

Meet District 15 candidates, learn about contributions

Posted Tuesday, March 20, 2007

Six candidates are running for three 4-year terms on the Palatine Township Elementary District 15 school board. None of three incumbents, Scott Boucher, Paula Mikula and Linda Silverman, are seeking re-election.

Three candidates are running as a team:

- Richard Bokor, 59, of Palatine, a former District 15 teacher and part of the adjunct faculty at National-Louis University in Wheeling. Longtime member of the District 211 scholarship committee.

- Gerald Chapman, 63, of Inverness, former longtime superintendent in District 211, now an educational consultant; board member of Palatine Rural Fire Protection District, The Bridge and the Palatine chamber of commerce; former chairman of the Palatine Township ethics commission and the township cemetery committee.

- Family physician Dr. James Ekeberg, 58, of Palatine, in practice 30 years with Northwest Family Physicians in Arlington Heights; former chairman of the family medicine department and the quality assurance committee at Northwest Community Healthcare.

The other three candidates are running independently:

- Lisa Neal, 45 (as of March 25), of Rolling Meadows; employed to do research and expenses for Arlington Orthopedics and Hand Surgery Specialists; active in Hunting Ridge PTA and Northwest Suburban Council PTA and Palatine Gymnastics Parent Club.

- Sue Quinn, 41, of Palatine. Stay-at-home mom, who has had several leadership roles within the Pleasant Hill PTA and has been on District 15 committees for the district Web site, Out-of-Level Math and the Gifted program.

- Mary Vanek, 45, of Palatine; an attorney who presently is a stay-at-home mom; formerly a Sunday School teacher and a Girl Scout leader; most recently was Girl Scout organizer at Pleasant Hill School.

The candidates were asked to contain their answers to 150 words. Where they exceeded that, their answers were cut at the end of that sentence.

Q. Tell us what contributions you would make.

Bokor, Chapman and Ekeberg (gave identical answers): As a board member, I pledge to work as a team member toward the following goals: Monitor the budget and maintain fiscal responsibility; provide comprehensive educational programs for all students; treat students, parents, staff and community with respect; work with all board members in the spirit of teamwork; make decisions in the best interests of students and community; respect administrators' responsibilities and avoid micromanaging; contribute to an environment of cooperation and collegiality; encourage all staff to make career commitments to District 15.

Neal: As a member of the Board of Education I will bring insight as a parent of three district 15 students, a small business person and a past neuroscience researcher. In addition, I am prepared to listen to all community members and do my best to build consensus with the other board of education members.

Quinn: I have been actively making contributions to District 15 behind the scenes, for several years now. In the past couple years I developed the Spotlight-on-the-Board Notes to inform the community about the school board's activities. I have been a leading advocate on the District 15 out-of-level math committee for quantitative assessments to make sure that each student gets the education they need regardless if they are below -level, at-level or above-level.

I was an instrumental participant on the District 15 web-site committee, crafting ground breaking policy and improving cyber-safety for our students. If I am elected I plan to bring my energy and enthusiasm, my background in science and engineering, and my ability to find these types of win-win solutions with me to the board.

Vanek: I want to see the District do a thorough financial house-cleaning, and examine every non-instructional expense to see if it can be reduced, eliminated, competitively bid, or out-sourced. I would like the community to have a very accurate picture of the district's true financial position, so that we can work together to address the financial problems that we face.

I would like to see the district come into full compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act and the Open Meetings Act.

Also, I hope to improve communication with the community, by holding town hall meetings where people from the community could engage in a Q&A session with the board. This would be a much more relaxed forum for the public than citizens address the board at a regular board meeting.