

American Association of University Women Northwest Suburban Branch Survey Results

District 62 School Board Election, April 2023

Thank you in advance for answering these questions to help our members get to know you before they vote in the April 2023 election for the District 62 School Board. Candidate responses are in the order received.

Candidate Gene Haring

1. Why are you running for the District 62 School Board? If elected, what do you hope to accomplish?
 - 1) To support the great work that the current Board and the administration have been doing.
 - 2) To continue the work I've been doing on the Strategic Planning Committee for the past 5 years, primarily in the area of communication. Rolling out a new website (coming soon!) and making sure that teachers and administrators can communicate effectively with parents and students—about their particular school and the district as a whole—are both critical to keeping everyone engaged, well-informed, and up to date.
 - 3) Maintain and expand the district's partnerships with the Des Plaines Park District, local organizations and businesses, so that teachers, parents, and students can benefit from all of the recreational and educational resources that are available.
2. Are you satisfied with the district's implementation of the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act and the district's general mandatory safety and health education? Please describe the program strengths or needed improvements.

Yes. The goals of the program are good. We need to make sure teachers have the resources they need so that all students are taught and treated with respect, and that students clearly understand the history and current evidence-based information about every aspect of what the Act is about. Whenever needed, those facts should be made available to parents and guardians as well, and in multiple languages.
3. Do you favor state tax credits or vouchers for use by families to send children to private schools? What was your position on the possible renewal of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program?

In general, I'm for investing in our public schools. While the scholarship program has merits, I need to learn more about how schools are qualified for the program.

4. Do you believe the district's current school policies encourage all children to learn tools and strategies to show respect and care for others and themselves?

Please explain your answer.

Yes. As the Marketing Manager for the Des Plaines Park District from 2005 to 2022, I collaborated with D62 teachers, principals, and administrators, and I know they work hard every day to ensure that their students are treated with respect, and are taught to treat others with respect.

5. Does the board have a role in selecting materials for school libraries that include gender, LGBTQIA+ or racial perspectives? What is the appropriate role of the board in curriculum development in general?

The Board certainly has a role in reviewing and selecting materials for the curriculum. The most important thing we can do is ensure that every teacher and every student has complete access to books and materials that are fact-based, evidence-based, current, and historically correct. To the extent that it's possible, materials should be available in multiple languages to accommodate the increasingly diverse population in Des Plaines.

6. What actions would you recommend to encourage the inclusion of female students and underrepresented groups in the most challenging STEM classes?

First, I prefer STEAM. All genders and cultures must be given access to all classes and extracurricular programs, and encouraged to participate. Bringing in representatives from local organizations and businesses, and providing free access to relevant webinars (and any other educational opportunities) can have a direct and positive impact on how our students understand why they should participate, and how they will benefit in the long run. I've seen this first-hand as a member of the MCYAF Coalition and as a former Board member of the [Link Together Coalition](#).

7. Do you have a website that our members can visit in order to learn more about you and your candidacy? If so, please include the web address here:

I do not have a website for my candidacy. People can follow my posts on Facebook at [HaringForD62](#).

Candidate Elizabeth Massa

1. Why are you running for the District 62 School Board? If elected, what do you hope to accomplish?

I believe in our students. As a current Board Member, I want to continue to volunteer my time for all students who attend D62 schools. I believe in public education, and want all of our students to become active members of the community. We need to ensure students are getting what they need to meet their educational goals. Teaching them to read, critical thinking, and empathy are all things that will carry a student through life. I am honored to be in a position to affect real change in the district. I want to see full day kindergarten and a new strategic plan with equity as a guiding tenet. I want to see more student achievement, more community involvement, and more social emotional learning for all. By engaging the entire community with clear communication, focusing on the whole student, and providing a safe environment, we can do this. I want to continue to be the change I want to see in our community.

2. Are you satisfied with the district's implementation of the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act and the district's general mandatory safety and health education? Please describe the program strengths or needed improvements.

Currently, our District 62 policy 6:060, Curriculum Content, reflects that curriculum must contain instruction on subjects required by State statute or regulation specifics on physical education and health education. District policy 4:170, Safety, outlines procedures, plans, review, and other requirements to make District 62 safe for all students and staff. Curriculum maps for all grades for Personal Health, Safety and Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Curriculum are on the district website, and are aligned with Illinois Priority Learning Standards. The curriculum required under the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act helps students learn how to better take care of themselves and learn safe practices online and in life.

The Instructional Services Team ensures health and safety are taught in an inclusive, age and developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed way which benefits all students. Programs that promote healthy bodies and healthy relationships in this mindful way are best for our students. By incorporating these tenets in State Standards, each child in Illinois public schools is being better educated to form interpersonal relationships and better understand themselves.

3. Do you favor state tax credits or vouchers for use by families to send children to private schools? What was your position on the possible renewal of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program?

This speaks to the systemic inequities in education all over the country. State money should be used in public schools which have equal access to all. Public funding for private schools should not undermine funding for public schools. It is the duty of public school boards to provide rigorous education. Tax-payer money should be used in an equitable way for the whole community with financials available to the public and held accountable. I am whole-heartedly in support of more funding for schools, but I think the public school system is what should be invested in, where all students of all backgrounds and beliefs attend.

4. Do you believe the district's current school policies encourage all children to learn tools and strategies to show respect and care for others and themselves?
Please explain your answer.

This is reflected in District policies 6:060 Curriculum Content, 6:065, Student Social and Emotional Development, and 7:180, Prevention of Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment. The district takes social emotional learning and mental health seriously. Initiatives like Second Step and partnerships like with The Kenneth Young Center allow students to grow as a classroom community and as individuals. They actively learn how to negotiate and get along, with skills to further their individual relationships. We have seen that all children can benefit from this instruction, and meet the goal of educating the whole child. The Administration and myself, along with the rest of the current Board, know that this education is something every child benefits from, and are committed to continuing to better incorporate social-emotional and instructional learning.

5. Does the board have a role in selecting materials for school libraries that include gender, LGBTQIA+ or racial perspectives? What is the appropriate role of the board in curriculum development in general?

The Board is not responsible for selecting school library materials. We empower the Superintendent and Instructional Services Team to ensure that materials are culturally reflective of our community, age appropriate, and that all staff have access to these. Additionally, materials that provide rich background knowledge and diverse content would absolutely be encouraged. As a parent, I have seen these materials come home and know that they are being used in the classroom.

The Board approves curriculum that the Instructional Services Team researches and presents. They are the curriculum professionals, but the Board has a responsibility to ask for supporting studies and data. It is up to the Board to follow up with student achievement data to ensure the effectiveness of the materials in new programs and curriculum.

6. What actions would you recommend to encourage the inclusion of female students and underrepresented groups in the most challenging STEM classes?

I would recommend purposeful recruitment of these groups for enrollment in STEM classes, with information to parents about their significance and long term effects. Explaining the benefits of STEM to parents and students will help create buy-in and excitement. District 62 has STEM classes, but I would love for this to be expanded to allow for longer courses with more materials and ways to explore the curriculum. I would love to see more hands on access to STEM at all grade levels.

7. Do you have a website that our members can visit in order to learn more about you and your candidacy? If so, please include the web address here:

<https://massafor62.square.site>

Candidate Patrick Maag

1. Why are you running for the District 62 School Board? If elected, what do you hope to accomplish?

I AM RUNNING BECAUSE I WANT TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN MY LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. I AM A TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR AND I HAVE BEEN VERY ACTIVE WHERE I WORK. I WOULD LIKE TO DO THAT AT HOME.

2. Are you satisfied with the district's implementation of the Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act and the district's general mandatory safety and health education? Please describe the program strengths or needed improvements.

THE SCHOOL DISTRICT IS DOING AN OK JOB, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LGBTQIAT COMMUNITY. THOSE STUDENTS NEED TO FEEL SEEN AND HEARD. OTHER STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THEM TO SUPPORT THEM.

3. Do you favor state tax credits or vouchers for use by families to send children to private schools? What was your position on the possible renewal of the Invest in Kids Scholarship Tax Credit Program?

NO ? WE SHOULD INVEST IN OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

4. Do you believe the district's current school policies encourage all children to learn tools and strategies to show respect and care for others and themselves? Please explain your answer.

I KNOW THE SCHOOLS HAVE POLICIES AND TOOLS (LIKE PBIS) TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT EMPATHY AND CARING, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE WORK DONE ON BULLYING. ADDITIONALLY, I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE INTENTIONAL WORK ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION.

5. Does the board have a role in selecting materials for school libraries that include gender, LGBTQIA+ or racial perspectives? What is the appropriate role of the board in curriculum development in general?

I WOULDN'T SAY THE BOARD HAS A ROLE IN SELECTING THE MATERIAL, THAT SHOULD BE DONE BY THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERTS. THE BOARD SHOULD ENCOURAGE RACIAL/GENDER AND EQUITY SELECTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN & DEVELOP EMPATHY. THE BOARD SHOULD LET THE ADMINISTRATION MAKE CURRICULUM DECISIONS AND REVIEW THEIR WORK.

6. What actions would you recommend to encourage the inclusion of female students and underrepresented groups in the most challenging STEM classes?

AS A PARENT, I WOULD ENCOURAGE THE DISTRICT TO EXPLORE PROGRAMS & INTERNSHIPS IN STEM FIELDS. I WOULD ALSO LIKE THE DISTRICT TO EXPLORE STEAM BECAUSE I AM A FIRM SUPPORTER OF ARTS EDUCATION.

7. Do you have a website that our members can visit in order to learn more about you and your candidacy? If so, please include the web address here:

NO, SORRY I DON'T.