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**Lowell Area Schools
Board of Education**

Candidate Forum

Hosted by

 Lowell's

First Look

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Jared Blough

Incumbent or Challenger
Challenger

Age
50

Occupation

Mechanical maintenance technician at Crestwood Equity Partners

Years in the District

50 years

Alumni of District

Yes, Class of 1990

Children in the District

Four children, one currently enrolled in LAS and three LAS graduates

Personal Statement

It would be my goal as a LAS board member to embrace the best interest of the students and families pertaining to their learning experience. I would also push for transparency of the board and to follow Federal and State board policies. I will promote seeking parental or guardian permission for their students health and identity choices. I will provide constructive input for the ways Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are used in the curriculum.

Notes



Jessica Curtis

Incumbent or Challenger
Incumbent

Age
41

Occupation

Sales representative for Viotron International

Years in the District

41 years

Alumni of District

Yes, Class of 1999

Children in the District

Three children, all enrolled in LAS

Personal Statement

As parent of three children who attend Lowell Area Schools, it has been a privilege serving on the board the past two years. If re-elected, my dedication, leadership, and experience I have already attained will provide continuity and support towards achieving our district's future goals. It would be a pleasure to represent you, your children, and the community again as a school board member of Lowell Area Schools.

Notes



Jennifer Dougherty

Incumbent or Challenger
Challenger

Age
48

Occupation

Civil engineer with Cogent Civil Engineering

Years in the District

48 years

Alumni of District

Yes, Class of 1992

Children in the District

Four children, two enrolled in LAS and two LAS graduates

Personal Statement

I am proud of the education that Lowell Area Schools provides our students. It is important that the Lowell Board of Education remain focused on preparing all students for life after graduation, whether they are attending college or trade school or whether they are entering the workforce. I want to continue to provide a high-quality education and ensure that families from the southern half of the school district have direct representation on the board.

Notes



Chris German

Incumbent or Challenger

Challenger

Age

44

Occupation

Facility manager at Impact Church

Years in the District

10 years

Alumni of District

No

Children in the District

Four children, three enrolled in LAS and one LAS graduate

Personal Statement

Over the last couple of years there has been an erosion of trust between the Lowell BOE, Administrators and the parents in our district. I plan to mend that trust, at a minimum, through transparency and communication. I will not only hear what the families in our district want but actually listen to them and then help form policy and procedures that reflect what is overall best for education in our district.

Notes



Kyle Hoff

Incumbent or Challenger
Challenger

Age
44

Occupation

Supply chain analyst for Medtronic, Inc.

Years in the District

4 years

Alumni of District

No

Children in the District

Six children, four enrolled in LAS and two high school graduates from another district

Personal Statement

As a father of four kids in Lowell Schools, my biggest motivator for running for Board of Education is to be a voice for all students and parents in Lowell who have a passion for providing the best possible education for our kids. I support academic excellence, parental rights, transparency, providing teachers with needed resources, and maintaining political neutrality in schools. I look forward to representing you and our students on Lowell's Board of Education!

Notes



Parker Liu

Incumbent or Challenger

Challenger

Age

30

Occupation

Pharmacist with Cherry Health

Years in the District

29 years

Alumni of District

Yes, Class of 2010

Children in the District

Candidate has one child currently, not yet school age but expected to attend LAS

Personal Statement

I am running for the Board of Education to help the district sustain its high-level of achievement and expand opportunities for our students. I am passionate for education and believe that our schools give our young people the best chance for success in the future. Ultimately, our schools should be a collaboration with families, the district, and the community and I believe my perspective will help LAS continue to grow into the future.

Notes



Pat Nugent

Incumbent or Challenger

Incumbent

Age

51

Occupation

Teacher at West Catholic High School

Years in the District

51 years

Alumni of District

Yes, Class of 1989

Children in the District

Candidate has no children

Personal Statement

I am a lifelong Lowell resident and proud LHS graduate. I know the values of the Lowell community, and I am happy to serve the community as a member of the School Board. Through my years on the Board and my education and experience as a teacher, I bring a valuable skill set to the Board. I support the work our administrators, teachers, and students are doing every day to achieve our community's goals

Notes

Thank you for joining us for the candidate forum!
We are grateful for all those who helped this night possible:

Forum Organizer

Amanda Schrauben

Forum Moderator

Maryalene LaPonsie

Forum Volunteers

Teresa Beachum	Becky Reagan
Bruce Doll	Amanda Rogers
Erin Foltz	Jodie Seese

Lowell Area Schools Staff

Nate Fowler
Sonja Dedonado
Cindy Johnston
Jules Crawford

Ballot items for Lowell Area School on November 8, 2022

School Board Members

Select 3

Operating Millage Assessment

Voters will be asked to vote to restore the 18 mill operating levy. This tax is levied only on “non-homestead property” which includes all taxable property other than principal residence, qualified agricultural property and certain other property classifications. Most non-homestead property taxes are levied on industrial, commercial, business and rental properties, as well as second homes. This tax does not affect the millage rate on owner-occupied primary residences. Voters approved a similar renewal in November, 2016. The millage is again expiring and requires voter approval.

This is a restoration of an existing millage that school districts are required to ask their communities to vote on in order to receive their full foundation allowance. If the renewal is not approved the state will not make up the difference in the revenue loss. The state expects the district to levy all 18 mills. With the passage of this election, the revenue generated for Lowell Area Schools would equal approximately \$3,728,113 in 2023.

Operating Millage Assessment FAQ

What is the impact?

This is a restoration of an existing millage that school districts are required to ask their communities to vote on in order to receive their full foundation allowance. If the renewal is not approved the state will not make up the difference in the revenue loss. The state expects the district to levy all 18 mills. With the passage of this election, the revenue generated for Lowell Area Schools would equal approximately \$3,728,113 in 2023.

What is an operating millage?

It is not a tax on primary residences. It is known as a “non-homestead operating tax” since primary residences are exempt from the tax. In general, most school districts must levy a local property tax of 18 mills on non-homestead property such as industrial, commercial, business, rental and second homes in order for the district to receive its full per-pupil funding from the State of Michigan. This operating millage helps fund the day-to-day functions of the school district.

Is this a new tax?

No. This proposal is a restoration of the expired non-homestead property tax last approved by the voters in 2016.

Will property tax rates increase?

No. Your primary residence tax rate will remain the same. In fact, for both homeowners and businesses alike, nothing will change. Homeowners do not pay this tax and businesses will simply continue to pay a tax they have already been paying.

Do businesses in other districts pay this operating tax?

Yes. Regardless of which school district a business may be located within Michigan, in order for a school district to receive its full funding from the State of Michigan it must levy its operating millage.

Can the district use bond/sinking fund dollars to cover the loss in revenue if the millage does not pass?

No. These funds are restricted by law to building and site projects and cannot be used for general fund expenditures such as staffing, textbooks, classroom supplies, or to operate our school buildings.

Why do we need an election?

The operating millage is required by Proposal A (the state’s school funding structure), in order for the district to receive its full funding. The law does not allow the 18 mills on non-homestead property to be levied unless it is approved by voters in an election. The video at this link explains how public school districts are funded in the State of Michigan.

Who is eligible to vote?

Registered voters living in the Lowell Area School district boundaries are eligible to vote. You can register to vote at the Secretary of State’s offices and city clerk offices. The last day to register to vote, other than in-person, is October 24, 2022.

Where do I vote?

Voting takes place at the same location as national and state elections.

What will the ballot look like?

LOWELL AREA SCHOOLS

OPERATING MILLAGE RESTORATION PROPOSAL

(EXCLUDING PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE AND OTHER EXEMPT PROPERTY)

This proposal will restore and extend the authority of the School District to levy the statutory rate of 18 mills against all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, required for the School District to receive its revenue per pupil foundation allowance. The original authority of the School District to levy 18 mills has been rolled back to 17.0241 mills by the “Headlee” amendment to the Michigan Constitution of 1963, and will expire with the 2022

tax levy. This proposal would restore and extend that authority, and would also increase the authority by 0.9759 mills to restore millage lost as a result of the “Headlee” amendment.

Shall the constitutional limitation on the amount of taxes which may be assessed against all property, except principal residence and other property exempted by law, within the school district of Lowell Area Schools, Kent and Ionia Counties, Michigan, be increased by 18 mills (\$18.00 per \$1,000 of taxable valuation) for a period of six (6) years, 2023 through 2028, inclusive, to provide funds for school operating purposes (estimated to provide revenues of approximately \$3,728,113 in 2023)?

YES

NO