continuous improvement in public education is towards the top of the list for me, and it is all-encompassing. I want to be part of conversations with our lawmakers about the effects that insufficient funding (especially special education reimbursement) has not just on our district, but many Wisconsin school districts. It ultimately affects all students. This ties closely to another objective, student outcomes. In order to best address literacy and math outcomes, we must ensure our educators have the resources they need. While we can find efficiencies during the budget process, it's not enough to make up for the lack of funding we receive for mandated services. We need to change our understanding that student outcomes are a symptom of larger problems, one of those problems being a funding system that is failing students, educators, and taxpayers.

**2. What distinguishes your experience and candidacy from your opponents?**

I am already immersed in the district as a parent and engaged citizen. I've attended almost every school board meeting for the last three years. I am aware of local, state, and national issues relating to public education. I already have the flexibility in my schedule to be a prepared and present board member. I am also running my campaign with no political party support. I'm here to focus on the issues without politicizing them.

**3. The Department of Public Instruction releases annual school and district report cards measuring student achievement and engagement. Although the Oshkosh Area School District improved its overall score from 69.7 to 71.3—placing it in the “Exceeds Expectations” category—our Advanced and Proficient levels in English Language Arts and Mathematics still fall behind state averages. As a member of the Board of Education, what steps would you take to raise performance in these two subject areas?**

As a board member, I cannot teach students, and I will not micromanage educators. The board sets expectations, and administrators and staff determine how to meet those expectations. As a board, we can review data and trends, along with feedback from the community. We are on a new path with fresh curricula in both subjects, so we need to take some time to evaluate if this is the right path for our students.

As stated previously, I can help the board advocate for fixing how the state funds education, so we can ensure our staff have the resources necessary to properly educate our students. While I understand we have to right size our district to enrollment numbers, I always come back to students being more than numbers. We have more students that have higher support needs (i.e. special education and English language learners), which means more resources are necessary to provide an adequate education.

**4. What are the most pressing literacy challenges you see (early reading, adolescent literacy, interventions, materials, professional learning, etc.) and how would you address them?**

With new reading curricula in the district, we need to make sure educators are on board, are familiar with expectations, and receive continuous training and development opportunities. Messaging must be consistent, starting from administration to educators, so everyone is on the same page. I am here to listen to feedback and use that to make informed decisions.

**5. What does College, Career and Community Ready (CCCR) mean to you? Where is OASD performing well, where are the gaps, and how would you help the system improve?**

This looks differently for each student. It could mean having the knowledge and skills to go directly into the workforce, going to college, and/or being an attentive and involved community member. A report for the upcoming OASD board meeting shows a growing increase in the number of graduating seniors receiving college credit and/or work experience. Gaps in math and literacy outcomes need to be addressed by meeting and instructing each student where they are at currently. Given the recent changes in curricula, I am closely monitoring test scores and open to feedback from students, staff, and the community to gauge if we're on the right track. From there, we can look at how the board can help.

**6. OASD is working to address a projected budget deficit for the 2026–27 school year (approximately \$5.5M). What principles will guide your decisions (e.g., priorities, efficiencies, service levels, revenue options), and what steps would you support to address this challenge in the coming years?**

I want to ensure we are having the least impact on our classrooms. This means prioritizing students and educators over central office. Also, as we head into the next 3

year with a new director of business services, I will be curious to see what insight they have regarding the deficit and ways to address it.

**7. OASD has recently completed major facility upgrades, including the opening of Vel Phillips Middle School in 2023 and Menominee Elementary School in 2024. In addition, voters approved a \$197.8 million referendum to build a consolidated middle school on the Shapiro site, resulting in the closure of South Park and Perry Tipler and reducing the number of west side middle schools from three to two. Looking ahead, long range planning includes constructing a new West High School and making improvements to North High as we move into the 2030s. What is your position on these facility improvements and school consolidations?**

I was in favor of the recent referendum, Consolidation, given enrollment numbers and financial factors, made sense. I'm open to listening to feedback from all stakeholders regarding future high school improvements. We should start talking about this sooner than later so we can have active engagement that is proactive, not reactive.

**8. What role should Tech Ed/hands-on learning play in OASD? How much emphasis would you place on CTE in policy and budgeting, and how would you ensure accountability for results?**

I am supportive of pathways that help students gain knowledge and a sense of self. Ideally, some of these opportunities or classes should be provided at the schools versus students having to leave campus. Partnerships with local technical colleges and businesses could help build and fund these opportunities. There are district incentive grants available through the state that incentivize districts that provide opportunities to high school students to earn industry-recognized certifications prior to graduation.

**9. What reforms, if any, would you support to fund public school operations? What is your view of school choice?**

Although the board cannot control state or federal funding mechanisms, we can advocate for funding reform in discussions with state and federal lawmakers. I am all in for advocating for increased special education reimbursement. Currently, reimbursement is sum certain, meaning that while a certain percentage may be agreed upon for reimbursement, that percentage can change based on how much money is left in the pot. Since special education is a mandatory

service (and we absolutely should educate all students), the reimbursement for services should be sum sufficient, meaning the percentage reimbursed is guaranteed. This would help districts budget better and help local taxpayers, and ultimately, all of our students.

With regards to school choice, we should, at the very least, put the amount that local taxpayers send to the voucher program on our tax bills. There needs to be transparency and accountability for these tax dollars. Currently, private schools receiving voucher money do not have to follow open meetings laws, and there is little data to support if these choice students have similar or better outcomes than their public school counterparts. This is another state issue that needs to be addressed with our state legislators.

**10. How would you help recruit, develop, and retain educators and staff (e.g., compensation, workload, mentorship, career pathways, culture)?**

I would love to hear from educators on this one. There was past state legislation proposed that would pay educators a bonus if they remained in a district for five years. That is obviously a state level initiative, but I would be in favor of something like this on the district level. I am open to suggestions and seeing how they can fit into the budget.

**11. The Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce is working with local businesses and the school district on programming to help create employable students through programs such as Youth Apprenticeships, Career Fairs, Youth Leadership Oshkosh, Career Pathways and Job Shadows. How will you build partnerships with the business community? Would you consider alternative models (e.g., industry-led academies like Fond du Lac's ACE) if supported by local partners?**

Having ongoing conversations with local business leaders is likely the most beneficial way to address what skills or workers they are looking for. I would definitely be supportive of alternative models of learning, as long as it also aligns with OASD's own goals for our students.

**12. A major challenge for leadership in any school system is navigating community perception, misinformation, and misunderstandings about how the district operates. Where do you obtain reliable information about the district's performance, needs, and priorities? How do you ensure that the information you rely on is accurate? (Include Board meetings attended, classroom visits, and your approach to communicating with all stakeholders.)**

I seek information from discussions with those with expertise and knowledge relating to education. This could be from current or retired educators, staff, and admins. I also read news

articles and look through data available on the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website. As stated previously, I attend board meetings, committee meetings, and volunteer my time through the PTO and in the classroom. Through multiple sources, you can validate if information is reliable and factual.

**13. As a Board member, how will you foster ongoing, accurate communication and engagement with families, educators, and community members—including those with differing views?**

I'm already doing this as I offer my phone number for calls and texts, along with my email address. I meet up with community members to chat over coffee, or engage during community events. I encourage everyone to attend or watch school board meetings, especially for those looking to better understand issues and to review data. I would like to see a committee put together of parent/caregiver representatives from our 6

schools, teacher and/or staff representatives, and other community members to give input on a regular basis and engage directly with board members. I'm also in favor of adding a non-voting teacher representative to the board. We have student representatives from each high school that attend board meetings once per month, we should have at least one teacher representative.

**14. Have you participated in the OASD School Academy? If yes, when and what did you learn? If not, how will you get up to speed?**

I have not participated in the academy, but as stated previously, I have attended school board meetings for several years. So I am already familiar with what's happening in the community, district, and board. I have also started attending board committee meetings to gain additional information and insight from board members and administrators. I am open to whatever opportunities exist in terms of meetings, events, and so forth that will help me learn and develop in order to make informed decisions as a board member.