

Dan Bailey

1. What are your priorities in the District for the next 1-2 years?

Keeping the schools safe for all. We have been having problems in the schools with the safety of the students as well as faculty. We need to look at the root of the issues that are causing a breach in safety concerns in schools, including classrooms. We currently do have disciplinary actions outlined in the student handbook. We as a district need to continue to adhere to these guidelines, policies and procedures. Additional resources may need to be available to faculty and administration. These resources for example could include, but not limited to mentoring, training to handle de-escalation of stressful situations and addressing any psychosocial needs of the child(ren). If the priority of safety continues it will lend a hand to learning.

Learning is obviously a priority. Unfortunately, we have seen statistics that demonstrate a fair percentage of WA-WM students need to take remedial math and english in college. Sadly, I have seen young adults that are unable to read, write or do math at a level one would expect after graduation from high school. These students feel the system has failed them. Each student is different. Not all students learn the same way. We need to know our students, their learning preference and move them in the direction in order for them to succeed after graduation. Our graduation rate is at 88%, this needs to be at 100%. 42% of our students pursue a 4 year degree. We need to look at this number seriously. We need to continue to support those students who are pursuing a bachelor's degree, but also encourage and support students for associates degrees as well as jobs in the trades. We have improved in the past 7 years, but we need to do more for our students to be successful at all grade levels.

2. If you have school-age children - do you join the PTA at their school? Or, if your children are grown - did you join the PTA when they were in school? If elected, how will you support our PTA's as a member of the School Board?

I have always supported the PTA. Yes, we were members when our children were in school and our grandchildren. We still attend PTA functions throughout the district. So the answer is yes, I have and will continue to support the PTA if I am elected and even if I am not elected.

3. The population of our school district is very diverse - both culturally and socio-economically. How do you plan to unite the District for the common good of the students?

Our district is very diverse. I have always taken this into consideration when making important decisions to unite the district, make it equitable for the common good of the students, so this is not new for me. Every student enrolled in our district, regardless of their ethnicity, culture, creed, gender, sex and socio-economic status, needs to be given the same opportunities; all should be treated fair and equal. The West Allis West Milwaukee School District is committed to fostering an inclusive community in which the opportunity gap can be closed and ALL students succeed.

I would love the district to add an Equity Coordinator that focuses on helping our Instructional Coaches focus on equitable practices. This will help with a successful implementation of a strategic plan that will help ALL students in our district reach the most rigorous practices possible. This strategic plan will help staff, administrators, teachers, and parents to identify

specific areas we can improve and/or create equity. This plan will help ensure students, staff, families, and community members of all cultures and perspectives are provided an environment and resources necessary for our students to reach their greatest potential. We need to make sure that we empower all students to achieve their personal academic vision and goals. We also need to increase cultural awareness of all teachers, administrators, and staff, ensure welcoming, safe, and inclusive school environments for all, recruit, hire, retain teachers, administrators, and staff of different cultural backgrounds, and strengthen our parent and community partnerships within the district.

**4. Do you feel large class sizes can be beneficial to our students?
How do you plan to make sure class sizes stay reasonable?**

I am a big supporter of providing instruction to students within a small classroom setting. I believe the student to teacher ratio should be no greater than 18:1. This allows for teachers to have manageable groups and provide instruction to students within a greater capacity. I feel very strongly that combined grade levels of 3, 4, 5 graders, or multiple grade levels similar to this, makes it hard for teachers to deliver instruction and doesn't allow students to have access to the proper curriculum within their grade level. Making sure that we continue to look at student data from our district and staffing will help us to provide best practices to students.

5. Do you feel the Project-Based Learning model is successful in our elementary schools, and does it keep our kids competitive with other nearby Districts? If so, what is the plan to make sure similar learning styles are available at the intermediate and high school levels?

I believe in creating opportunities allowing students to explore real world problems and challenges as well as toward expanding and applying their current knowledge in an authentic, real-world context being essential with keeping up with the 21st century learner. I believe that having a balance within classrooms is important to creating a well-rounded learner who will access at all times to different learning opportunities. Project-Based Learning is embedded within every district around the metropolitan area because it's what is needed for the 21st century learner. Project based learning should be occurring throughout the district at every grade level, this would include intermediate grades and high schools as well.

**6. Would you be in favor of increasing academic standards for high school student athletes?
Why or why not?**

Yes, I would. Back in June of 2015 the standard was lowered to 1.5 GPA for student athletes. Unfortunately, the standard was lowered so that schools in the district had a complete athletic team. Sadly, by lowering the standard, as the district did, this puts the athlete before the student. You are first a student. Sports should be a motivating factor. Students should want to do well in class to do well in sports.

However, we should be helping those student athletes that are struggling. There are many factors involved with students' success or lack of success in school. Maybe it is time management or organizational skills. Maybe these students struggle with test taking. We need to help these students, but also need to continue to have a standard. Remember we are working for the common good of all students no matter their differences.

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association says student athletes must have no more than one failing grade from the previous year in order to compete. Individual schools and coaches can raise those standards at their discretion, but they cannot lower them.

7. Do you think it is important to consider banning cell phones from classrooms?

I believe all phones should be turned off and put away while in a classroom. The teacher is there to teach and with everyone on cell phones it is a big distraction. I feel anyone using a phone during class should have the phone taken away and returned to the student at the end of the day. If it continues the phone should be taken away and the parents should be required to come to school with the student before the phone is returned. I am okay with phones turned off completely and put in pockets or purses while in school. There is no need to have them on in a classroom. If a parent needs to get a hold of them, they can call the office. There are many research studies that have been done which support no cell phone use in classrooms.

8. The suggested school counselor/social worker to student ratio is 1:250 and our District currently does not meet that ratio. Do you think we should work toward meeting the suggested ratio, and if so, how do you plan to accomplish that?

Yes, as a district we need to add more counselors/social workers to schools. Mental health is a big issue that needs support in today's society. The more we can support our students, provide guidance and tools to equip them in the world, the better we and the students will be. We have a diverse district on multiple levels as we are aware of, which I believe needs more resources than some surrounding districts. I feel that we could look more closely at the budget and find the funds to accomplish this. We could also explore different avenues by partnering with local agencies to provide support to students as well as looking at different grants that could help support the finances of hiring more bodies within the school.

9. There are 9 members on the WAWM School Board. For the incumbent candidates - could you share a time when you voted differently than the majority of the other members, and why? For the newcomer - could you share an example of an experience when your opinion didn't fit the majority?

As an incumbent, an example of a time that I have voted differently is when I have raised concerns over people that were potentially going to be hired within the district. I had concerns because I thought that they were not vested in the district and didn't share the same mission, vision, and values that the West Allis West Milwaukee School District supports. I shared that I was not interested in the candidates and wanted to continue looking for someone who shared a similar vision and wanted what was best for all students, staff, and community members.

Brian Keller

Brief Introduction:

Before answering the questions presented by the PTSA Council, I want to give a little background about myself and why I am running.

My wife Jasmine and I have lived in West Allis for about 17 years. I have three sons who all attended WAWM Schools. My oldest, Zachary, graduated from Hale and went right into the workforce. Dylan graduated from Central and is currently a freshman in college. Logan is my youngest and finishing his last year at Franklin Elementary School and will be attending Frank Lloyd Wright for intermediate school. I have a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater in Human Resource Management and have spent most of my career working in recruiting. My experience helps me to understand the challenges of attracting and retaining qualified candidates for positions and translates well to some of our current struggles as a district.

Part of the reason that my family moved to West Allis was the schools. West Allis West Milwaukee had a very good reputation at that time and we felt it was a good place for our children to get their education. As time went on, the district encountered many challenges. At one point many years ago I joked about running for school board, but then I really started to think about it. I talked to some parents in the district that I knew and talked to a couple board members to get an idea of what it might entail. I started going to meetings on occasion, usually if there was a topic that I felt particularly passionate about. I learned more about the district, I joined the 20 Year Facility Planning Committee and talked with more people. I decided I wanted to be a part of moving the district to a better place. As soon as I decided I was going to run I went to almost every meeting until the election. I felt it was important to learn about the current issues the board was facing and to see, in person, what a meeting was like. I wanted to be as prepared as possible in the event that I was elected to the board.

During my current term I have had the pleasure of serving in two officer positions for the board. My first year I was elected to serve as the Clerk and the last two years have served as the secretary. For those positions I was voted in by my peers on the board. I have also served as the chair of the employee engagement and culture committee and vice chair of the Recreation and Community Services Committee for 2018-2019 and 2019 -2020.

In my role as chair of the Employee Engagement & Culture committee, I was able to utilize my professional experience to talk about the need for our district to be more competitive in attracting and retaining the best teachers for our students. These conversations have included working toward a new compensation model that makes us more attractive to potential employees in our district. We have to work to make sure we are bringing in the best possible teachers at all levels and work to keep them in our district. Our students deserve to have great teachers and it is important for our improvement as a district to limit turnover. Making sure that we keep our great teachers will help to continue to improve our results in educating our youth

and make our district more desirable to families. I look forward to seeing this process though if elected to another term.

In my role as vice chair of the Recreation and Community Services committee, I was able to be involved in the early stages of the planning for the Recreation Center. The addition will allow for increased offerings for our students and the community.

I feel like the district is in a better place than it was when I was elected 3 years ago and I am hopeful that I will be able to continue to serve the district and its stakeholders for another 3. We have started to do some very good work but we still have more to do. I take this job very seriously and both understand and appreciate the responsibility that the voters trusted me with. I know how important every vote is, I know that at times we have some very tough decisions that we as a board have to make, and I will always do my research, ask questions, and listen to other perspectives. But even in those tough situations I will make sure not to throw away my vote as my voters trusted me to be their voice.

I thank you for the opportunity to answer the questions presented by the PTSA Council and for making the accommodations to share with the public due to the current public concerns.

1. What are your priorities in the District for the next 1-2 years?

There are a number of things that are important to me as we look toward the future of our district. Some of the things that I hope to focus on are as follow:

I want to continue to work to make sure that the District's financial position continues to improve. A part of that is also making sure that the resources we have are protected and are being used in the best possible way to provide our students with an excellent education.

Something I have been involved with since before my first term is the district facilities. We need to be proactive in terms of understanding what our current situation is and what is needed for the future. That is not just in terms of physical space, but also making sure that the environments are suited to how students are learning not just now, but in the future as well. Then we need to come up with a realistic plan that addresses our needs.

A big concern of mine is making sure that we have a new and fair compensation model for our teachers and staff. We need to make sure that we are competitive with other districts so that we do not become a training ground for surrounding schools. It is crucial to be able to attract and

retain talented teachers so that our schools can have continuity and so that our teachers can develop and grow with us and our students. We need to do all of this in a manner that is fiscally responsible as well.

Another item related to teachers is making sure that they have the support and resources that they need in order to be able to focus on teaching the students in their classroom. I think too often there are situations that take away from classroom learning. This can be caused due to class size, student behavior or other issues. As a district I want to make sure that we are finding a way to balance the needs of all students, in a way that does not take away from those that are ready to learn.

I want to make sure that the district continues to improve on its communication. In some ways I feel that as a district we have improved a great deal in this area, but it is also clear that at times we can do better. I believe that timely, transparent information is an important part of a great relationship with our stakeholders.

I want to make sure that students are provided the best possible education and that they are prepared for life after WAWM whether that is college, the trades or any other path.

I also want to make sure that we work to have appropriate levels of mental health resources for both our students and our staff.

There are likely some other items, but those are some that are very important to me.

2. If you have school-age children - do you join the PTA at their school? Or, if your children are grown - did you join the PTA when they were in school? If elected, how will you support our PTA's as a member of the School Board?

My wife and I have joined the PTA at our children's schools every year I believe. Our level of participation has varied over the years due to other commitments. When my two oldest sons attended Lincoln as an elementary school, we were very active in every aspect of the PTA. Recently we have not been as active in terms of regularly attending meetings or serving on the board but try to attend events regularly.

Most recently I have served as the President of the Central Booster club for the last two years as there was a serious void of volunteers for that organization. My term will be ending this year and I am planning on being involved in the FLW PTA as my son transitions there next year.

One of the things that I would like to do more frequently is attend an occasional meeting for the PTA's of the other schools to learn more about what they are doing, their challenges and successes and to see how the school board can support them. I also want to do a better job of promoting the events I attend so that others can see the great things that are happening thanks to the PTA. Whether that is sharing through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or giving shout outs at board meetings it is important to highlight these activities. A lot of effort goes into all of it and it is important to recognize how important these activities are for the individual schools and the district.

3. The population of our school district is very diverse - both culturally and socio-economically. How do you plan to unite the District for the common good of the students?

I think it is important to celebrate the diversity of our district. Because we are so diverse, our district gives our students a more realistic view of the world outside of our walls. Our students have a great opportunity to work with students who might come from a different background and to learn from each other.

I think as a district we need to continue to address any inequities that our students might have and need to work to put all of our students in the best possible situation to succeed. We need to get to know each student and their background. Understand what excites and motivates them. Identify any obstacles they may have to achieving their goals and work to remove those.

From an education perspective, we need to find engaging ways to teach our students about some of our differences. Highlight different cultures to learn about. Celebrate the differences and identify things that might be similar across cultures. Work at a young age to help understand those differences should be celebrated for making us who we are.

We have to make sure that each student feels as though they belong and that they have a place in our district. I think as a board member we need to be accessible and make sure we are hearing feedback both positive and negative. We need to hear from families about what we are doing well and where we can improve. I know I want to try to be even more accessible, at every school. Be more of a presence. I think it important to engage with students when you can and let them know you value their education and success.

4. Do you feel large class sizes can be beneficial to our students?

How do you plan to make sure class sizes stay reasonable?

I think it is important for us as a district to make sure teachers are put in the best possible position to succeed. I feel like there are some situations where larger class sizes can be beneficial. Larger classrooms can lead to more sharing of ideas, more creativity, and more social development.

There are some situations where having split grade classes can be beneficial as well. I know my family has personally had that experience multiple times including the last two years. My son was in a split class and because of that he was easily able to take on more difficult work and be exposed to learning that he might not have had the opportunity for otherwise.

From a teacher perspective there can be a lot of concerns. Every additional student in a classroom means more work for the teacher. Additional time teaching, grading assignments, preparing report cards, and many other tasks. If it is a split class this then includes lesson planning for 2, and in some cases 3, groups of students. In many cases this is happening while also seeing less prep time and more demands of our teachers in other areas.

I think what is reasonable for any one specific class room can vary depending on a number of factors. When determining what makes sense we need to be aware of the grade levels the classroom is teaching, the age of the students, the school and it's population and individual needs, and any other factors that will impact the teachers ability to be successful.

I think it is important to work with our educators and listen to their feedback. They are in the classrooms every day. They know the challenges, they know what situations allow them and, as an extension, their students to be more successful. I am very much in favor of more regular dialogue with our teachers. I think it is important for the district, and specifically the board, to hear about their success, their challenges, and what is important for their students and for them as educators.

5. Do you feel the Project-Based Learning model is successful in our elementary schools, and does it keep our kids competitive with other nearby Districts? If so, what is the plan to make sure similar learning styles are available at the intermediate and high school levels?

I am excited by the Project-Based Learning that we are doing in our schools. I feel it is successful because students are working on projects that are engaging to them. It is something tangible that allows them the ability to really drive their own learning. There have been so many exciting projects from our students and you can tell their excitement when they present it or talk about it. Anytime a student is excited about something they are going to be more motivated to learn and continue the work toward the end goal. There has been so much imagination and creativity that has resulted from this learning style and I am very excited to see it continue. I think because of these things it very much keeps our kids competitive with other districts.

In order to successfully move Project-Based Learning to the intermediate and high school levels, I think we need to be more creative in terms of what those environments look like. Many of these projects really cover more than one area of study. I think one of the reasons that Project-Based learning works so well in elementary school is that you don't typically change classes for different subjects. We need to find a way to make an environment more conducive to that type of learning. Maybe "families" of teachers that work together across subjects. We need to find ways to allow students at the higher educational levels to be able to have that same imagination and creativity while working toward the requirements to progress.

I think one of our best resources in moving to a model that includes the intermediate and high school levels is looking at other school districts that have been successful in implementing Project-Based Learning at those levels. Finding out what worked and what didn't, what mistakes were made and what things went better than expected. Use the knowledge of the people who have done it before, and understand not every environment is the same. Make sure we work to understand the differences in our situation and look for ways to proactively address them. And most importantly, let our teachers, students and parents have a voice. Understand what is important to them and what they are looking for in order for it to be successful.

6. Would you be in favor of increasing academic standards for high school student athletes? Why or why not?

This has actually been something that has been a concern of mine since before I was elected to my first term on the board. I am very much in favor of a standard that requires at least a 2.0 GPA in order to be eligible to participate in any athletics. I think the current standard does a disservice to our student athletes as it allows them to perform academically at a level that is below average and still participate in sports.

I am very much a person that believes athletics are a crucial part of the educational experience, but participation is not a right. The opportunity to participate in athletics is a privilege that needs to be earned. Decisions should not be made based on our ability to field teams, but what is best

for the student athletes long term. I would like to see us increase the standard to a minimum 2.0 GPA and provide tools and resources for those students that are in danger of not meeting that requirement.

A 2.0 is basically a C, which is average. Performing at a below average level in the classroom should not be good enough. Let's work with the student and understand where the issues are and then work to remove whatever barriers there may be to performing at a higher level. This part is crucial. There are many factors that could impact their grades. A student may have too many responsibilities at home, may have to work, may have a learning disability or mental health issue or any of a variety of other factors that could be impacting their education. Let's work to make sure we are finding out what those reasons are and coming up with a plan to overcome them. Let's make sure that we provide the tools they need to assist them. Let's offer tutoring, mentors, before or after school study halls and anything else that can assist them. Let's be creative in how we work with athletes. Our athletes typically do not strive for below average work on the field or the court, so let's help them to not do it in the classroom. A student athlete by their title should be a student first and an athlete second.

7. Do you think it is important to consider banning cell phones from classrooms?

As technology continues to evolve cell phones continue to have more and more functionality. Ultimately it is a mini computer that can allow its user to stream television shows and movies, update their social media, play games and other apps that can be very much a distraction to someone that does not know how to handle that responsibility. I think it is important that schools limit the possibility of the distraction.

While I am not opposed to a cell phone ban, I do worry about how that could ultimately be enforced. A student could ultimately still have it with them, and a teacher would not know if they were not using it. I would like to see us have more of a policy where devices should be powered down and put away before class starts. This should be done with very clear consequences should student's not meet those expectations. I think this type of policy will also help to teach the student how to use the device responsibly which is going to be important when they enter the workforce. It will also allow for situations where the teacher may want students to use their device for something class related.

I have seen many instances where employees are on their cell phone when they clearly should not be. Often this is in plain view of customers or in situations where they should be working and are ultimately stealing time from their employer. As a place of learning, we should look to implement policies that will not only facilitate a better learning environment, but also teach

students skills that they will need for their life after high school. This is yet another skill they will need to have to be successful in college or the workforce.

8. The suggested school counselor/social worker to student ratio is 1:250 and our District currently does not meet that ratio. Do you think we should work toward meeting the suggested ratio, and if so, how do you plan to accomplish that?

As I mentioned earlier, I feel that it is very important that we make sure that students and staff have the appropriate levels of mental health resources. We live in a world where it appears there are more potential issues for our students than ever before. If these needs are not addressed they will serve as a barrier to them throughout their education.

I think it is very important that we find a way to get to the recommended school counselor/social worker to student ratio of 1:250. I think one of the ways to work toward accomplishing that is by making sure that we continue to be fiscally responsible. We need to make sure that all of our decisions are made with the focus on providing our students with the best possible education. We need to make sure that all of our resources are being used appropriately in serving that goal.

Another thing that I mentioned before is the need to make sure that we have a salary structure in place that makes us competitive with the other districts. These positions are in demand in every school district. When we are able to get a qualified professional to fill one of these roles, we need to make sure that we are able to keep them. Those staff members have already taken the time to get to know the students and build relationships with them and their families. Continuity can be crucial when working with our students and addressing their various needs.

I would also like to see us explore partnerships with community agencies that may be able to provide some of these services. Oftentimes partnerships like this can be done in a way that allows districts to focus their resources and have a greater impact on their student population. This can also help to strengthen the relationship between the schools and the community.

9. There are 9 members on the WAWM School Board. For the incumbent candidates - could you share a time when you voted differently than the majority of the other members, and why? For the newcomer - could you share an example of an experience when your opinion didn't fit the majority?

When thinking of a time that I voted differently than the majority of board members there is one situation that I quickly remember. It is a vote that happened in a closed session so I can not give

any specific details, but I can tell you why I voted the way I did. I am very much a person that likes to have data and information. I like to review that and make sure that I understand it. I try my best to also look at every side of the situation. Even after I come to my own conclusion, I try to be open minded because I know there still may be something that I had not considered.

In this particular case, I felt that some of the information that I needed to vote with the majority was missing. I asked questions to try to see if I could get what was needed. I listened to others as they shared their thoughts and perspective. I feel that I understood their points and how they ultimately came to their decision, but to me there was information that was still missing that would not allow me to take that leap with them. Information that to me was vital in order to vote with the majority. Based on the information I had, I felt the right choice was to vote in a way that ultimately led me to be in the minority.

I take every item that I vote for on the board very seriously. I understand the responsibility that I have been given to represent the many stakeholders in our district to vote one way or the other on every vote that I am present for. In my time on the board I have only abstained once, for a supplemental contract vote which included a person who was basically family. I use the information that is given to us, ask questions, listen to others and ultimately vote in a way that I feel is in the best interest of the district and its stakeholders.

It is important that all 9 of us are able to work together, listen to each other, and respect each other's opinions even when different from our own. I pride myself on being easy to work with, prepared, open minded, and respectful of my colleagues. I listen to their opinions and value their perspective, but it is my job to vote in a manner that I believe right for the district.

Kristen Keyser

Hello everyone! My name is Kristen Keyser and I am the non-incumbent candidate for the West Allis - West Milwaukee School Board. Thank you so very much for allowing all of the candidates to speak to all of you in these most unusual circumstances.

I will bring to the school board a voice of a parent and a teacher. I have been an elementary teacher for over 10 years, but I work outside of the district, so there will not be any conflicts of interest. I have first hand knowledge of Project-Based Learning, having begun to implement it in my own instruction. I can provide keen insight to the current educational curriculum, classroom environment, data driven instruction and special education intervention. As a proud parent of two elementary students, who attend the West Allis public schools, I have a vested interest in ensuring the continual success of our cities' schools.

1. What are your priorities in the District for the next 1-2 years?

My priorities over the next 1-2 years would be to make sure there is equity in our school district. I firmly believe every child has the right to the same resources and educational rigor without barriers.

I am also placing high priority in recruiting and retaining teachers and support staff. This will be accomplished through increased retirement benefits and a competitive pay that demonstrate their expertise and level of education are valued.

Finally, I am going to focus on transparency and accountability in the budget. We need to ask, "How does this money directly support student learning?" for every dollar spent.

2. If you have school-age children - do you join the PTA at their school? Or, if your children are grown - did you join the PTA when they were in school? If elected, how will you support our PTA's as a member of the School Board?

My family has been members of the General Mitchell PTA. I want to create a partnership with the PTA, so that we can work together to meet our shared goals, as well as support one another in our independent endeavors. I am incredibly impressed with the family friendly events, fundraisers, classroom donations, and scholarships the PTA is able to offer our students.

3. The population of our school district is very diverse - both culturally and socio-economically. How do you plan to unite the District for the common good of the students?

I have spent my career focusing on providing equity in education. I have achieved this by attending workshops on personalized learning, reading books on diversity in education, and trying to be thoughtful in attending to every one of my students, their families, and my colleagues. I have spent the majority of my career in very diverse school districts and have always been the first to listen to the communities I serve. I plan to attend as many school events and meetings as possible to hear from every school community and understand their unique needs and wants from the school board. It all comes back to equity. I want to be the school district's number one advocate, but I wouldn't be able to do that without engaging with the community.

4. Do you feel large class sizes can be beneficial to our students? How do you plan to make sure class sizes stay reasonable?

I want to see classroom sizes capped at 20 students, or less. Numerous studies have shown higher test scores and higher college attendance rates among classrooms of under 20 students. As a teacher, twenty is a very manageable number for differentiating instruction, multi-level ability groupings, and really getting to know each child individually as a person and as a learner. I've had larger class sizes in my career and I lost a lot of valuable instruction minutes to management needs and transition time.

I would like to see the budget be re-worked to support hiring more teachers to increase the number of classrooms offered to reduce class size, especially in elementary schools where that early engagement and instruction is so important. If the budget re-work is not an option, then we must hire more support staff, including: interventionists, social workers, and paraprofessionals to support student learning.

5. Do you feel the Project-Based Learning model is successful in our elementary schools, and does it keep our kids competitive with other nearby Districts? If so, what is the plan to make sure similar learning styles are available at the intermediate and high school levels?

I've been using the Project-Based learning model in my classroom and I've seen my own children use it in theirs. I wholly support project-based learning, as it employs a multi-disciplinary approach to learning, as opposed to separating the subjects out from one another. When students are engaged and excited about learning, their ownership of their education and learning is intensified.

I have been studying and learning the curriculum standards for nearly two years and I am wondering how teachers are managing so many standards in a multi-grade classroom setting. Deeply understanding one grade level with over a hundred standards is difficult alone. I am closely following Forward exam scores to track student outcomes since the multi-grade classroom framework has been implemented.

6. Would you be in favor of increasing academic standards for high school student athletes? Why or why not?

I am absolutely in favor of increasing academic standards for high school student athletes! The West Allis - West Milwaukee School Board celebrates the goal of college and career readiness for all students, but our current Athletic Code of Conduct does not penalize poor academic performance until they reach a GPA of less than 1.5. That's the equivalent of a D+ on a 4.0 GPA scale. Athletics offer students so many social and health benefits, but I would not be comfortable with any student being unable to maintain at least a 2.0 GPA while participating in extracurriculars. That is the bare minimum for college acceptance. If we have athletes who have collegiate dreams, we have to prepare them academically to succeed. On that same scale, career readiness is being able to move into any workforce with academic competence.

7. Do you think it is important to consider banning cell phones from classrooms?

I've been asked this question before and it's a complicated issue. From the parent point of view, I would prefer that my children are "unplugged" from social media and only use school assigned technology. From the teacher point of view, I see benefits in educational and technological apps students could use in the classroom if there aren't enough resources provided for all students to have equity. Many school districts and states have adopted a no cell phone policy, and I, at this time, think it should be decided on by a school-to-school basis. At the very least, I would like input from students, parents, teachers, and administrators in our district before making any claim.

8. The suggested school counselor/social worker to student ratio is 1:250 and our District currently does not meet that ratio. Do you think we should work toward meeting the suggested ratio, and if so, how do you plan to accomplish that?

One of my main campaign platforms is to hire more support staff for schools, especially social workers and school counselors. I often hear from parents who are concerned about increased behavior issues in the schools. A child isn't going to learn if we aren't addressing their social and emotional health. They just won't be in the right place of mind to take instruction and focusing on their mental health is the very first step. I've mentioned before re-working the budget to

support student learning. That includes hiring social workers and counselors to support teachers and students.

9. There are 9 members on the WAWM School Board. For the incumbent candidates - could you share a time when you voted differently than the majority of the other members, and why? For the newcomer - could you share an example of an experience when your opinion didn't fit the majority?

I am currently a teacher at the Indian Community School, a school for children of Native American ancestry. This job has rejuvenated my passion and love for teaching. I truly love my students and the lessons they teach me every day. Being apart from them has been very difficult during the school shut down.

I have embraced the opportunity to be an advocate for my Native American students and colleagues. This past January, the Wisconsin Association of School Boards voted against retiring all Native mascots from schools, despite overwhelming evidence and research that Native students face racism and discrimination due to their usage. My Indigenous students, their families, and the Native community are beautiful and thriving. They do not deserve to continue to be depicted in such a dehumanizing and stereotypical manner. Native Americans are people; they are not mascots.

As a member of the School Board, I will advocate for the statewide ban on Native mascots and encourage the lobbying of the state legislature to ban such imagery.

Thank you so much for your time!

To reach me for comments, questions, etc, please email me at kkeyser@keyser4wawmsd.com or go to my Facebook page @Keyser4WAMWSD

Noah Leigh

Introduction:

My name is Noah Leigh and I am a 37 year old father of two children ages 6 and 9 attending Hoover Elementary. My wife is a high school math teacher in South Milwaukee. My family has always been active in our school's PTA both while at Wilson and now at Hoover. My wife and I have lived in the district for almost 13 years and recently chose to remain in the district when purchasing our new home.

I am just finishing my first term on the board. During that term, I served as Board Secretary my first year and Board Treasurer each of the last two years. I also served as the Chair of the Financial Stability and Efficiency committee and Vice-Chair of the Employee Engagement and Culture committee the last two years.

I am running for a 2nd term because I feel that I have work left to do. In my first term, I was able to help make positive financial changes in the district to get back on solid footing. However, other initiatives, such as the new employee compensation system, are just getting started and I want to be able to see the new system through. Long-term facilities planning, OPEB, and Deeper Learning schools are other endeavors I would like to help shape as a board member.

1. What are your priorities in the District for the next 1-2 years?

My priorities for the next 1-2 years would be focused on three large topics.

1. Ensure the implementation of a new compensation system for staff that is both designed to recruit and retain staff to our district but is also fiscally sustainable long term.
2. Strategize a plan moving forward for the district regarding our aging buildings based on the evaluation of those buildings by the construction and architectural firms hired this year. The plan needs to be clearly communicated to the community to ensure the reasons for the selection are easily understandable and the plan needs to address the long-term learning of students in our district.
3. Evaluate and modify the districts Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) to ensure they are tailored to recruit and retain staff long term in our district but also will be predictable from year to year in order to allow the district flexibility in future budgets.

2. If you have school-age children - do you join the PTA at their school? Or, if your children are grown - did you join the PTA when they were in school? If elected, how will you support our PTA's as a member of the School Board?

Yes, my family has been a member of our school's PTA since our children first started going to school. We have always been active members in PTA meetings and events with my wife serving as a PTA officer for the last 4 years. I myself often serve as the 50/50 raffle spokesperson at PTA events.

As to how I would support PTA as a board member, I would continue to support the use of school buildings for PTA events, share those events on my social media and encourage people to attend, and continue attending and volunteering at the annual PTA Carnival and the PTA events held at my children's school.

3. The population of our school district is very diverse - both culturally and socio-economically. How do you plan to unite the District for the common good of the students?

The diversity of our district can certainly present challenges, however I also feel it is one of our district's greatest strengths, and is one of the main reasons my wife and I decided to stay in our district when we were looking at homes last summer.

As such, I would look to use the diversity of our district as an asset. As adults, we know we come in contact with people from all sorts of different backgrounds, and having our learner's attend school in a similarly diverse population better prepares them for what comes next. In order to help bridge the challenges that can come from a diverse student body I feel that building school communities is very important. Misunderstandings that can occur between those of differing backgrounds usually stem from a lack of knowledge. If each school works to create a community, the students will be more invested in learning about their fellow students, bridging that knowledge gap, creating relationships with value, and hopefully fostering reactions of understanding.

4. Do you feel large class sizes can be beneficial to our students?

How do you plan to make sure class sizes stay reasonable?

My goal is to ensure that class sizes stay manageable and within the guidelines set in board policy for the grade. There are some benefits to larger class sizes, such as encouraging student collaboration and problem solving which is a focal point of Deeper Learning. However, we know not everyone learns the same way, and some students need a smaller setting in order to thrive.

In order to keep classes at the right size, I would work to ensure we have flexibility in our staffing models to ensure that the district can be nimble when unexpected staffing changes occur. This was partially addressed in the recent change in district policy surrounding long-term sub pay and I would like to see our daily sub pay rates looked at next in order to try and increase our fill rates. This along with whatever changes come with the new compensation plan, should help ensure we have the right number of staff in our district to keep class sizes optimal.

5. Do you feel the Project-Based Learning model is successful in our elementary schools, and does it keep our kids competitive with other nearby Districts? If so, what is the plan to make sure similar learning styles are available at the intermediate and high school levels?

I have had the opportunity to attend several community showcase nights at some of our elementary schools where students are able to showcase what they have learned and present arguments as to why their point of view is correct. Considering the age of the students doing these presentations, and that they were giving them unaided by teachers, I feel that PBL is providing a very interesting way of teaching in our schools.

The district has already worked to incorporate PBL at the intermediate level with Lane Global and work at FLW, and Dottke has been using PBL for the last few years. There are also initiatives at Hale and Central to bring in techniques learned at High Tech High in California to those schools in a more formal sense next year.

However, in many of our schools this type of teaching is new, and I think PBL will not be the answer for all students. I want to avoid the issues the big NxGL push encountered before my time on the board and ensure any new initiatives make sense for our students. PBL seems to have a lot of benefits in engaging students and empowering them to drive the work which creates more investment from the students in their learning.

To ensure any new initiatives will be given the best chance to succeed, I will work to ensure that the staff are provided with the proper support and time to incorporate the new initiatives before implementation.

6. Would you be in favor of increasing academic standards for high school student athletes? Why or why not?

Yes, but I would not limit this to just student athletes, but participation in all extracurricular activities including music and other clubs. I have brought this issue up several times about

increasing our GPA requirement. A 1.5 GPA is a D+ average, and I feel that our students should be held to a higher standard. I have advocated for a GPA of 2.0 for participation in extracurricular activities, or at least 1.75 which would be a C- average.

I was informed there are few students who have a GPA as low as 1.5 and that the coaches and teacher mentors for these activities actively work to ensure their students are achieving much higher GPA's. I have no doubt that is true, however, if that is the case then there is little harm in raising the standard.

7. Do you think it is important to consider banning cell phones from classrooms?

This topic has been an issue since I joined the board. Shortly after I was elected, a new personal electronic use policy was put into place that provided general guidance on personal electronic use, but allowed each school to provide their own rules regarding the use of cell phones in classrooms or the school in general. That was two years ago and I think it is time to revisit what is being allowed in schools surrounding cell phone use.

One of the reasons a complete cell phone ban in classrooms was not implemented several years ago was because the district moved away from 1:1 devices at the secondary level. There is technology available for check out from the IMC in the high schools for teachers to use, but my understanding is that it is sometimes difficult to check out or use for longer periods of time. This issue would need to be resolved, at a cost of around \$200,000, before a ban at the secondary level could go into effect.

I also recently have had an opportunity to visit many of our schools during the school day to see what is happening in our classrooms. I was able to witness many students with cell phones out and staff working to get students to comply with the rules. I also asked staff their thoughts on a cell phone ban and many seemed in favor of it.

So, with this information, I would be open to a ban but would want to see the staff surveyed as a whole to get a better idea of how they feel now, since they would be the ones having to enforce it, along with discussions with the principals to hear their thoughts.

8. The suggested school counselor/social worker to student ratio is 1:250 and our District currently does not meet that ratio. Do you think we should work toward meeting the suggested ratio, and if so, how do you plan to accomplish that?

I definitely think that we should work to reach the suggested ratio for students to counselors/social workers. Increasingly our students are coming to us from very difficult backgrounds and only trained professionals can truly help get them to a place where they can focus on learning.

During my short time on the board, I have advocated for more school social workers, psychologists, and counselors and the district has been able to add more to our schools. However, there is still a greater need, and using state funds aimed at increasing mental health resources for our schools combined with a private partnership to support more resources available to our students would be two avenues I would look to pursue to help with this issue.

9. There are 9 members on the WAWM School Board. For the incumbent candidates - could you share a time when you voted differently than the majority of the other members, and why? For the newcomer - could you share an example of an experience when your opinion didn't fit the majority?

In general, I have been in agreement with my fellow board members when it comes to things we take action on. However, recently I voted against the use of an opt-out letter for Human Growth and Development that stated if opted out, the students would be given an abstinence-only centered option instead. As a scientist who works in public health, I know that abstinence-only education does not work to reduce teen pregnancy or STI rates and I felt strongly against using these educational materials for the opt-out option. Although I agree an opt-out option should be provided, my issue was in including abstinence-only education materials as part of the opt-out option. I was told this was being included still due to the curriculum the district currently has which is being updated in the next school year, but I still felt it was important to vote the way I did.

I will note that before I voted, I made sure my reasons and concerns were clearly stated to the administration and the rest of the board so they all knew my stance and why I voted the way I did. I feel this is the best way to encourage discussion of issues among board members and have found when other board members do the same it sometimes causes me to think about things in a way I had not considered before.