How are you connected to the district?

I moved to Iowa City in 1999 with the intent of attending the University after attaining in state resident status. Shortly after moving here, my wife and I found out our daughter was on the way. She is an 8th grader at SEJH, having attended Lucas Elementary before that. My wives cousin is now a freshman at City High, having attended SEJH, Grantwood and Hoover. My brother in law just graduated from City High. My mother in law is a native of Iowa City.

What is the one issue that is motivating you to run for school board, given the scrutiny and the negativity that often comes with the job?

I decided to run in order to give back to the community that has given so much to my family. My daughter is going into 8th grade at SEJH and is receiving a stellar education. Our high schools are consistently in the top 10 in the state. With recipients of accolades such as Merit Scholarships, internships to places like NASA, and perfect ACT and SAT scores. I would like to look at our District 10, 15, even 20 years from now and see that we are still the top in the state, perhaps the nation.

I know we can do better for our students that might not be destined for college. Bringing back the Home Building Program would be a start, and would give these students exposure to a trade that would provide a livable income. I would work on bringing this program back. Once the program is reestablished, I would work on partnering with our local tradesman to bring in a “guest” lecturer for the day. This would have to be a certified tradesman for the class being taught that day. I already have contacts in many of the Trade Unions, and have started laying some of the ground work that will help implement these ideas.

We could involve the University in similar ways to help improve our overall educational experience for our AP classes. Wouldn’t it be great to bring all of our students that are taking Physics together for a day and have a couple of guest professors from the University do a one day work shop?

DIVERSITY POLICY:

1. Do you support the district's diversity policy as currently written? If so, what specific measures do you propose the district enact to meet the policy's requirements? If not, how would you propose to amend the policy?

Since it has already been passed, as a board member I would have to support it. Measures taken on the implementation of passed policies falls to the Administration team, not the board. The board only over sees the implementation. Without having any form of enactment put forth by the administrative team, I feel it is inappropriate to speculate on what may or may not happen.

1. Do you support redistricting at the elementary level prior to new schools opening? Why or why not?

Since it will be at least two to three years before the doors to any new school will open for educating students I feel there will be a need to redistrict. Redistricting now, will allow the board to adjust for overcrowding at many of our elementary schools.

1. The DP as written includes a capacity clause. It will be necessary to redistrict at the JH level to meet FRL numbers and capacity numbers (particularly before completing additions at SEJH and NCJH as noted in the Facilities Plans). How and when do you think this should happen?

Redistricting is a District wide event, not just a single level event. So, any adjustments at the elementary level will matriculate to junior and high school levels. Again, this will depend on actions and recommendations put forth by the administration, which as of date have not been presented.

1. What is your position on grandfathering and bootstrapping clauses when redistricting occurs?

Again, this is a decision that is made at the administration level, not the board level. However, I am in favor of keeping siblings in the same school. If grandfathering and bootstrapping create issues the board can look at revising the wording in the DP, however there already is language in the policy regarding attendance zones.

1. What is your plan to best support low income students if they are redistricted into a school without the resources found in Title I schools?

Again, this is not an issue the board has the realm of control over. The administration is the controlling factor on resources within the brick and mortal facilities. Without any recommendations from the administration, there is no way to speculate on how the programs in each school will be affected by redistricting. Nor has there been any previous correlation to redistricting and program offerings at the elementary levels. There are already differences in the High School level on class offerings.

FACILITIES PLAN

1. The SILO/SAVE plan will not provide enough revenue for all the projects on the facilities plan. How will we pay for them?

The RPS allows for borrowing up to 75% of projected revenue to the amount of $150 to $175 million. With a price tag of an estimated $252 (first cost) we will most likely have to bond for the extra money. We do have to keep in mind that there is already around $35 – 40 million in the set aside for the 3rd comprehensive high school bringing that estimated cost down to $210 to $220 million.

Keeping in mind that our administrative team as assured the current board that all the projects listed in the adopted plan is within the financial ability of the district, I have had to adapt a wait and see outlook.

1. If we need a GO bond and it is voted down, how will you prioritize the project list?

Equitable classrooms are a must. We have to have standards for every classroom. To that end, I feel upgrading and renovating our current schools should be a high priority. As well as building new elementary schools. During the time that those projects are ongoing we can look at having building plans drawn up for all other projects and look at the priority list and adjust according to budget and timeline for completion of project. It is possible to have two or more major projects underway at the same time. In all honesty, I think even with the purchase of land for an additional elementary school and the third comprehensive high school already complete it will be at least 4 to 5 years before the high school will be complete. Given the amount of design and build time needed.

1. Do you support closing Hoover? Why or why not?

Looking at the enrollment projection data and the capacity data there is very few seats left open with the closure of Hoover. I would feel better if there was more room for more students in the Elementary level. It would be best to have a solid plan for any property that the District would be closing. There are ways to expand City High without closing Hoover. Different avenues should be explored to expand City High before we fully commit to closing Hoover.

1. If Hoover closes, how do you envision using the site?

Should Hoover close, I would like to see that area have a true educational purpose. I would like to see the home building program brought back. It could be housed near the corner of Court Street and First Avenue, thereby allowing the home to be picked up and moved to its foundation within our community. Those roadways give reasonable access to all major roadways within our community for a truck the size needed.

MAGNET SCHOOLS

1. Do you support magnet schools? Why or why not?

Magnet schools can be a great asset to our community. They will help diversify and improve our educational experience within our schools.

1. If we have balanced FRL rates at elementary schools in areas with new schools, how will you determine where magnet programs will be established?

This is a decision that is made through recommendations at the Administrative level, and ultimately approved or revamped at the board level. Without knowing what the Administration will recommend, there is no way to give an answer to this issue. Since there has not been any recommendation from the administration to start a magnet program, there is no way to speculate where those programs will be.

1. How will you determine which students are allowed to go to magnet schools?

I would have to imagine that there will be a limited number of seats, and a certain amount of those will go the students already enrolled in the hosting school with a number available to open enrolled students as well. This is something that the administrative team will have to present the board before any decisions are made.

1. What kinds of magnet schools (if any) interest you?

Multiple language immersion, STEAM, and Trades would be my top three.

1. Are magnets equitable given your research?

They can be.

HIGH SCHOOLS

1. Do you support a third comprehensive high school for the district as noted in the facilities plan or would you prefer another concept? Why?

Yes, we need to either have a third high school or we end up with two mega high schools. Since the facilities plan has already gone through multiple community input sessions, and community support for the school was prevalent. I myself prefer the community feel of a smaller school vs a mega school. There are many pros and cons to each, but I prefer a smaller school footprint.

1. What year should we begin work on a third high school and what year should it open?

In all honesty, I think even with the purchase of land for an additional elementary school and the third comprehensive high school already complete it will be at least 4 to 5 years from start to finish before the high school will be complete. Given the amount of design and build time needed. I think we can go ahead and work on getting the building design done before we break ground, thereby speeding up the process once the decision is made. We need to make sure we can afford to run any new school opened before we build it.

1. What year should we begin work on an addition at City and what year should it open?

I cannot speculate on when a project will be started or completed.

1. The current facilities plan includes expanding City's cafeteria and library. West's cafeteria was built for a capacity of 900 students. How do you propose to address space issues at West?

Many capacity and facility issues are addressed in the comprehensive facilities plan. While there are components I don’t like, there are some that I do. My personal opinion is that there are ways we can avoid actually having to expand the library at City High, or any other school. One possible solution would be to explore the option of utilizing a similar program that the Iowa City Public Library uses for E-readers. This would help alleviate space issues in the library, but still offer the space for its current use. We will have to look at addressing issues that were not raised during the BLDD and facilities master planning sessions. And this might have to be one. I am not opposed to tweaking the overall plan to be more dynamic and comprehensive. And addition to the cafeteria may not come from the SAVE funds, but a possible GO bond might be a different option.

1. Do you support balancing the enrollment at the three comprehensive high schools? Why or why not?

I think as long as the curriculum is balanced, the number of seats should not be the primary concern. If the argument for balancing the enrollment levels in the three high schools is so that the schools are in the same athletics division, then I cannot support that argument.

1. What is your plan to address current overcrowding issues at the HS level between now and the time that the new high school is built?

The facilities master plan already addresses these issues and does not need to be redone. The plan had plenty of public input, and multiple revisions. Now is the time to roll up our sleeves and get to work versus talking about work.

DISTRICT POLITICS

1. Please describe the concerns of North Corridor residents as you understand them.

My observations have been that there is a large portion of the community pushing for a third comprehensive high to be built no matter what the cost to the rest of the district. A focus on the number of seats leads me to believe there are concerns on what athletic division the school will be in. I understand that many in the community feel they were promised a high school back in 2007 when SILO was passed. Just as many community members on the East side of Iowa City felt they were promised HVAC in the elementary schools. I understand there are concerns with traffic safety for students driving to City, or West depending on which one they attend.

1. District politics can be challenging at times. Please describe how you will include stakeholders from across the district during your term on the school board. If you are already on the board, please describe your efforts to represent the entire district during your term and the engagement you have had with the entire district.

I think having the committee meetings and work sessions recorded and aired on TV would be a start. They should also be made available to stream online as well. Timely posting of meeting agendas is a must. Diligent, monthly listening posts either held with another board member, or individually would be a must. This would allow for a more relaxed atmosphere for dialog with the community.

Putting items currently under District consent items actually on the agenda individually would allow for more input and review by the public as well.

3. What role should stakeholders of the district (teachers, students, PTOs, administration) play in forming district policy? As a board member how would you personally seek their input? Current board members, how have you sought input from district stakeholders?

I would first start by having a board member attend each of the above mentioned organizations union meetings. I already have a working relationship with each of these Unions allowing for free and open conversations. My phone and e-mail are always available, and I am willing to sit down and meet with anyone individually.