



INCUMBENT

Pat Allen

I grew up in Eau Claire, and attended college at the University of Northern Colorado, where I earned a bachelor's degree in Broad Field Social Studies. I complemented that degree by earning a teaching certification and a certification for Special Education from UW-Eau Claire. Subsequently, I earned certification for Learning Disabilities from UW-Stevens Point. My employment experience in both the private and public sectors provides me with the well-rounded perspective needed to serve the district and the community on the Chippewa Falls School Board, where I have served for the past six years.

Why did you decide to run for the Board of Education?

My three children are all graduates of the Chippewa Falls School District. They received a top-notch education, which prepared them for successful careers. I also have three grandchildren currently enrolled in the district. I am amazed every day at the dedication and commitment of our high-quality administration and staff. My sincere desire is to give back to the community and the district has led to my strong belief in public service, and in particular, service as a member of the Chippewa Falls School Board.

What do you see as the greatest challenges facing public education?

Preparing all students to be successful in 21st century skills is perhaps at the top of the list, as this is truly our primary goal. Achievement comes in many forms, but all students must be prepared for the transition to post-secondary education and the world of work. With this in mind, the district must have the financial capacity to hire and retain top-quality administration and staff. This presents challenges when financial resources also must be allocated for building construction and maintenance. Dollars must be allocated wisely; at the same time, consideration for taxpayers must be a priority for the School Board. My six years of experience on the Board, has provided me valuable knowledge and experience to do just that.

As a Board member, what will your top priority be?

Student achievement through our results and operational policies is clearly a top priority. As I work with the Superintendent and my fellow Board Members toward successful achievement for all students, I also always keep in mind the wishes of the District community, District stakeholders and the needs of the taxpayers. This community is very generous in their support of the Chippewa Falls School District, but stakeholders, community members and taxpayers want to see continued positive results from their investment in the District.



NEW CANDIDATE

Steve Olson

I grew up in Chippewa Falls and attended elementary, junior high and high school in the Chippewa school system. After two and a half years of college, I returned to my family's precast concrete business, which I eventually owned with my brother. After 42 years in the business, I am now retired. As a businessman, I was involved in both state and national organizations. Locally, I have chaired community organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Agnes' Table Board. I have been married for 40 years to my wife Deb, a retired teacher. We have four adult daughters and nine grandchildren. Five of those grandchildren presently go to schools in the Chippewa Falls District.

Why did you decide to run for the Board of Education?

I have been interested in running for the School Board for several years but, as a business owner, there was never enough time to commit to doing so. Education has always been important to our family. I believe that I am fair and willing to listen to all sides of an issue in order to provide the best educational opportunities with the resources available.

What do you see as the greatest challenges facing public education?

That is a difficult question to answer. We continue to ask our education system to fill the roles that families and communities filled in the past. The ever-growing social issues, as well as spacing needs, will continue to challenge all districts. I believe locally we have gifted and competent educators. The guidance they receive from administrators and the cooperation from all other supporting staff are necessary to meet our children's educational needs.

As a Board member, what will your top priority be?

At first, to listen. I don't have an agenda. Then, as I see it, the priority as a School Board member would be to put the basic educational needs of the children first. We must work within our community to find the balance to make that happen.



NEW CANDIDATE

Ross Spitz

My wife and I have two daughters. Our 10-year-old is in 4th grade at Jim Falls Elementary and our 13-year-old is a 7th grader at Chippewa Falls Middle School. I graduated from the UW-Madison School of Engineering in 1998 and have since worked, both in the private and public sectors, designing and administrating public works projects. I am currently the business manager for Smiles In Motion Pediatric Dentistry and also provide traffic engineering consulting services as time permits.

Why did you decide to run for the Board of Education?

I would like to serve on the Board of Education because I feel this is another way I can give back to our community. I have a lengthy background in working for the public sector and I feel the skill set I bring to the table will be a nice addition to the Board. Also, my background in engineering / construction could complement the strengths of the other members. I am a strong supporter of public service and public education, and I see this is a great opportunity to make a difference in our community.

What do you see as the greatest challenges facing public education?

One of the greatest challenges is the inequity in the state's funding formula for school districts throughout the state. Coupled with that is the fact that the costs of doing business continue to increase while available revenues decrease. We need to continue to find innovative ways to produce the desired student outcomes using fewer funds. As I visit my children's schools and meet with their teachers, I am amazed at the innovative ways educators continue to provide a high-quality education with limited resources. Until the funding formula is fixed, I want to help facilitate that practice in any way I can. I believe my experience as an engineer in the public sector working with limited budgets will be beneficial.

As a Board member, what will your top priority be?

I will work with my fellow Board Members and the school administration to keep the School District strong. Overall, my top priority will be to serve the community to the best of my ability and to help ensure the students have the educational resources needed to become successful adults.



NEW CANDIDATE

Sharon McIlquham

I grew up in Lafayette and graduated from Chippewa Falls High School. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from UW-Platteville and a law degree from Hamline University School of Law. Since 2001, I have been an Assistant Corporation Counsel for Eau Claire County. I am responsible for truancy cases as well as CHIPS (Children in Need of Protection and Services) cases. I have two daughters who both attended CFAUSD schools: Rachael, a choir teacher at Eau Claire North High School; and Emma, a senior social work major at the UW-Eau Claire. I have served as the Town of Lafayette supervisor since 2005. My volunteer interests are JDRC, Eau Claire Children's Theatre and Eau Claire Master Singers.

Why did you decide to run for the Board of Education?

I was raised to give back to my community and seeking a seat on the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District School Board is something I have considered for some time. I believe my knowledge and experience with truancy issues, as well as dealing with cases involving children who are victims of abuse or neglect, will give me a valuable perspective to offer the School Board. Also, with the possibility of replacing Stillson School being consideration, I want to help provide the residents of Lafayette an avenue to voice their thoughts and wishes during that process.

What do you see as the greatest challenges facing public education?

Budgetary issues create a myriad of challenges and issues for public education. Teachers are expected to cover more information with less time and resources. Providing teachers the necessary resources is a key concern. Technology can provide great assistance to students, but access to that technology must be provided to all students regardless of their income level. If school districts do not receive adequate funding from the state and any other funding sources, adequate staffing and programming cannot be provided. In addition, maintaining facilities and equipment is also a consistent challenge.

As a Board member, what will your top priority be?

At the risk of sounding cliché, if I am fortunate enough to be elected to the CFAUSD Board of Education, my priority will be to try to provide the best education possible to CFAUSD students. There are many pressing challenges, including but not limited to, the financial resources necessary to address the aging district facilities. Making decisions regarding how to be fiscally responsible and move forward with replacing and repairing the facilities, while still keeping the focus on the needs and best interests of the students, is what I would identify as my priority.