



Elder Grove School District #8 Board of Trustee Candidates 2022

To help better know the candidates running for our school board, we put out a questionnaire. Here are their responses, in their own words.

To learn more about a specific candidate simply click on the link below. They are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

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DANIELLE LACKMAN

Please give us a little background information about yourself.

I was born and raised in Billings. My husband and I operate a farm/feedlot on the West End of Billings. We have two daughters who do/will attend Elder Grove. I am an educator and have taught 6th grade, reading interventions, and currently teach high school English.

What motivates you to want to become a board member?

I am running for the school board for the two beauties that call me mom! I am running for the school board because I am an educator who has a heart for making sure our students receive the BEST education! I am running for the school board to support the men and women who work behind the scenes to make sure our students receive the best education!

Elder Grove is a special part of our community that I want to remain special for the generations to come!

What attributes are essential for successful school board members?

Integrity, compassion, willingness to listen, not afraid to ask questions, someone who is continually learning and helping Elder Grove evolve into the best school possible.

I strive to be approachable so that staff and the community feel comfortable approaching me with questions and concerns.

What do you see as the board's role and responsibilities?

The boards' responsibility is to help Elder Grove evolve in this ever-changing educational climate. It is our job to make the most well-informed decisions that will better the school, administrators, teachers, and most importantly the kids!

How can you contribute to a successful board meeting?

I will ask meaningful questions to help me make the most well-informed decisions possible. I am not afraid to do a little research. I hope to be approachable to staff and the community.

Any other comments you would like to share?

♥♥♥♥ Go Outlaws ♥♥♥♥

LACY NATIONS

Please give us a little background information about yourself.

Professionally, I have over 15+ years of human resources and leadership experience. I spent most of my HR career in the oil and gas sector starting at an entry-level job leading into corporate America. In 2017, I transitioned into the legal industry, and I am currently the Director of Human Resources for a regional law firm spread over a 3-state region and 11 offices. As a high-level explanation, I am responsible for developing, advising, and facilitating changes related to organizational design. Personally, I have two boys (13 & 16), a husband of 20+ years, 2 dogs, a cat, some fish... we are pretty much your normal-slightly chaotic household. I am a Wyoming native but a Montanan at heart.

What motivates you to want to become a board member?

For a good portion of the time that my children have gone to school, I hadn't given much thought to the inner workings of a school, however, I gained an interest to learn more about how the board and the district collaborated. While I know I have much to learn, my experiences of attending and participating in the board meetings this year have largely opened my eyes. Through this experience, I have discovered a strong desire to be an active participant in the school for the purpose of ensuring as a community we are taking steps and making decisions that are proactive and with the intention of serving the students, staff, and tax-paying households of our district in a way that is collaborative and with thoughtful intention. Being a board member is where I feel that my knowledge and experience would be best utilized in this effort and would be balanced among the knowledge and expertise that those already serving on the board bring to the table.

What attributes are essential for successful school board members?

Professional, trustworthy, proactive, objective, transparent and collaborative.

What do you see as the board's role and responsibilities?

In my opinion and as a standard of what I would hold myself to when taking into consideration the tasks, challenges, and decisions needing to be made, is being responsible for consistently keeping the children of our school at the forefront of our minds. Asking ourselves how these decisions best support and serve them, both for the here and now but also for the long-term. Our role as a board is to ensure that there is a unified approach to making these decisions, holding ourselves and each other accountable by getting curious and remaining objective when faced with complexities. I do not see the board's role to be one of a dictatorship rather the board should be partnering with the superintendent and other school faculty to address concerns and establish levels of accountability where it is necessary and appropriate.

How can you contribute to a successful board meeting?

By remaining engaged. The attributes I listed are some of those that I would expect as a participant in a board meeting from a board member. Additionally, I listed these because these are the same expectations, I would uphold for myself as a board member when dealing with participants at the meetings and during my engagement with other board members. In my opinion, it's important to recognize that all parties at the board meeting are there because they are choosing to be, they are invested, and they have a shared interest. While there will always be disagreeing positions on the various agenda items, it does not excuse the importance of treating others with respect and in a professional manner regardless of the opposing positions. Trust is built with time and through experiences. When faced with opposition I think my ability to maintain an objective view and remain transparent yet take a collaborative and proactive approach to tackle the issues at hand would largely contribute to the success of a meeting or at minimum provide balance in the process of reaching a solution.

Any other comments you would like to share?

N/A

STEVE NICOLA

Please give us a little background information about yourself.

I moved back to Montana nearly 3 years ago after leaving as a child. Married for nearly 14 years, 1 daughter. I enjoy hunting, fishing, and spending time with family and friends. I have been in Law Enforcement since 2005. I have a Bachelors degree in Career and Technical Education.

What motivates you to want to become a board member?

I want to be active in my community and be involved with aspects of my daughter's future. Education is the base to which all future roads start. I want to make sure that we are providing the best base possible.

What attributes are essential for successful school board members?

Work ethic, listening skills, common sense

What do you see as the board's role and responsibilities?

Guiding our school in the best direction to provide the best education and academic experience for all students.

How can you contribute to a successful board meeting?

Being present, listening, working hard to have Elder Grove succeed as the best Billings area school.

Any other comments you would like to share?

Whether you vote for me or not, thank you for using your right to vote and making your choice to better Elder Grove and School District 8.

RICH POPE

Please give us a little background information about yourself.

I have lived in the Elder Grove school district since 2006. All of my children have attended Elder Grove. I have owned and operated a local small business for 18 years here in billings. I have been serving on the current District 8 School board for 6 years.

What motivates you to want to become a board member?

I enjoy serving our school district and community. We as a board have accomplished a lot over the last 6 years including the addition of our new middle school. There is still much anticipated new growth in our district. I would like to be an asset and a part of addressing this continued growth.

What attributes are essential for successful school board members?

Patience. Commitment. Willingness to learn. The ability to hear all sides of many topics. Working with all parties who have a vested interest in our district. This includes community members, parents, students, teachers, and administration.

What do you see as the board's role and responsibilities?

As a volunteer organization there are a lot of expectations resting on the board of trustees. Working directly with the District Superintendent is a major role. The Superintendent reports directly to the Board. Overseeing a balanced budget. Ensuring state education polices and expectations are met. Working with our community.

How can you contribute to a successful board meeting?

Coming well prepared having reviewed the current board packet of information. Staying current of communications flowing down from the state. Being familiar with and exercising proper board room etiquette. These meetings are very important to the success of our district. There are often challenging discussions, which require a patient and blanché approach.

Any other comments you would like to share?

We have an incredible history at Elder Grove. Our community is outstanding. Our students are spectacular and deserve a committed Board to ensuring they receive the best education as possible. I look forward to serving our community. Several community members have reached out with concerns about what is being taught or what might be potentially taught in our schools. These are important topics that should be addresses in the near future. I supported a mask FREE campus this past year. I do not support CRT. Covid vaccination is a personal decision and I would not support a mandate requiring this vaccination at our public schools. I think parents should have a voice in what their children are taught at school.

