

6 newcomers, 2 veterans seek Walled Lake posts

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY
STAFF WRITER

Following a year of hot issues, six newcomers are throwing their names into the ring as candidates for the June 12 Walled Lake school board race, when two four-year terms and a single one-year term will be decided. In addition, two incumbents are running for re-election.

Lois Lange, director of personnel and community relations for Walled Lake Public Schools, is not surprised by the number of candidates for one reason: recent bond issue elections "brought a lot of publicity to the district, we see more citizens wanting to get involved on the board."

List of candidates

■ Harvey Altman, Ph.D., is one of five candidates running for two four-year seats.

He is interested in maintaining standards throughout the school district and tackling the district overcrowding problem. Altman claimed his decision to run for the board was not influenced by the repeated failure of the bond proposals, but he did say the failure was important to recognize.

If elected, he views his first priority as learning from and educating the electorate — a step he sees as necessary for a millage approval. He is the father of two children out of the K-12 system.

■ Randolph Ston, Ph.D., is also running for a four-year seat. Father of two young children, Ston is concerned about the district growth and hopes to shape the future using his economic and educational development skills.

Schools

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Beechview, Eagle, Gill, Kenbrook, Larkshire and Wood Creek elementary schools will likely need more space, Farmington school officials said.

Another hurdle would be the Oakland schools board, which has to approve such a transfer. First, the proposed move must maintain a contiguous district boundary. "There also has to be a compelling reason for the switch, Oakland Schools spokeswoman Nancy Stark said.

"They just don't change them willy-nilly," Stark said.

At least 60 percent of the homeowners in the area would have to approve, Stark said. They would then petition Oakland Schools and a hearing would be set.

Walled Lake school officials are bound to protest. The \$6,500 per pupil the district receives from the state would go to Farmington, not to mention the tax base. Farmington officials would likely stay mum.

"If they (Farmington) were to speak in favor of it, they would look like grabbers," Stark said. "The receiving district wouldn't want to appear as cheerleaders."

Stability is one reason behind seeking a transfer, Dubin said.

Walled Lake school officials see moving students to Meadow Lake as a temporary solution to overcrowding. The district would like to build a new school in the 13 Mile and Meadowbrook area.

To do that, the district needs voter-approved funding. Dubin isn't hopeful a bond issue will ever pass.

"Putting our child on a bus for seven miles each way is only the first step of what's coming when there is no support for a bond issue," he added.

Not all parents share his view. Suzy Ran who lives in Farmington Glen said she's not ready to bail out.

"I'm going to take a reverse tact: I'm going to work within the school to make it a gem," she said.

If elected, his top priorities would be focusing the district's resources "on the students rather than the periphery" and stopping the "out-of-control student growth rate."

He also supports educating the electorate in hopes of convincing them that everyone has a stake in the local public school system. He further believes if the millage goes before the voters one more time, it will pass.

■ William Drum, is the third new person running for the four-year seat. A father of one son, he is interested in stopping school violence, repairing community relations and ensuring fiscal responsibility.

Dissatisfied with the current board as a whole, he claims that

the group is not in touch with their electorate. He worked on the recent bond campaign as a member of the Citizens Alliance group in opposition to the \$116 million proposal.

■ Marc Slegler, incumbent, has a passion to serve on the school board.

With two teenage children of his own, he recognizes the importance of settling the district overcrowding problem while maintaining quality education. His addition to the board began as an appointment for trustee Marc Belsky, who resigned at mid-term. But Slegler feels his input over the past year will benefit the community with future planning.

■ Samantha Ruolenik, incumbent, wants to serve at least one

more term "to accomplish what she set out to do" as far as building and bond issues.

With two grandchildren in the district and 31 years in education, she feels capable of addressing any issues that confront the board. If re-elected, her top priority would be bringing together the nine communities served by the Walled Lake Consolidated School District.

Candidates for 1-year slot

Three people are also running for the one-year position, which is the final year of Belsky's term.

■ Patricia Cork said the rejected bond issue did not influence her decision to run, but her two young children did.

"I just feel it's important that

the policies the board sets in the next few years ensure children can make it in the 21st century."

If elected, she sees her first priorities to be: addressing the overcrowding issue, ensuring accountability and maintaining high standards. She would also encourage the school district to focus more on technology and promote computer literate educators.

■ Alp Onder was "moved to action by the recent failures of the bond proposal."

With three young children of his own, Onder feels he has an obligation to make the educational opportunities the best they can be. Furthermore, he hopes to use his background in financial consulting to benefit the school district.

The fact that he supports what the current board is doing led him to run for the one-year seat instead of the four-year seat, where he would have competed against two incumbents. Ranking high among his list of concerns is the student capacity problem and communication between the school board and electorate.

■ Susan Adamson has been active in the district for eight years through her three children's Parent-Teacher Associations.

An advocate for the bond proposal, Adamson is not dissatisfied with the current board. Instead she is running because "I feel I have a certain responsibility to the district." She sees maintaining a quality education as a top priority.

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