

ROB SKIDMORE

Why are you running for the school board?

I am running for my second 4 year term. I enjoy being a part of the board of education and feel like I am helping our community to work with the school administration to oversee the district. I believe that each of us has gifts and abilities and we should use those gifts accordingly. Through the years, in Medina, there has generally been some individual who is an attorney serving on the board and I felt that it was my turn to serve.

I also believe that transparency is a very important function for the public and I've worked hard over the last 4 years to make this practice better. We use boarddocs to make our agendas more visible to the public and I continue to push that contracts and other items be made available on the system so that the public has an opportunity to read them before the board enacts action items. We also have public comment before voting on agenda items. This has helped us to be more responsive to the public and to address concerns before issues become major problems.

What do you bring to the table (outside of being a parent) in terms of your skills, abilities, experience, volunteerism, and how does it complement the current composition of the BOE?

I am an attorney with Skidmore & Hall Co. LPA and president of Transfer Title Agency, Inc. I would consider my skillset to be critical thinking to be able to look at different angles of decision making. I currently serve as the chairman for the Medina County Bar Association character & fitness committee that interviews new attorneys before they take the bar examination.

I previously coached soccer for 6 years in the Medina Rangers travel soccer program. I have a motorcycle and enjoy taking rides with the local Stinger Harley Owners Group. I also still play soccer on a co-ed adult rec team in the spring and fall, as well as a men's soccer team during the winter months. I am a member of the Salvation Army board of advisors and have been involved since 2006. I have served as president or chairman of the Medina Salvation Army Board, the Medina City Schools Foundation, and the Medina County Bar Association. I have a degree from Mt. Vernon Nazarene College in business administration, a master's degree in business from Ashland University, and a juris doctor (law) degree from the University of Akron School of Law. I am a graduate of the Ohio State Bar Association leadership academy as well as Leadership Medina County.

I believe my skills complement the other board members and have appreciated our different perspectives.

What do you hope to accomplish/ What are your top priorities to improve the quality of the education of Medina's students?

SCHOOL BOARD GOALS FOR FALL, 2017 ELECTION FOR NEXT 4 YEAR TERM:

- 1) PASSING A LEVY IN 2018 AND CONTINUE TO ADEQUATELY FUND THE DISTRICT.
- 2) CONTINUING TO HIRE THE BEST PEOPLE AND MAINTAIN THE CURRENT DISTRICT LEADERSHIP.
- 3) CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE 5 YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN ADOPTED THIS YEAR.
- 4) CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE THE REPAIRS AND UPGRADES FOR THE BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE DISTRICT.
- 5) KEEP THE STUDENTS AS THE TOP FOCUS AND TOP

PRIORITY FOR THE DISTRICT.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing our district currently?

The biggest challenge I see facing our district is to continue to challenge ourselves to make education the best it can be in Medina. I don't want us to become complacent as a district or community and we need to continually improving ourselves and offering our students the absolute best education that our community can afford.

What issues does MCS need to address in its academic programs and offerings?

I believe we have added back several programs including some great classes at the high school level that are elective courses to help keep students engaged during their high school years. I would like to see us continue to offer more courses that are hands on and give students experiences that simulate the real work world. I'm also in favor of adding back some things like traditional shop class if the funding is available. College preparedness is very important, but there are many jobs that I keep hearing about such as welding, etc. that can't get enough people into them. I also believe we need to continue to expand AP offerings and to give our gifted children the education they deserve. We need to expand our gifted program within the district. The elementary and middle schools have done a great job with the "Leader in Me" program which has been initiated by the elementary principals, especially Eldora Lavdas, who took the lead initially. Children in Medina are being taught leadership skills that are sometimes done at the college level. That's a great thing and I'd like to

see it continue.

Conversely what do we need to do to address facilities?

Our biggest issues are the maintenance and the retrofitting of air conditioning at Fenn, Claggett and parts of Ella Canavan. This project is a 1-2 million dollar project and we do not currently have the funds to do this. In 2017, it's important to provide a learning environment that meets the norms of society. Beyond that we have a list of projects that we need to accomplish and space out over time. With the sales tax money, we can do most of them year over year if we plan accordingly. Although the district has retracted slightly in size over the last 5 years, I do believe that we will have continued growth in the coming years as families have begun to grow again post the 2008-2009 great recession. I do not believe any of our elementary schools need closed and I believe we need to continue to make upgrades for security purposes as we've done at Claggett and the High School.

What methods would you consider to get funding for the school system other than putting a levy on the ballot?

MCS has joined (2 years ago) the Alliance for High Quality Education that lobbies with the Ohio House and Senate issues related to districts like ours. I have expressed our need for funding to our local legislators and they live in our communities and are aware of the needs of local school districts.

Why do you believe that public education must be supported and strengthened in our community, our state, and our country?

Public Education is the greatest gift our society gives its children. The standard of living that we have today as American people can be attributed to many things such as great leadership of our founding fathers and our military men and women who have sacrificed so much. There is also a factor in there of the public education system that our country embarked upon in the late 1800s that promises an education to all children for free. Education is the cornerstone of our society and I'm firmly committed to making Medina's the best it can be.

Will you work with Ohio's legislature to protect and strengthen public education and prevent the reduction in funds given to our district?

Yes. I had the opportunity this March to travel to Columbus for legislative day to meet with Ohio School Board legislative representatives and to walk the State House and meet with legislative advisors for Steven Hambley and Larry Obhof. Mr. Obhof is the current Senate President for Ohio and is obviously in a very influential position. Both Hambley and Obhof know the value of education and are willing to take my calls when I've reached out to them. You probably won't see me with picketing signs, etc., but I definitely care strongly about the funding of our district and go about contacting the legislators in a different way.

What are your thoughts on the differences in the way our schools are run?

Each elementary school and middle school serves parts of our population within the district. Over time, there can and have been some differences in the culture of the buildings and the

way things are done. The board recognized this as well as the administration and Dr. Quallich helped the schools to unify their handbooks a couple years ago in an attempt to help this situation. Beyond that, if one school has a bigger discipline problem, you will probably see other rules enacted in order to get order. I can remember as a kid riding the bus to school. If the kids got unruly, my bus driver would pull over and look in the mirror until everyone settled down. This was an effective tool. I'm not sure every bus in Medina pulled over 35 years ago the day our did. The point I'm trying to make is that there needs to be some flexibility to achieve the goals of public education.

Do you think rules and opportunities should be equal between all elementariness and the two middle schools?

Yes, I am in favor of trying to continue to align opportunities between the buildings. Many great after-school opportunities are parent driven with a dad who works at NASA, etc. Sometimes it's difficult to keep all extra curricular opportunities totally the same, but our administration is working hard to try to have the schools have similar offerings. We don't want to take away something that's great at a school, so hopefully we can continue to add new programs at the schools that do not currently offer them.

What is your view on balancing special education accommodations against school funding limitations?

It is great that we live in a society that is able to educate all children and we do our best to honor this mandate. Special education funding is a very significant expense for the district. There are a few instances when the disability is so challenging

that the student goes to a facility outside the district for education. Sometimes this education is a very significant cost for the district. Some disabilities are very minor and the child is on an I.E.P. with accommodation made to turn in homework late, etc. We do all within our power to educate the children that we can within our district and with our teachers and aides that can help accommodate the needs of each specific child. Below is a link to a parent's guide to special education rights in Ohio. http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Special-Education/A-Guide-to-Parent-Rights-in-Special-Education/ODE_ParentRights_040617.pdf.aspx

It seems that with thousands of school districts in the country, we are all doing the same thing, which doesn't seem to be producing dollar for dollar what many other schools worldwide are producing. Besides asking for more money, what should the district do to improve our results and become a top district in the state and country?

I believe this happens with great leadership. We invest in our top leader, who is our superintendent and he or she sets the course for the district. Our slogan last year was "Every Student, Every Day." Also, beyond setting the course, it's also important for there to be professional development so the teaching staff is kept current with the best practices of teaching students. Master teachers engages their students and make their classes exciting. We have some of the best teachers around and I hope Medina continues to build upon this reputation. Also, beyond teaching, our other staff such as cafeteria workers, maintenance workers, secretarial staff, administration, counselors, psychologists, coaches, and anyone else I've missed who work in the district help to make the environment of high academic achievement.