

2009 Board of Education Candidates Questionnaire

Where do the Candidates
Stand on Issues Important to You?



Our MISSION:

The Coalition for Economic Justice is an ongoing coalition of labor, faith, community, academic and student activists and organizations. We engage in collective action to promote strong, sustainable communities and economic justice for all. Together, we build and win dynamic campaigns for living wages, rights at work, accountable economic development and health care for all, through education, public advocacy and mobilization of our members, communities, and allies.

Our VALUES:

Coalition Building - Uniting the power of labor, university and religious communities is key to winning concrete improvements for workers and our communities.

Direct Action - We believe in taking direct action, of making demands and winning them. Workers and communities united, and in motion is the driving force for social and economic justice.

Leadership Development & Education – We engage in outreach and educational activities and actively build lasting long-term relationships, built on principles of reciprocity, respect, and solidarity. We develop the leadership skills of those most affected by injustice.

Workers' Rights and Economic Justice - We envision a United States and a world where workers have collective bargaining rights, employment security, health care, a decent standard of living, and freedom from discrimination of all kinds.

Candidates were asked to provide their biographical information as well as substantive answers to the following questions. We have provided their answers exactly as they were received.

1. *Why are you the best candidate for the position?*
2. *If you are elected or re-elected, what are the top three priorities for you? How would you suggest approaching these issues?*
3. *Do you have children in the Buffalo Public Schools?*
4. *What measures do you think the Board of Education should take to close the forecasted budget gap?*
5. *Do you see any connections between the condition of our neighborhoods and the quality of our schools?*
6. *How would you vote on the passage of a Living Wage policy that covers both direct employees and contracted employees? Why?*
7. *What new ideas will you put on the table during your term?*
8. *Are you open to working in collaboration with parents, students, and issue based community groups? What do you see as the benefit to this?*
9. *What responsibilities, if any, should the Buffalo Public District, assume for dealing with societal problems such as poverty, hunger, emotional illness and drug abuse?*

Don' forget to VOTE
Tuesday, May 5th!

Dr. Catherine Collins

Current Occupation-Associate Professor

Length of time in the School District-4 years and 8 months

Incumbent

1. I am the best candidate for the Buffalo Board of Education because I love and care about children-my primary reason for seeking this office. I have walked through many prisons in New York State and have first hand experience with the end results of poor public education. Eighty percent of prisoners in state and federal prisons do not have a high school diploma-need I write more? Public Education has failed these individuals. Also, my doctorate in education administration, masters in curriculum development and a bachelors in vocational education has prepared me to address many education issues.

2. My top three priorities will be AIDS education (bring together national state representatives) with the Districts health staff to address the issues. New State is one of the two state with the highest teen (13-18 yr) infections. I will take an active role in the teen pregnancy problem in our schools (seek grant money). I will keep the pressure on the academic progress in the District-holding everyone accountable. I will continue to closely monitor academic achievement and attendance.

3. No- I do not have children in the Districts (Lots of relatives children)

4. I need a budget that presents all the allocations (where the monies are going) and what funds are carried over. Then and only then will I be assured there is a budget gap.

5. When you live in decaying neighborhoods where crime and racist conditions exist-your hopes are shattered. The conditions that children see in their neighborhoods and home will affect their attitudes toward learning/education.

6. Three or four years ago I brought up for discussion at a Board meeting the need to pay a living wage. I was recently reminded by a former Board member we supported a living wage (2004)- but we were faced with a budget gap. I still support a living wage-Not only for Buffalo-for Cheektowaga, Kenmore, and Tonowanda

7. I addressed this in question 3. However, I will start a Board Mentoring effort.

8. I volunteer with parents groups in Buffalo and other cities. These collaborations help to bring new ideas and energy to the efforts

9. This question requires a written dissertation. Boards of Education are responsible along with others (e.g politicians, policy makers, other governmental agencies, and public works) for the conditions of their surrounding communities.

Patricia Devis

Current Occupation: Chemistry Professor

Length of time in School District: 32 Years

1. I have been an educator for 22 years. I love Chemistry and I love my students. I have realized that the quality of the entering freshmen has been deteriorating throughout these years. I want to do more than remediation at the college level. I think we need to improve the quality of the educational system as early as possible.

Also, I am highly motivated. I value education highly. Education was my way out of poverty. My mother was a single parent who was a seamstress, part of the “working poor”. I have lived in inner cities all my life San Juan, Santurce Puerto Rico, Los Angeles (Watts in 64-65), San Diego, Buffalo. I am a first generation immigrant who started learning English as a second language, by myself, in the sixth grade in 1962.

As a PhD scientist I have much training dealing with lots of data and paperwork.

I am detail oriented yet I can focus on the important questions, as a prospective school board member, without being buried by massive amounts of information.

I do not owe any political favors to anyone, nor do I have any political aspirations other than to be a member of the Buffalo School Board. My only motivation is to have better students, better citizens and a better society

2.

- a. Increasing the number of students reading at grade level through increased support for teachers.
- b. Enhanced parental involvement by educating parents to be better advocates for their children.
- c. Increasing high school graduation and attendance rates by improving the quality of teachers and academic programs and truancy intervention such as Attendance Officers in the urban schools.
- d. Settling the teachers contract and negotiating in good faith. have better students, better citizens and a better society.

4. No, but I am the product of a public school education. I know what urban children need in order to succeed. Much like the way I have done with my own educational accomplishment as a biochemist and scientist. English language arts, mathematics and science are areas we need to improve in our education of public school students.

5. Due to the federal economic-stimulus package benefiting schools nationally as well as locally, the forecasted budget gap will not be so severe as predicted. We should increase our efficient use of the school funding while we have the resources instead of waiting for financial crisis. We need to put the monies where they are most needed. We need to increase the quality of education in our schools by bringing together all of the stake-holders. We all need to help decide what are the most efficient and effective programs.

6. Yes, there is a connection between our neighborhoods and the quality of our schools. For example, there should be more involvement of the community in the schools. In recent years, this has been done through the introduction of Comprehensive Educational Plans which includes both the school and the community. Urban flight and urban decay are deleterious to families and have a negative impact on student achievement. The present system of real estate taxes funding the school system leads to inherent inequalities. We need to study this more and find ways to provide a quality education to all of our youth regardless of where they live and income.

7. It is shameful that workers earn below poverty level. I support a living wage policy for all employees whether contract or not. Yet, I am sensitive to the needs of labor, as well, in their attempt to improve the quality of life and working conditions for employees through negotiations.

8. We need to involve the parents and community groups as much as possible. I will be proactive in seeking input from my community. I want all our voices heard.

I will promote science education and seek innovative ways to improve the science curriculum.

I want to be a watchdog of our budget and be vigilant that the moneys for education reach their targets so our children do not get short-changed.

Cont. on page 12

Rosalind Hampton

Current Occupation: Nurse

Length of time in the school district-N/A

1. I represent the concerned parents and grandparents in the City of Buffalo. I have been a strong advocate for the rights of healthcare workers and residents of the facility "Quality Care for All." I know what it's like to fight for a cause I believe in. I've been in the trenches for the past decade. I'm a nurse by trade. I successfully completed my courses in the Buffalo Public Schools system, as did my children, I'm a single parent. To all the single parents out there "yes you can" I feel I have been chosen to fight for the birth rights of our children. All our children have the right to receive a "Quality education" Our children deserve the best possible education by any means necessary.

2. First and foremost, we need to acquire the stimulus money- put in place a check and balance system to monitor how the money is spent-many schools need basic supplies & more staff. We need to incorporate "Networking" the increased communication between teachers, parents, and students; with equal input in their educational needs and or semi ten-week reports.

Decreased student to teacher ratios by reducing class sizes and or increasing the number of staff in classrooms to provide students with more attention and help them better grasp their daily lessons.

Technology is a necessity not a luxury the rest of the world has surpassed the USA in the interaction of technology. If we continue as we are our children's future will remain students, Our goal should be to immediately improve the technological studies of our students from grade school through college and grad school.

3. As I stated earlier my children and I have successfully completed the Buffalo Public School system, Now my grandchildren and many other family relations are currently attending school here in Buffalo, I have a vested interest.

4. The fair share tax program is a start and just as other facilities, business and, corporations have had a give back, a little in this time of recession so also should the superintendent give a little you know take a pay cut, or better yet; be paid accordingly to his accomplishments as they dire city affect the quality of education of our children in the entire city of buffalo "No child Left Behind"

5. Of course there's a direct correlation between schools between schools and neighborhoods, the better the school the better the neighborhood will become. Parents choose to purchase their homes based on what the neighborhood school has to offer their children, all our schools should become "A State of the Art" learning institution.

6. Everyone deserves "A living Wage" for too long the working poor has been an accepted class of people, I say "No More" the passing of and enforcement of a living wage will have a positive effect on our students improvement in education.

7. Accountability is a big issue: we need to hold all parties accountable for our children receiving the "Best possible education". This includes teacher, principles the superintendent, parents and students just as there is no such thing as "too much parent involvement."

Along with the previous mentioned ideas, comes "reverse suspension" for any non-violent infraction.

8. Definitely, parents, teachers, community groups and students all working together towards the same goal, quality education for each child being educated in the state of the art learning institution, that's a no brainer, win, win, for all, People need to realize that the children are our future, if they have no future then we have no future.

9. The problems listed are all of our responsibility as a society however, if we utilize ours as a resource building for the community, to bring the needs of the people to the people these schools will be more positives light to each of our neighborhoods and also allowing our children to be more focused on receiving their much needed education.

Chris Jacobs

Current Occupation: Real Estate Developer

Length of Time in School District: Served One Term on School Board

Incumbent

1. I believe I bring a unique perspective to the Board. I am the only small business owner on the Board. I believe my background in business and finance has made me an asset to this Board. I am proud of the work we have done thus far to bring financial stability to the district and thus, stability to the classroom.

I am also a founder of one of the first charter schools in the City. I believe my 5 years of experience starting and being board chair gives me a unique perspective on the Board of Education. I have seen different ways of doing things, in terms of the charter school structure. I believe that perspective has caused me to challenge the status-quo in terms of how we operate the district.

I also believe I am a good listener and I am always receptive to new information and ideas from the Superintendent, teachers/administrators and fellow board members. I have learned a great deal over the last five years and it has made me a better board member. I have a lot more to offer now than when I came onto the Board five years ago.

2.

a. Push to restructure the central administration in an effort to bring more efficiency so more resources can be allocated at the school level. More importantly that we create an organizational structure that revolves around servicing the needs of our students and their families.

B. Dramatically increase in student achievement in the next five years. Most especially, the graduation rate for minorities in the District.

C. Garner much broader community awareness and involvement in the challenges of our school district and the children we educate. We need a much greater understanding, engagement and a sense of urgency in the crisis in urban education and a collective sense of responsibility to resolve this crisis.

3. Next year I will have a child in BPS.

4. We have two major problems. We have a major cut in funding that if passed by the legislature would create a huge budget gap. It is likely that that cut will be decreased by both the state legislature putting money back in the budget and the federal stimulus.

In regards to this, we have built up a healthy reserve thanks in part to going to a single-health provider, we will use this to stave off any large scale cuts.

Equally as problematic is the structural budget gap we have on an annual basis. Even prior to Wall Street's melt down we had a projected \$9 million budget gap this year. We had a budget gap even with the historic increases in State Aid over the last four years. Unfortunately the increase in our expenses far outpaced our revenue (now almost 80% of our budget). Just a few things to note:

14% of the Districts Budget is now going to health care (health care costs has been increasing double digits for many years now). Most our employees pay no premium so 100% of this cost is borne by the District.

The District Pays lifetime healthcare. We are paying more now for our retiree health care than current employees (\$59 million for retirees, \$46 for employees).

In addition, we still have not resolved contracts with our largest union the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

So we may be ok in the next two years with the Stimulus but without structural reform we will be right back in crisis mode when the Stimulus is gone. It is for these reasons that it makes it hard for me to take on other long-term financial obligations such as the living wage.

Florence Johnson
Incumbent
Did not return Questionnaire

John B. Licata

Current Occupation: Lawyer

Length of Time in School District: 44 Years

1. I am a product of the BPS system and have lived in Buffalo, NY my entire life. I am a Buffalonian who was bussed across town for the desegregation order of Judge Curtin. I personally am familiar with the disruption of desegregation and the conflict between magnet and neighborhood schools. My profession as a lawyer has cultivated the skill to negotiate without becoming personally invested in my position, but to advocate for my client-- in this case that is the child who is attending ANY school in the Buffalo Public School system.

2.

a. The teachers need a contract because to continue having them teach without a contract is untenable and cannot continue. Negotiations with teachers should start from the common ground of improving the schools as partners and not as antagonists. Good faith approach to negotiations that puts teachers in a position to influence education changes and agenda and not simply implement edicts of the administration.

b. The BPS has eroded the professional aspect of teaching and implemented a program that has a narrow focus on standardized scoring. The NCLB unfunded mandates have been accepted without a comprehensive effort to address the financial inequities presented. Congress may revise the NCLB and BPS should be involved in encouraging a rewriting of the legislation to reduce the emphasis on annual standardized testing that becomes the

c. The proliferation of Charter schools in Buffalo is symptomatic of the administration not responding to the concerns of the most active parents in the system. We have alienated parents who want to be involved in the schools, leaving parents with less interest in their children's education to bet he population upon whom the current crisis is inflicted. We have to see why charter schools are so numerous and make every reasonable effort to adopt what works and eliminate what alienates our parents.

3. Yes, I have four children attending BPS.

4. Negotiate a contract with the teachers-- have them agree to the single provider health insurance instead of forcing it on them. See how our aging schools can be made more energy efficient.

5. Yes. There was a considerable amount of concern by the parents of Olmsted students when it was announced that the high school would be at Kensington. I believe many parents put their children into Elmwood Village charter and Tapestry because of the location of Kensington. Many parents were concerned Kensington was run down based on the neighborhood, a belief that supports the perception that stressed neighborhoods contain sub-standard schools.

6. I am for the Living Wage. Any school district must agree that the most precious resource is the children. With a Living Wage, we can attract and keep quality employees who can take pride in their work and be role models for our children. Why would we have people who cannot live upon the wage paid as the first and last interaction with our children? The first and last people our children encounter are on their busses, why not make that experience a positive one?

7. We should create a high school that partners with the medical corridor, the Oak-Elm hospitals, so that the students have the exposure to the health care industry much as vocational high schools catered to the auto industry ears ago. We need to have local businesses donate their scrap paper to use in our schools, to save the environment and the cost for paper that is used to provide announcements to parents. Many local business could donate pencils, pens and supplies for our students.

8. Yes. The BPS system is not owned by the school board or the administration. It is our collective future. Everybody needs to be involved in the decisions, the ideas, the solutions. To exclude any aspect of the community is to cut off our nose to spite our face. The problems facing the city and the school board are without precedent. To believe they can be solved with a business as usual approach without inviting anyone with an idea into the discussion is folly. The benefit of conversation is education and the increased possibility of creative cooperation that will hit upon a solution that one mind, or mind-set thinking alone will not have considered

Cont. on page 12

Bryon McIntyre

Current Occupation: Firefighter

Length of Time in School District: 30+ years

1. I have a vested interest in the system (4 children). I also know the hard reality of having a inferior education.
2. Get the best teaching programs to improve library and math skills. Make sure support is in place for students, teachers and families. Hold people accountable with the consequences for failure.
3. Two at MLK, one at 81, and one at Grover International.
- 4 Only use proven programs and cut the waste (review all contracts).
5. The impact of coming out of the schoolhouse and seeing dilapidated homes is depressing and inspires no hope. It represents a failure of adults to provide a healthy environment.
6. I would fight for it. Everyone deserves to make a living wage, at least, if not more.
7. We don't need to reinvent the wheel, our system can produce good students. We just need to see that everyone is given the same support and resources regardless of which school they go to.
8. Yes. It is necessary in order to have a healthy system that serves the people.
- 9 First, if the child receives a good strong education it helps remove them from poverty. I think the district should move towards helping parents also with education. If one-third of our population is functionally illiterate, who is helping the child at home? We should provide after-school programs with strong emphasis on academics, not speaking, a healthy hot meal help to distressed families giving them a place to get help and services at the school.

Rebekah Williams

Current Occupation: Financial Manager

Length of Time in School District: 30 years

1. I am the best candidate because I am a parent with a son in a Buffalo Public School. I listen to him, talk with him, and learn from him regarding issues in his school and what it's like to grow up in public schools today. I am concerned about the quality of education and the approach of how education is being offered to Buffalo Public School students. I am concerned whether the resources are in place to support our children to grow in to happy, healthy adults.

Beyond being a parent, I have served on finance committees on several nonprofit boards locally and nationally and I am currently the Financial Manager at Buffalo ReUse. I will bring a strong fiscal understanding and a love for children to the board.

2. My top three priorities upon being elected are: safety, lack of funding, and poor student performance.

I believe that many of our problems with the schools stem from a lack of parent involvement and school cultures that do not value mutual respect. The foundation to establishing safe schools is mutual respect amongst the school community. If students, teachers, and administrators do not treat each other with respect then no one in the school will feel safe. As a leader, I will offer direction in establishing a culture of mutual respect, and offer incentive to schools that are successful in modeling this foundation within the school community.

I believe that poor student performance is tied to the lack of involvement of parents. I am interested in creative, innovative approaches to parent involvement. Neighborhood schools, geographically-localized parent groups, parent think-tanks and integrated parent-teacher groups, can all be used to stay in touch with what is most important for our kids and ensure that their concerns are being met. I also believe that school administrators, teachers, and officials cannot be afraid to visit student's homes. They should get to know the family and the parents to make sure a child's basic necessities are being met. As a school board member I would promote policy that encourages creative and innovative approaches to parent involvement.

Finally, the funding issue will need to be approached by a combination of looking at inside expenditures as well as bringing in funding from the outside. In terms of internal fiscal concerns, what are we spending our money on and what is really important? Are we providing our children with safe school buildings, loving and attentive teachers, engaging programs and innovative curriculum? Are the administrative costs all really necessary? I believe that the issue of funding is really an issue of priorities and looking at how we are currently spending money on schools.

3. My only son, Bhakti, is a nine-year old at Bennett Park Montessori Center, Buffalo Public School #32. He has recently been accepted at City Honors School and we are deciding whether to send him there.

I think the board of education should look first to how it can cut back on basic costs associated with school building utilities (such as turning off lights, setting a heating cap, etc.). They could offer school administrators and staff incentives to save energy and reuse materials associated with maintenance and upkeep. The board could also look to administrative costs within the Board of Education. Are there unnecessary or excessive expenditures?

I believe that the Board should also be conducting long-term visioning and planning that could save the district money in the long run. Such as investing in more neighborhood schools.

4. The condition of our neighborhoods and the quality of our neighborhood schools are directly connected. Regarding neighborhood schools, the more violence, drugs, and neglect seen in the neighborhood, the worse the state of the school. Magnet schools are different story. With magnet schools, kids are bussed in to the school from around the city, and kids attending magnet schools have a specialized interest in a specific subject offered by that school. Magnet schools also tend to attract children whose parents are concerned with their child's education.

Parents who are too busy trying to get high on drugs, who are disrespectful to their peers and neighbors, who do not care for their property, these parents are likely to not give positive attention to their children or their child's school. Thus, the same issues you see in a neighborhood, you will see in the schools.

5. The condition of our neighborhoods and the quality of our neighborhood schools are directly connected. Regarding neighborhood schools, the more violence, drugs, and neglect seen in the neighborhood, the worse the state of the school. Magnet schools are different story. With magnet schools, kids are bussed in to the school from around the city, and kids attending magnet schools have a specialized interest in a specific subject offered by that school. Magnet schools also tend to attract children whose parents are concerned with their child's education.

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Fred Yellen

Current Occupation: Retired Teacher

Length of Time in School District: 32 + years

1. Having worked my entire career in the classroom, I feel that I have first hand experience and knowledge of today's students. I am aware of the difficulties and struggles facing today's youth, and I am prepared to provide leadership that will improve our schools. Teachers are more likely to accept leaders who have walked in their shoes.

Additionally, I have a math and financial background which qualifies me to deal with a large budget. I have previously served on numerous finance committees, and I have developed the skills necessary to prioritize spending. My number one focus is to guarantee students the resources they need to succeed.

2. School employees, parents, and the community must all work together in order to have the best possible system. Each of the parties must be respected and feel they have open access to provide input in the decision-making process. Employee contracts should be negotiated and signed in a timely fashion. A team approach is the way to run a successful organization.

2. We must never lose sight of the fact that we must all be there for the students. Funds must be allocated in order to provide the best learning environment.

3. Children need structure. Rules must be fair and consistent, and should be displayed throughout the buildings. A strong discipline policy will help to provide a safe learning atmosphere.

3. All of my children attended Buffalo Public Schools while they lived in Buffalo.

4. It appears that Federal Funding will eliminate the need for any cuts. Under no circumstances should cuts affect classroom services.

5. Many schools have already been remodeled, and others are currently being renovated. We must finish the task and expand our efforts to the neighborhoods. Quality schools will hopefully encourage residents to better maintain the physical conditions of their homes. The city should provide funding to assist homeowners in beautifying their neighborhoods.

6. I am 100% in favor of this policy. Everybody who works should have a living wage. I believe this would have a positive impact on the economy, and it would certainly be good for the city and its employees

7. I would focus on improving community involvement, and strengthening discipline in the schools. Students should again be offered opportunities to prepare them for the trades. Some students would best be served by being instructed in carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, electrics, and computers, rather than being required to pass Regents exams in multiple subject areas.

8. Absolutely, these are all necessary ingredients to a successful school system. Parental involvement increases student achievement. Community involvement encourages increased funding for services. Students are more motivated when they accept ownership of their education.

9. Ignoring these societal problems will surely result in a failed school system. Teachers, administrators, support personnel, student mentors, parent volunteers, and community members must be actively involved in the schools. The schools should be a place where students feel safe. The problems are immense and it will take the entire village to deal with the complex issues in our schools. We can and must take the necessary steps to ensure success.

Patricia Devis Cont.

9. Not only I am open to it, but I think it is essential. There are many pieces to this puzzle and without the parents and community groups we are incomplete. We should involve them in the decision-making of the schools in order to increase the academic achievement of students and the involvement of parents and community groups in the schools.

10. I know from first hand experiences through my own life that Education is the way out of poverty.

We need better nutrition in schools with healthier choices. Mental, emotional illness needs to be diagnosed as early as possible and effectively treated.

We need to do a better job of introducing affective drug abuse curriculum in the schools along with collaborating with organizations in the community who have expertise in this area to be able to provide services to our youth

John Licata Cont.

10. Hungry children cannot learn. It is that simple. We need to provide them food in an environment that encourages dining, not simply eating to fill a physical need. Many employers gauge the quality of a candidate upon the etiquette and ability to converse and dine. Students presented with food in a complimentary manner will be empowered by the experience, not simply shamed by having to have food provided for them.

Poverty is a state of economics and not of mind, and trying to involve parents who cannot sacrifice a day to meet with parents means that sometimes we will have to meet with parents on of-hours or on a Saturday to discuss their children's progress. The school cannot provide more than an even playing field, but that means that some parents do not have the luxury of meeting on the weekday.

Chris Jacobs Cont.

5. There is certainly a connection between the condition of our neighborhoods, the prevalence of poverty in our community, and the challenge of academic achievement in our schools. Having said that all children can learn and all children, no matter what their background, can succeed in school. Schools just must adopt appropriate teaching techniques, early intervention strategies and a comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of the child.

We have been seen some success with the work we have done with the 16 worst performing schools in the District, that have children with high poverty rates, where we have increased teacher training and placed teaching coaches in the schools, moved the counselors out of central office and into the schools, and extending the day and year. As a result, six of the 16 came off the SURR list (School Under Registration Review).

I am very excited at the prospect of using some of the Federal Stimulus monies to extend the school day to up to 35 additional schools next year. The proposal would extend the day 1-hour and pay the teachers accordingly. This could make a big difference in expediting academic gains.

6. I was one of five board members to vote at the March 25th Board of Education Meeting for a living wage policy for employees by the 2010-2011 school year.

7. I will be announcing some proposals for the upcoming school year in the next few weeks.

8. I am and have been very open to working with all individuals and organizations that are interested in our school system. We all benefit from a diversity of ideas and perspectives. I believe engagement and collaboration of all these groups improves the end-product and additionally increases the likelihood for community support for the ultimate decision.

9. I believe the district needs to be concerned about all factors that impact the ability of our children to learn. I was a leader in the District embracing the "40 Developmental Assets" which is a framework of the developmental assets all children need to succeed. This model identifies the crucial relationships, experiences, opportunities and personal qualities that children and adolescents need to grow up healthy, caring and responsible. Contrarily, identification of children who are missing crucial assets enables professionals to find ways to fill those voids and enhance likelihood for these children to for positive growth academically and personally.

Rebekah Williams Cont.

Parents who are too busy trying to get high on drugs, who are disrespectful to their peers and neighbors, who do not care for their property, these parents are likely to not give positive attention to their children or their child's school. Thus, the same issues you see in a neighborhood, you will see in the schools.

6. First and foremost, everyone deserves the right to a living wage, but before voting in favor of any policy involving funding from our schools, I would ensure that the funding to implement said policy would not detract from services for students. I would vote in favor of Living Wage policy for both direct and contracted employees, because I believe that every person inherently deserves a living wage, regardless of his or her school background, work experience, or skills.

If a person is working full-time, 40 hours per week, he or she should be able to provide for their necessities and the needs of their family through said employment and be earning enough from that one paycheck to be able to spend quality time with their family, instead of having to bring in supplementary income. This ties in directly to a parent's ability to be involved with their child's school. If a person is working two or three jobs to make ends meet, how will they find time to get involved in their child's education.

7. Two new ideas I would bring to the table are an open-door policy in regards to parent volunteers and a more thorough examination of the advantages and disadvantages of neighborhood schools.

8. Along with financial capital, human capital is of utmost importance. The more people we have at the table, the more resources the Buffalo School District will have to tap in to, (i.e. ideas, skills, loving attention, experience, and insight) and the more we, as a community, will be able to accomplish.

9. The schools in our district should offer respite for children. In our schools, children should be loved, fed fresh and healthy foods, kept warm, and have their confidence and self-esteem renewed. I believe that schools should go beyond offering an academic foundation for students. Our schools should prepare students socially and physically for a happy, healthy adulthood.

The district should connect with resources in the community that work with troubled families. There are many community organizations that have tried to work with the Buffalo School District to no avail. Many times these programs have their own funding for working with the schools, all the district would have to do is promote these school-community organization teams and encourage school administrators to tap in to the resources that are available to support children dealing with these societal problems.
