



BRAINERD LAKES AREA



VOTING



GUIDE

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

YOUR GUIDE TO SCHOOL BOARD
ELECTIONS IN THE BRAINERD LAKES AREA



PEQUOT LAKES

— Chamber of Commerce —



**BRAINERD
LAKES**

— Chamber of Commerce —



CROSSLAKE

— Chamber of Commerce —

EARLY VOTING
SEPTEMBER 23

Remember
to vote!

ELECTION DAY
NOVEMBER 8



What's on my ballot? What district am I in? Where can I vote?

Find answers to frequently asked questions at
BrainerdLakesChamber.com/Vote
or scan the QR code below.



THESE SPONSORS SUPPORT THE CHAMBER'S 2022
GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & VOTER EDUCATION ACTIVITIES.



Dear Chamber Members & Friends,

As Brainerd Lakes Area business men and women, we have another opportunity to positively influence the future of our communities by voting in the 2022 election.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, Government Affairs Committee and Business Champion Sponsors, we're proud to deliver this year's Business Voting Guide. Please take a few minutes to research the candidates by reading through this guide and attending our candidate forums.

Although we strongly advocate for policies that support small business, the Chamber does not endorse candidates or political parties. Special thanks to all the candidates who took time to respond to our questionnaire as they strive to serve in public office.

Sincerely yours,



MATT KILIAN, PRESIDENT

Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce
(218) 822-7111 | Matt@BrainerdLakesChamber.com

2022 Brainerd Lakes Chamber GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Nate Grotzke
Close~Converse
Commercial &
Preferred Properties

Jim Haakonson
CliftonLarsonAllen

Deb Holthaus
Benefit Innovations

Val Knudsen
Advantage Seamless
Gutters

Ginny Knudson
Borden,
Steinbauer,
Krueger and
Knudson

Mark Osendorf
Xcel Energy

Chris Quisberg
Cub Foods

Tim Ramerth
Widseth

Matt Seymour
Tudor Properties

Tim Swanson
Peer 360
Facilitator

Bart Taylor
RiverWood Bank

Angel Zierden
Brainerd
Lakes
Holdings

2022 School Board ELECTIONS

All of the listed candidates were contacted by the Brainerd Lakes Chamber of Commerce for participation in this Voting Guide. Responses received from our questionnaire are listed herein.

Brainerd School Board, Page 6

- School Board, DJ Dondelingr
- School Board, Randy (RJ) Heidmann
- School Board, Elisa Korentaver
- School Board, Charles Black Lance
- School Board, Derek Owen
- School Board, Lowell Smith
- School Board, Sarah Speer

Brainerd School Board Special Election, Page 13

- School Board Special Election, Anthony Bonsante
- School Board Special Election, Michelle Brekken
- School Board Special Election, Tris Cluever
- School Board Special Election, Jessica Lynn Forsberg
- School Board Special Election, Trevor Mulholland
- School Board Special Election, Mike Stanek
- School Board Special Election, David R. Stimac
- School Board Special Election, John Ward
- School Board Special Election, Brent Yaunick

Pequot Lakes School Board, Page 22

- School Board, Erik Bresnahan
- School Board, Jake Cameron
- School Board, Brian Hankins
- School Board, Bryan Held
- School Board, Mariah Hines
- School Board, Pamela J Johnson
- School Board, Dena Moody
- School Board, Craig Polchow
- School Board, Tracy Wallin

Pillager School Board, Page 31

- Pillager School Board, Rebecca (Becky) Bennett
- Pillager School Board, Sara Nagel
- Pillager School Board, Sarah Smith



For voting information visit the Minnesota Secretary of State website:
www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting

2022 Brainerd Lakes Area Candidate Forums

Your opportunity to meet our future leaders and make an informed choice at the polls!



All Candidate Forums will be streamed live on Facebook.
For more information or to RSVP,
visit BrainerdLakesChamber.com/Forums.

Crosslake City Council and Mayor
Thursday, September 8th | 6:30 p.m.
The Gathering Event Center

Brainerd and Baxter City Councils
Monday, September 12th | 6:00 p.m.
Brainerd Police Station

Crow Wing County Commissioner and Sheriff
Tuesday, September 13 | 6:00 p.m.
Crow Wing County Land Services Building

Nisswa City Council and Mayor
Thursday, September 15 | 6:30 p.m.
Nisswa Community Center

Brainerd School Board
Tuesday, September 20 | 6:00 p.m.
Forestview Middle School

Breezy Point City Council and Pequot Lakes School Board
Thursday, October 6 | 6:00 p.m.
Eagle View Elementary School

US Congressional Debate (Pete Stauber & Jennifer Schultz)
Monday, October 24 | 6:30 p.m.
Madden's On Gull Lake

Candidate Forums Presented By



Brainerd: School Board _____



Name DJ Dondelinger
Public Office School Board
Age 56 years old
Family Wife Kris, Son Max (29), and
Daughter Mackenzie (26)
Occupation Dondelinger Chevrolet-Hyundai,
Abra Auto Body, Dondelinger Ford
(Grand Rapids, MN), Dondelinger
Dodge (Grand Rapids, MN)
Contact djforschoolboard@gmail.com
(218) 820-5197

Why are you running for public office?

BHS was once among the best schools in the state. With teachers and students now leaving at an alarming rate, I want to help return Brainerd to its former glory.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

As a lifelong businessman, I know what it takes to run a successful operation. I have the skills, time, and interest to get District 181 back on top.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Smarter kids in our schools lead to future leaders. Better schools lead to easier recruiting for businesses in the community. It is time to re-install rural Minnesota values in our schools, not woke propaganda. It is also important we focus on all areas of education – vocational and academic.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

We need more support for teachers in the classroom. I have met with several teachers and heard the issues they're facing due to existing rules not being enforced. We need to have a healthy environment for teachers to do their jobs so our children aren't learning in a circus environment.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Owning several businesses in the area, I'm open to any suggestions or help that business people would offer. While I may not have all the answers, I do have the time, interest, and energy to make sure our district is the place for children to go to school.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Randy "RJ" Heidmann
Public Office Brainerd School Board
Age 71
Family Wife: Lorna Children: Zachary
and Taylor
Occupation Retired Retirement Plan Consultant
Contact randyheidmann@gmail.com
(218) 839-6470

Why are you running for public office?

To create an environment so that every student is on a path to graduate and be educationally equipped to lead a productive and successful life.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

My 45 years of working with IRS tax laws and my ability to simplify complex issues in regard to those laws so that it is understandable to the general public.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

We need to maintain and improve ISD 181 to have a best-in-class school district in order to retain and attract new businesses and families. These increases can help ISD 181 become more sustainable; the performing arts center can be an asset for business meetings, entertainment, and other revenue generating events.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

- 1) I would change the "School Choice" parameters to also include some or all of the tax dollars to follow that student to a private or religious school.
- 2) Allow School Districts to control their subject matter within the state required disciplines; I would ban CRT & progressive ideals.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

To positively impact local economy, I would work with our AD to bring in more competitive activity events throughout the year. I would also work with local youth associations to support their tournaments. In the class, I want to continue the pursuit of trade classes and expand as needed.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Elisa Korentayer
Public Office School Board Member
Age 47
Family Husband, Chris Klein, and two sons ages 6 and 8.
Occupation Parent, singer-songwriter, author, and public speaker
Contact info@elisa181.com | (218) 270-8974

Why are you running for public office?

I moved to Brainerd to educate my sons here. I am running to ensure our schools provide the best education possible for them and for every student in this community.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am thoughtful, reasonable, and no-nonsense. I communicate for a living and have experience leading nonprofits and businesses. I am passionate about seeing differences as opportunities for connection.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Our community and its businesses depend on the citizens that we educate through our public schools. My priority is to educate our students with the broad range of skills necessary to lead and service the businesses in our region, continuing to build Brainerd into an economic hub.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I have no changes to suggest at this time.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Local businesses, their leaders, and their employees are key stakeholders to the decisions made by the school board. I would set up meetings with business leaders and schedule listening sessions where the public could provide input.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Charles Black Lance
Public Office Brainerd Board of Education
Age 50
Family Olivia - 15 years old, Bethany - 13 years old and Chayton - 11 years old.
Occupation Director of TRIO Programs at Central Lakes College

Why are you running for public office?

I want to continue serving our students, staff and community. I am motivated to continue contributing to a school district that effectively educates young people in a fiscally responsible manner.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am a current school board member. I have 3 children within ISD 181. I understand the challenges ISD 181 faces. I have demonstrated the ability to make informed decisions.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

ISD 181 must pursue and apply input from area businesses and their employees to better understand educational needs and effectively meet workforce needs through career focused options for students. A successful school district will attract individuals and families to our community while retaining those that currently live within ISD 181.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

The state transportation funding formula for school districts is based on student enrollment, not the miles traveled to get a student to school. This hurts rural schools like Brainerd by having to spend dollars on transportation instead of providing other services to students. Minnesota transportation funding formula must be adjusted.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

ISD 181 must be more accessible to local businesses and their employees. Their input is valuable to all aspects of our school district. There must be a clear process for sharing information with and hearing feedback or guidance from local businesses and their employees. This communication must also be transparent.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Derek Owen
Public Office Brainerd Public School Board
Member (4 year seat)
Age 42
Family Wife and two kids
Occupation General Manager of the
Northern Pacific Center
Contact derek.npc1871@gmail.com

Why are you running for public office?

I chose to run for the Brainerd School Board to have the opportunity to give our students the best experience possible both academically and in extra curriculars.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I coach two sports, have two kids and a wife who teaches in ISD181. I have first hand knowledge and experience with what our kids and schools need!

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

The business community is huge in supporting our schools. We need to communicate with them more in the happenings of the district. They need to know that we support them as much as they do us. If we do that together, we will both see growth together!

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

When it comes to our school district, we need to keep politics and government out of the classroom. Let our teachers take control of their classrooms and support all of our staff. We need to hold each other accountable from the board of directors down to our students.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Communication with our local businesses is important. Pick up the phone and get to know our business owners and the people that run our area businesses. Set up meeting times to brainstorm ideas or send out surveys when needed. Feedback from our community should help shape our community.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Lowell Smith
Public Office ISD 181 School Board
Age 61
Family wife, 4 children, 6 grandchildren
Occupation Tenured Program Director /
Faculty MN State College and
University System
Contact smith4isd181@gmail.com

Why are you running for public office?

I want to ensure parents voices are heard, transparency of curriculum / finances, focus on academic success of our students & return to Warrior traditions.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am a college educator who is finishing my EdD in Educational Leadership. I also have 42 years of public safety experience. Which will translate toward student safety.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

This question does not fit well with a school board candidate but ISD 181 needs to support our local stakeholders and work cooperatively in supplying the next generation of workers to our business leaders. From college to trades we need to ensure competent professionals to fulfill needed future roles.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Abide consistently to the 181 policies in place. This would allow for a lot of the well publicized distractions in the system to be removed. Next, any policy that does not focus first on the academic success of our students needs to be changed. Our students need education not indoctrination.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

All educational stakeholders, (parents, teachers, administrators, students & business), needs to be a part of the process. By providing a cooperative environment, we will be able to make decisions that best represent our families, communities and district. Public education is a bipartisan effort to improve the lives of our children.

Brainerd: School Board _____



Name Sarah Speer
Public Office ISD 181 Brainerd School Board
Age 47
Family Husband, Erik and two children, Macy (18) and Attly (13)
Occupation Marketing and Public Relations Leader
Contact sarah.joy.speer@gmail.com (218) 820-9248

Why are you running for public office?

Community health and vibrancy starts with how we educate and care for our children. I am passionate about education and the success of our youngest community members.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am an accessible and connected representative with a commonsense approach. My experiences as a parent, professional, former educator, and community member offer a well-rounded perspective at the board table.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

The partnership between the community and the district is mutually beneficial. Successful schools attract talent to the community. Developing a workforce with skills valuable to local employers helps businesses thrive. Our community invested in education spaces matched to local workforce needs. Our work now is to keep pushing continued collaboration.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

As a school board, our impact is through district policy. That said, I will continue to be vocal about needed changes to school funding formulas at the state level to streamline long-term budgeting and planning, which is challenging under current mechanisms and imperative to our district health and success.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Our chamber has a large, engaged membership. I enjoy personal and professional connections to this group and call on these relationships often to take a pulse on community perspectives. I am present and approachable in the community. I realize the gravity of my voice at the table representing many.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election _____



Name Anthony Bonsante
Public Office School Board
Age 51
Family Yes
Occupation Truck driver

Why are you running for public office?

I am in it for the students. I believe we need an environment that benefits our students.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I have no personal or political agenda. I will show transparency, common sense and accountability. I will speak for the students and our taxpayers

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

I believe we need to partner with businesses for internships. I believe we need to train our student for life after high school when they choose not to go to college.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I would not mandate wearing masks. I would like to talk with custodians about the rumor of furies in our schools.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

It's not so much engaging our local businesses, because I see them doing their part. I would like to see more parent involvement in our students achievement. I would like to see more respect in our schools. Maybe we need to bring in local businesses to see interaction in classrooms.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... Michelle Brekken
Public Office ISD #181 School Board
Family Married to Bob Brekken, 5 children,
5 grandchildren
Occupation..... Retired School Social Worker
Contact..... mbrekkenfor181@gmail.com
(218) 851-2732

Why are you running for public office?

Membership on the School Board allows me to have a voice in ensuring students have access to compassionate, inclusive educational opportunities while strengthening trust between the schools and the community.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

For 32 years as a school social worker, I was privileged to work closely with administrators, teachers, support staff, community organizations and families, in the shared goal of supporting students.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

An important issue facing business and economic growth is developing a strong workforce. I support initiatives such as Bridges Career Academies which is a collaboration between ISD 181, Central Lakes College and local businesses. Promoting workforce development is essential to the vitality and economic growth of the Brainerd Lakes area.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

It is imperative that any legislative changes impacting ISD#181 would need to ensure adequate school funding to further student achievement and student success.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I would be responsive to community voices in public education in an effort to strengthen the relationship between the school district and the community. I believe our city, our neighborhoods, and our schools are stronger and safer when the citizens of the community work together to support our youngest learners.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... Tris Cluever
Public Office District #181 School Board 2 you seat
Family John clever Jr husband,
3 kids, 9 grandkids
Occupation..... Child care
Contact..... heylady37@msn.com

Why are you running for public office?

We need more transparency and accountability. I am very involved with many kids who are desperately looking for change and safety. All children deserve a education.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I have been involved in many different categories of Brainerd school district. I am very up front on many issues. I will ask for answers until I can find one.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Education and work force can achieve together. Expansion and retention. Technology has a large part in education Our strengths should be with our children, to help them move on after high school.

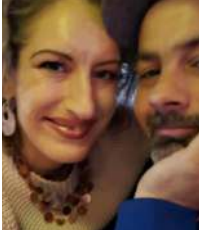
What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Having parents involved in their child's education is important. More voices being heard from parents, teachers and students. More involvement in decision making at school board level not federal level.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Having a good relationship with out of school business as a school board, can give you a little in sight as to the job market after kids graduate from high school. Work study credits, after school working, to help kids get involved and have a good work ethic.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election_____



Name..... Jessica Lynn Forsberg
Public Office School District 181
Age..... 44
Family Forsberg
Occupation..... Disabled Chemical Engineer
Contact..... jlforsberg43@msn.com
(612) 730-1127

Why are you running for public office?

I have kids by marriage coming & I simply care about kids. I'm the longest running Vacation Bible School Teacher at my church.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I'm was the treasure of the MN Government Engineering Council + more!

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Kids are first. I'll make sure to improve the budget. I've always been a successful treasurer my whole life. It's natural. I think tutoring is key, plus someone kids love and trust. Therapy available.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Not sure because I'm new to this area but I'm doing my due diligence and research. Already plans forming but need more information.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Why would that come into play with our kids? Fundraising. Everybody loves me.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election_____



Name..... Trevor Mulholland
Public Office ISD 181 School Board 2 year seat
Family Wife Katie and 3 Daughters
Occupation..... Business Manager
Contact..... trevormulholland@gmail.com

Why are you running for public office?

I am running to help make a difference in our schools. I want to focus on making ISD 181 the best experience for all students.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I was born and raised in the Brainerd Lakes area and a 1999 BHS Graduate. With children in the district I have first hand knowledge of the day to day.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

I believe we need programs in place to help our children with real world scenarios that would help them be better prepared for employment opportunities in our community.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

N/A

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I think local businesses should be looked at as valuable partners in the school district. If it was not for them we would not have the great community that we have now.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... Mike Stanek
Public Office ISD 181 School Board, 2 Year Seat
Age..... 40
Family Elsie (Spouse), Everett (Son-9), Ervin (Son-8), and Johonna (Daughter-6)
Occupation..... Minnesota Army National Guard
Contact..... mike.stanek181@gmail.com

Why are you running for public office?

To focus on a policy-driven, moderate approach of getting back to the basic fundamentals of the educational system, all the while advocating for ALL students in an equally-equitable learning atmosphere.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I have been a non-partisan collaborator with the current board and worked extensively with them to understand the future hurdles we must overcome to ensure a successful future for ISD181!

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

I want to ensure there is deliberate engagement between the school district and local community for shared marketing opportunities. Our community, local businesses, as well as, school district have a lot to offer outside entities looking to relocate the Brainerd Lakes Area!

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

As a school board member, we do not pass laws, but rather set district policies. I want to continue to work on transparent communication to the district shareholders and to make current policies the focal point when making decisions for the Students, Educators, and Parents of ISD 181.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I would directly utilize my collaborative mindset to bring all parties together, ask for thoughtful insight, and collect as much information to educate myself prior to making any critical decision. Our community, local businesses, and school district need to be a collaborative effort in bringing in new resources.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... David Stimac
Public Office District 181 School Board 2 year seat
Age..... 56
Family Wife Christy, daughter Annabelle, and son Jonathon
Occupation..... Retired Air Force Colonel; Substitute Teacher and Coach
Contact..... david.stimac@yahoo.com (218) 270-2254

Why are you running for public office?

I want to support our schools; set policies, manage the budget, and advise the superintendent to enable our teachers and staff to provide the best educational opportunities for ALL students.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

My leadership experience as a retired US Air Force Colonel along with my experience as a substitute teacher, coach, and volunteer will bring a unique perspective to the school board.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Hire highly qualified teachers and staff and ensure they have the support needed to provide the best educational opportunities for our students. Our curriculum must remain relevant and challenging to best prepare our students for success after high school whether entering the work force, learning a trade, or attending college.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I'm not running for the school board with an agenda to make changes to existing laws or operations. I'm running for the school board because I can be objective and will critically weigh both sides of the issues before making decisions that will support the best interests of our community.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

A strong public education system is critical to the future of our community and local businesses. As a school board member I would seek input from businesses on decisions that could impact them and seek feedback on how our schools can better prepare students for the workforce.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... John Ward
Public Office Brainerd school Board Member,
2 Year Term
Age..... 72
Family Wife - Sally, Children - Amy, Eric
Ryan, and Shannon and their
significant others and 11 grandchildren.
Occupation Retired teacher/coach/advisor, MN
Licensed Insurance Agent and State
Legislator
Contact jewardjr68@gmail.com | (218) 838-7335

Why are you running for public office?

To utilize my years of educational experiences, knowledge and passion while using my skills in communicating, building teams, problem solving, while being fiscally responsible and prioritizing students, staff and community.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I spent 34 years in a classroom, developing and implementing many unique, innovative and highly successful programs for school districts. I also served on educational committees as a state legislator.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Partnerships between local businesses and schools are important and greatly needed. We need to buy local and use local services local businesses services. We need to reach out and listen to local economic development agencies and businesses for their needs and suggestions to tie our educational opportunities to our students.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Board members should focus on local school policy district policy, using research, communication, problem solving, compromise and fact finding making the best decisions for students and businesses. Members should know how to effectively lobby our legislative delegations for good public educational policy that will not negatively impact schools or businesses.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

It is imperative that our school district has excellent relationships and partnerships with our local businesses and local services. I started a highly successful class for ISD 181 called Service Learning. This provided students and local businesses a hands-on experience to check out careers while volunteering daily at businesses.

Brainerd: School Board Special Election



Name..... Brent Yaunick
Public Office Brainerd ISD 181 School Board
2 year term
Age..... 38
Occupation Electrician
Contact byaunick@live.com

Why are you running for public office?

To represent the parents, students and community with transparency from input and feedback I receive and to also increase community involvement and support in the process.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I will base my decision making on input I receive from the community and be open to ideas to make my decisions and explain reason for those decisions

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

To increase involvement of and listen to our area businesses with their needs from the school district. Invest in opportunities to prepare our students to be successful within our businesses or to be successful in the own.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I am unsure of any specific laws or operations I would change as of today.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

By asking for their input and involvement in the process and based on feedback and response make decisions and explain why the decision was made.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Erik Bresnahan
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board
Age 44
Family Married with 2 children,
 11 and 8 years old
Occupation Farmer
Contact bresnahan24@msn.com

Why are you running for public office?

I am running to make our schools and community the best places they can be. Being a public servant at this level is the most effective way to help.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am able look at situations from all sides. If there is a good idea based on it's merit, I stand up for it.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

In regard to our education system, we need to continue to ensure that we are teaching our children to cope with present day life at every level. This means we need to ensure adequate yet efficient funding for our programs, technology and staff with an eye towards the future.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I am coming into this process with a fresh set of eyes, I have no preconceived notions as to any changes that have to be made. The purpose of being on the board is to work with administration and the community to ensure a quality education system for our children.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Engagement with our community is important. We all need to work together to thrive as a district. We can work together respectfully and responsibly and our students will benefit from seeing that. I think the Eagle View motto has it right; Respectful, Responsible and Safe. Our children are our future!

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Jake Cameron
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board
Age 40
Family Married w/three children
Occupation Insurance Agent/Owner

Why are you running for public office?

As a lifelong resident of Pequot Lakes and graduate of PLHS, I think it's important that we continue to keep a fresh perspective in all aspects of education.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I will never consider myself to be the best at anything; there are always new things to learn, even from those we've yet to meet. This is how we grow.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Community involvement should be a top priority, including businesses whenever possible. Having a strong school district should attract new community members, and in turn, this should help support local business.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I personally do not have a specific agenda, but I think a solid working relationship between the school board and local government will always help in creating a better environment for our students and the community.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Again, feedback and opinions from everyone in the community, including businesses, is very important. The school board should represent the community to the best of their ability; and trust both ways, should be a reflection of their ability to work together reasonably.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Brian Hankins
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board Member
Family Married with 2 sons
Occupation Retired Financial Services Risk Management Executive
Contact (218) 820-7407

Why are you running for public office?

This is a Great opportunity to contribute to Pequot Lakes’ students, teachers and administration success. My governance, financial and regulatory experience will allow meaningfully contribution as a School Board Member.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

With 27 years experience on more than 20 Committees and Boards, collectively, including process oversight, I have obtained the skill set to govern and communicate in this ever changing environment.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

As a Board Member my priorities will be to better understand the key initiatives driving success of our Pequot Lakes students, teachers and administration. Then, what support is needed to enable that continued success. Successful and engaged students will drive business and economic development.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

This Board’s role is more about understanding the confines of laws and/ or government that enable or inhibit the success and engagement of the students and teachers. Experience with multiple regulatory bodies has taught me how to engage and support when influencing positive change.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

As a School Board Member, I will always have an “open door” policy with a listening ear. Engaging in conversation to get ideas and facts will be key to supporting the success and engagement of students, teachers and administration.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Bryan Held
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board
Age 52
Family Emily Dru & Andie Joy - Daughters
Occupation Sales Consultant & Fishing Guide
Contact heldsguideservice@yahoo.com

Why are you running for public office?

I am running for School Board to support our educators in their endeavors personally, financially, and professionally. Furthermore, I wish to assist our students and help insure academic success.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

As a father, I wish to cultivate an environment that not only enables my daughters success, but their peers as well.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Foster business-first practices to support our local businesses both on- and off-season.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I would like to change the allocation of lottery winnings to have a higher percentage of money set aside for educational use rather than on invasive species prevention at our boat landings.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

As an active member in the community, I know the needs of the business owners and their operations. That being said, on the school board, I can be a voice on the board that can speak for local businesses.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name..... Mariah Hines
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board
Occupation..... Substitute

Why are you running for public office?

I want to be a voice in our school district for parents and students, to insure that the actions of our administration reflect our community's values. Let's put academics first!

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am already heavily involved in the community and the schools. I volunteer on the PTA, and as a mom anything passed by the school board directly affects my family.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Pequot Lakes is a great community businesses often donate to PTA events that support our schools and in return as part of the school board I would fight for hiring locally only. We support each other in this small town and that means buying and hiring locally.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I would like to focus on academics. We have seen district policies in the last 5 years veer away from academics and focus more on social emotional learning. I would fight for our schools focus to be academics and prepare our kids for a bright future.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

We have a great community and our community wants to be involved in the education of its youth. I want to make that happen. Business owners are parents or grandparents and I want to hear from them on issues their children are facing in the schools. I won't disregard community concerns.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name..... Pamela Johnson
Public Office ISD186 School Board
Age..... 44
Family Married (Kent Johnson) 4 Kids: 23, 13, 11, and 8 and one Angel in Heaven
Occupation..... Director of Coaching (Business Consulting)
Contact..... pamelajohnson4PL@gmail.com (218) 316-1822

Why are you running for public office?

To bring my experience to ISD186 school board so that as a whole community (teachers, administrators, children, parents, businesses and residents) we can ensure a rewarding future for our kids.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

- *Have served on a non-profit board
- *I excel at strategic planning/possibility thinking through challenges.
- *I served in the United States Army.
- *Life Experiences that I'm happy to discuss further

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Ensuring that our students' academic success is a priority. That we provide healthy challenges and expectations for our students so they can move on from ISD186 with strong skills for continuing their education or moving into the workforce. After academics I am excited to work on facilities & safety planning.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I would like to see decisions remain at the local level in regards to most school related items. As we saw over the past several years, regulations and laws for one area don't always meet the needs or best serve other areas.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

As a local business owner I believe that our students are our major asset. I hope to see more engagement with business owners and opportunities for learning within work environments. I know many area businesses are actively engaged and ready to do more in regards to working with the district.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Dena Moody
Public Office ISD 186 School Board
Occupation Semi Retired Teacher

Why are you running for public office?

I believe serving on the school board is a vital and worthwhile way to give back to my community. This is the best way to invest my time and talents.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

My entire career has been spent as an educator in Minnesota schools. I believe that my experience "in the field" provides valuable insights and a unique perspective to the board.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Our schools must provide the work and life skills for our young people in order for them to become productive members of society. Our communities' economic growth and development is dependent on local businesses providing career and housing options that will keep these young people in our communities.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Simplify, simplify, simplify! Present laws often only serve to complicate the process of educating our children. I would ask our local, state, and federal elected officials to lobby for and support more funding, and a fair distribution of it, to our schools, making education a top priority on their agendas.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I would encourage local businesses to offer more internships and work-study opportunities for our students to participate in. I would ask local businesses to participate in career days in our schools so our young people become aware of the local job market and the education and skills they will need.

Pequot Lakes: School Board_____



Name Craig Polchow
Public Office School Board ISD 186
Age 43
Family Married - 3 girls
Contact cpolchow@outlook.com

Why are you running for public office?

To be a voice for the children of our school district, we need someone on the board that is strong and willing to stand up for what is right

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I'm a no b.s. person, no gray area. I get to the pont, fix what is broke and move onto the next issue that is upcoming.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

I would like to give the kids back their morals, respect, and work ethic. I would like to work with local business to have kids come to their establishments and teach them old fashioned work ethic, respecting their patrons, and show good morals. Therefore, teaching new and upcoming employees

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I think all of our biggest goals is to get this rederic out of the school system and start teaching kids how to be kids, good old fashion academics.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Our local businesses owners are the parents of the kids in our school district. Local businesses, parents, guardians, should have a big say in our decisions/ votes. Afterall the school board is the voice to stand up for what is right for our kids. The change starts here.

Pequot Lakes: School Board _____



Name Tracy Wallin
Public Office Pequot Lakes School Board
Family Husband, Rick, and two boys:
 Logan (19) and Braden (14)
Occupation Bookkeeper, Graphic Designer
Contact twallin@isd186.org

Why are you running for public office?

I support giving back to our community and this is my way of filling that role. As an incumbent, I look forward to continuing to serve the residents of ISD186.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am reliable, genuine, honest, kind and a good listener and thoughtfully consider all sides of an issue before making a decision.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Our area businesses have a lot to offer our students. As a parent and board member I have seen and appreciated the generosity of businesses contributing time and resources to benefit student success. Internships, mentoring and financial contributions have provided opportunities that otherwise may not have been possible.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

Schools are constantly on a shoe-string budget and it would benefit everyone to increase funding to school systems. Today's students truly are our future and we need to invest in them and continue to ensure access to opportunities and resources to make them successful citizens, leaders and employees.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Every decision a school board makes must balance the best way to provide for the students and staff of the district while also being fiscally responsible with our taxpayer dollars - a benefit to both businesses and residents. Decisions must also take into consideration short- and long-term benefits and costs.

Pillager: School Board _____



Name Rebecca (Becky) Bennett
Public Office School Board ISD 116
Family Husband-Greg, 2 daughters
Occupation Physician Assistant
Contact becky.bennett@isd116.org

Why are you running for public office?

I am running for Pillager School Board as I hope to continue to represent my community to impact our kids positively by providing an education that meets each student's needs.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I am dedicated to providing a happy and healthy community as I serve on Pillager School Board and as I work as a Physician Assistant in Pillager.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

I promote partnerships between Pillager School and businesses to bring opportunities to youth and the community. I advocate to have our students graduate and be ready for the workforce and/or ready for further education. I believe investing in our kids helps our community be successful and sustainable.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I continue to follow and carry out policies and procedures set forth by MN and Minnesota School Board Association.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I would reach out and communicate with businesses to know their needs and hopes for their future. There may be relationships that can be built to help meet their needs and those of our future workers.

Pillager: School Board _____



Name Sara Nagel
Public Office Pillager School Board
Contact sara.nagel@isd116.org

Why are you running for public office?

I want to give our kids the best education we can while using our tax dollars in the most fiscally responsible way.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I love to talk to community members about our school. I'm happy to listen to your concerns and either look into it or explain the why of the decision.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Running for school board, I don't think this question applies to my office. The best thing a school can do for business and economic development is to have kids coming out of school ready to take the next step in life.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

I would love if the local school boards had more control over some of their decisions, instead of the state and federal mandates.

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

I would love to see more businesses participating with school. Kids need to know what jobs are out there and if businesses partner with the school for internship, job shadowing or just coming in to talk to a class about their job, it could open opportunities for both.

Pillager: School Board _____



Name Sarah Smith
Public Office Pillager ISD 116 School Board
Family Husband Shawn, children Ally, Joshua, Madelyn & Dylan
Occupation Marketing & Event Director, Confidence Learning Center
Contact sarah@confidencelearningcenter.org

Why are you running for public office?

To continue to be an active leader within the community in which we live and raise our family.

What sets you apart as the best candidate?

I have the passion to be active as our young children grow in the school system and take on a role that can help shape them.

What are your priorities to support business and economic development?

Using a hands on approach that will always put our children, school & community on a path to continued success that will not waiver on academic achievements, safe & hands on learning environments, teacher retention & success.

What changes, if any, would you make to existing laws or government operations?

N/A

How would you engage local businesses as you weigh your decisions?

Engaging local businesses within the school is essential to continue the growth of our school. Engagement through community functions within the school, partnership opportunities and communication.



**B
U
S
I
N
E
S
S**


VOTING **GUIDE** **•2022•**

For an online version
of this voting guide visit:
BrainerdLakesChamber.com/Vote.



BRAINERD LAKES
— Chamber of Commerce —

224 West Washington Street
Brainerd, MN 56401
BrainerdLakesChamber.com

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 252
BRAINERD, MN