

**Oshkosh Chamber of Commerce
Candidate Questionnaire**

Spring Election 2023 – Board of Education, Oshkosh Area School District

Please provide some personal background information.

- Name Barb Herzog
- Occupation Community Volunteer
- List any community activities you are involved with
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President, Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education
President, Oshkosh St. Vincent de Paul Society Council
President, SOAR (nonprofit that raises funds for hands-on arts education programs)
President, Women’s Fund of the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation
Active member, Oshkosh Chamber Ambassadors
Active member, Oshkosh Public Museum Board
Lector, Most Blessed Sacrament Parish
Past board member, The Paine Art Center Board
Past board member and board chair, Oshkosh Symphony Orchestra
Past board president and co-campaign chair, Oshkosh Area United Way
Pie baker, Pie on the Porch Program of the Winnebago County Historical and Archaeological Society

1. What do you believe is your primary responsibility as a board member? What will be your most important objective if you are elected to the board?

The role of the school board is defined in both state statute and in Board of Education policy 0122.2, Key Board Charge:

- A. Set the vision and the mission statement for the district.
- B. Set standards and expected student achievement.
- C. Develop and approve district goals.
- D. Employ and evaluate the superintendent.
- E. Monitor and evaluate district performance.
- F. Establish and review district policy annually by May 30.
- G. Advocate for continuous improvement in public education.

- H. Reinforce community values through our curriculum and instruction.
- I. Review and adopt annual budget.
- J. Oversee the community's investment in school properties and facilities as good stewards."

Boards define their roles and responsibilities as well as district operations through policy. I support what is included in Policy 0122.2. The role of the Board is to define "what" and for the administration under the leadership of the superintendent to define "how".

Simply put, the role of the Board is to hire, supervise and evaluate the superintendent: establish and review policy; review and adopt the annual budget; ensure the safety of students and staff on and in our facilities; and oversee the investment in facilities as good stewards. In addition, the role of a school board member is to serve as a strong advocate for public education, be visible at school and district functions, and seek input from stakeholders and constituents in decision-making.

My most important objective when elected to the Board of Education will be to promote improved student learning and growth for all students, especially in the areas of literacy and math and to improve the rating on the DPI report card to "exceeds expectations" for all schools. In addition, I will promote updating of facilities and emphasizing fiscal responsibility.

- 2. There are distinct differences between each of the three candidates that are seeking positions on the Board of Education. Please outline what distinguishes your candidacy and qualifications than those of your opponents.

I am the only candidate and incumbent with a proven track record as a successful and experienced member of the Oshkosh Board of Education. I have devoted my professional career to public education, including 10 years on the Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education, six (6) years on the CESA 6 Board of Control, and six (6) years on the Board of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, including one year as president.

I am a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and of the University of Wisconsin Madison. I have enjoyed success as a public-school teacher, principal, and central office administrator in 4 Wisconsin school districts. I have a passion for public education as it educates **all** students. I am well known for my love of showing support for our students and staff by attending athletic events, plays, musicals, and other school and district events.

Since 2013, I have demonstrated commitment, dedication, energy, and strong leadership as a successful member of the Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education. I have served as Board treasurer, vice-president, and president. I have chaired the Board's Policy and Governance Committee as well as the Facilities

and Finance Committee. I have been a member of the Legislative and Administrator Compensation Committees, a Meet and Confer liaison to the OEA and OPEA, and the Board's representative to the CESA 6 Board of Control.

In my 10 years on the Board, we have accomplished much as a Board of Education: adopting a long-range facilities plan (with community input), implementing the largest referendum in district history, placing a full-time counselor in each school, updating all district policies, updating high school athletic facilities, adopting new literacy resources to incorporate phonics and phonemic awareness in the science of reading, and expanding mental health services in our schools to name a few examples. I believe that the district is moving in a good direction and I want to contribute to those efforts. I am running for the board because I want to continue to build on the progress of the last 10 years. I support and stand for:

- increasing student learning and growth for all students
- updating facilities
- promoting integrity and transparency
- and emphasizing fiscal responsibility.

3. The Department of Public Instruction produces annual report cards that are an indicator of overall student achievement and engagement. While the Oshkosh Area School District received an overall score of 68.7 which puts the district in the "Meets Expectations" category, there are still opportunities for improvement when compared to the rest of the state in Advanced and Proficiency ratings such as English, Language Arts & Mathematics. As a member of the Board of Education, what will you do to ensure improved scores in these two areas?

One of my goals is to increase student learning and growth for all students. This means that all our schools should be rated as "Exceeds Expectations" on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction annual report cards. This also means increasing the number of students scoring Advanced and Proficient in literacy and in math.

I have supported the recommendation of our superintendent, Dr. Bryan Davis, to imbed increasing our student literacy scores into Board of Education policy. This will serve to hold staff more accountable for student performance. I will encourage the Board to adopt policy that will set benchmarks for student learning in math based on work being done with CESA 6 in developing Continuous Improvement Plans as part of the district's strategic planning. These 19 Continuous Improvement Plans, including the one for math achievement, will be reviewed at the March 29, 2023 meeting of the Oshkosh Area School District Board of Education and will go to a Board vote for adoption. I will vote to adopt these 19 Continuous Improvement Plans. Approval of these plans will serve to hold staff more accountable for student performance in literacy and math and to move each

of our schools to reach the level of “Exceeds Expectations” on the district’s report card.

I will promote use of or redistribution of resources to help those schools most in need of improvement in literacy and math and where they have met few expectations on the DPI report card. I will support narrowing the achievement and opportunity gap for English learners, students with disabilities, students on free and reduced lunch, and students of color; increasing the percentage of students reaching stretch growth goals by the spring of each academic year; and determining a benchmark for each grade-level cohort to reach by the end of the academic year.

4. In a recent state-wide survey, employers have indicated that school districts are not placing enough emphasis on core subjects like reading, writing, mathematics and other STEM programming. As a member of the Board of Education, what are you going to do to ensure that the District invests educational dollars in these areas?

For several years, our Board has emphasized data-based decision-making. Requests for new staffing should be tied to areas of need as defined by student performance. I will continue to advocate for increasing student learning and growth for all students in literacy and math, placing more emphasis on the science of reading (to include phonics and phonemic awareness), meeting the literacy benchmarks in Board policy, and increasing student performance on the state report card. These actions can be accomplished at the committee level as well as in Board meetings. I will also support the 19 Continuous Improvement Plans that emphasize the District Report Card, College Credit or Work Experience, Math Achievement, Reading Achievement, and Composite ACT scores.

5. Tech Education - the old Industrial Arts programs - has been slowly going away for many years for various reasons. Please describe your thoughts as to the need for these programs. Describe how much emphasis/weight you personally would put on this in your decision-making process as well as from a policy, expectations, and accountability stance?

Part of the expectations of the district and the community is that all students be “college, career, and community ready “(CCCR), by the time they graduate from high school. To me, Tech Ed programs are a very important and needed component for students to be career and community ready which is one reason why specific Tech Ed courses are offered to all middle school students. I view Tech ED as a high priority for the district and for the community.

Over the years, I have talked with business owners as well as young people seeking careers as electricians and as plumbers. These are good-paying professions that cannot be outsourced to another country. One of the 19 Continuous Improvement Plans that the administration will share with the Board at the March 29, 2023 meeting, includes a plan related to College Credit or Work

Experience which calls for increasing “opportunities for students to engage in pathways aligned to a local needs assessment designed to increase local economic development—including manufacturing, IT, and health care”, and “increase the number of students participating in work-based learning”.

I support helping all students to improve their learning and growth in math and literacy to help them to be eligible to participate in these programs. I expect to see more dual-credit opportunities through Fox Valley Tech and more apprenticeships. The Board has established a yearly calendar with specific reports tied to student outcomes. I successfully advocated to have Career and Technical Education on this list with an annual presentation to the Board in March.

The following plans for moving forward were part of the Tech Ed district presentation at the March 8, 2023 meeting of the Board of Education:

Update and prioritized CTE (Career and Technical Education) pathways to meet the quality for federal Perkins funding

- A sequence of career and technical education courses
- Opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials
- Work-based learning experiences
- Dual enrollment opportunities
- Career and technical student organization-related activities
- Update high school course guides to include Industry Recognized Credentials and Redefining Ready criteria for CCCR
- Partner with counselors, Special Educators, and CTE Educators to create coordinated WBL (work-based learning) continuum and career connected learning opportunities
- Gap Analysis Protocol to understand decreasing enrollment and disproportionality in enrollment in CTE courses
- Personalize the student experience and increase internal OASD supports by discontinuing CESA 6 Consortium

Agreement for Youth Apprenticeship and Perkins Grant

While I support the above actions, from an expectations and accountability perspective, I would like to see more students enroll in these programs, increase the number of students in work-based learning and apprenticeships, expand and enhance communication with the business community (including the Chamber of Commerce) to ensure that the district is preparing students to be successful in the workforce. I would also like us to attract and retain Tech Ed staff and explore licensure opportunities through the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services for those who need a Tech Ed teaching license. These actions may need an investment in updating Tech Ed equipment and spaces in order to attract more students as well as attract and retain teaching staff.

6. Long Range Planning – Oshkosh has made significant progress as it relates to facility improvement and one example is the construction of Vel Phillips Middle School which is scheduled to open in the fall of 2024. However, Oshkosh residents have seen their annual OASD tax bills increase almost 30% since 2020. With an updated 10-year Facility Plan in place, please describe how you will stabilize and prioritize this growth in expenditures with more proposed school improvement projects on the horizon. Also discuss your thoughts on how the OASD should address replacement plans and long-term preventative maintenance on its aging facilities and specifically our high schools.

As a Board member, I have always sought to be a good steward of the district's resources. I have supported recommendations from the business office and the superintendent to lower the district's debt through such actions as refinancing debt at lower interest rates, paying off debt early, and building the fund balance to reduce the need for short-term borrowing. In addition, I supported establishing the Three Waves Clinic and moving to a partially self-funded health insurance program to lower district costs. These efforts have recently resulted in the reduction of the mill rate for 2022-2023 by one (1) cent.

Nonetheless, taxpayers may have seen a property tax increase as a result of increased property assessments. In addition, there has been an impact on property tax bills as a result of the voucher program. According to Drew Niehans, Oshkosh Area School District Executive Director of Business Services, school vouchers are local education tax dollars collected by the public school district but distributed entirely to private and religious schools. In 2021-2022, 476 students used school vouchers, costing Oshkosh taxpayers \$4,021,150. Since 2016, Oshkosh taxpayers have spent nearly \$17 million on private and religious education through the voucher program. School vouchers are an extra tax paid by property owners to fund private and religious education.

I will continue to support the business office efforts to reduce debt and increase the fund balance. I will support efforts to consolidate schools to reduce costs and to increase efficiencies in delivery of services. Paying down or paying off debt will allow the district to at least partially fund phases of the Long-Range Facilities Plan along with setting money aside in Fund 46 to pay for capital projects.

As for replacement plans and long-term preventative maintenance, the Board adopted a Long-Range Facilities Plan in January 2020 with community input. The construction of a new middle school and elementary school on the northside are included in Phase One of the Long-Range Plan. Phase Two would address South Park, Phase Three Oshkosh West, and Phase 4 Oshkosh North. Replacement plans should seek community input. Preventative maintenance should seek to reduce costs through energy efficiencies including lighting and heating. Putting money into Fund 46 will also allow us to at least partially address replacement plans and preventative maintenance.

7. What reforms, if any, would you support to fund public school operations?

I support funding the voucher program at the state level rather than through local property taxes. Voucher recipients only have to apply once to the program and public school districts only receive a number from the state on the number of voucher students from the state. If a student applies for a voucher while in Oshkosh but moves to Fond du Lac, Oshkosh taxpayers would continue to pay for that student under the voucher program. I would like to see voucher students verify their addresses every year. I support special education reimbursement to be the same for both public schools and voucher schools as currently voucher schools are reimbursed at a higher rate than the public schools.

I have always said that everyone in the community has a stake in how well our students are educated. Therefore, I would support Governor Evers' 2023-2025 Biennial Budget for Private School Choice Programs to:

- Pause private school choice programs to limit costs and property tax increases to reevaluate how programs impact public schools, taxpayers and students, and whether any reforms are needed
- Require all private schools in choice programs to have DPI-licensed educators by July 1, 2026
- Provide property tax transparency by requiring private choice programs state school aid reductions to be shown on, or attached to, property tax bills

8. The OASD has lost student enrollment due to the Covid-19 situation and overall population demographics. How do you plan to stop the departure of children from our district either going to private schools or surrounding districts? How do you plan make up for the lost dollars from students who have left the district?

There are several actions that the district might take to stem the departure of students and to make-up for lost dollars. One of these actions is a multi-year marketing plan to attract more students. I support hiring a communications specialist to assist our communications director in telling the district's stories, including the unique curriculum opportunities the district offers that other schools do not. These include the Communities Program at Oshkosh North and the Global Studies Program at Oshkosh West. I recommend that we update our website and Facebook pages to tell our stories that make us unique as a district and the many learning opportunities that we can offer. We can use these resources to expand enrollment in eAcademy, the district's online learning system. We can also reach out to students and families who have left the district to see if can persuade them to return to the district. We can continue to press for increased accountability on the state report card and set targets for improving the district's math and literacy scores as noted above.

In making up for lost dollars, we can seek ways to streamline and/or reduce overall costs through greater efficiencies. Some high school courses may need to only be offered at either North or West, rather than at both sites.