1. **Why are you running for this office, whether for re-election or election the first time? Is there a particular issue that motivates you?**

I am running for re-election on the platform of Communication, Collaboration, and Change. While serving on the board for the past few years, I have employed a direct communication style with fellow board members, administrators, and community members. In the role of the Board President, this communication style has increased respectful decorum at board meetings. Next, collaboration is a strength of mine, and I have fostered collaborative relationships with district administrators and staff members, with neighboring school board members, and other local organizations. Lastly, the district is once again experiencing change with a superintendent transition. Although I personally did not support this leadership change decision, I am experienced in navigating personal and professional changes, and would be able to effectively assist with a new superintendent changeover due to my four years of experience at the board table, with two of these being the Board President.

1. **What is the role of the school board in setting and monitoring curriculum?**

A school board has 3 main roles of hiring/evaluating a superintendent, setting policy and ensuring it is upheld, and providing fiscal oversight for the district. It is paramount that board members ponder issues holistically, considering them from a “balcony-level” view, not from the ground level or “in the weeds”. From my perspective, curriculum should be set by those who work directly with the curriculum. Although I bring educational experience to my role on the board from my employment as a high school mathematics teacher to an online instructor in a postsecondary setting, I would not disrupt the successful process that D64 utilizes when researching and implementing a new curriculum. A committee strategically comprised of various constituents is formed, and then the group diligently and thoroughly researches curriculum options before presenting the final choice to the board. My role then, as a board member, is to seek understanding on the process and decision for the curriculum.

1. **Are there curriculum issues within the district that you feel need particular attention from the board?**

As a trained school counselor, I naturally prioritize mental health for students. Therefore, I am a proponent of social-emotional learning. The district currently uses the Second Step Social Emotional Learning Curriculum, which integrates listening and getting along with others. Since the district witnessed a rise in disruptive student behaviors during and post-pandemic, particularly at the middle school level, the curriculum might need to be modified to promote more positive behaviors. However, I want to be clear that these curriculum changes should be made by the teachers, counselors, administrators, and staff who work directly with students in one of the D64 schools.

1. **How do you view your role in confronting policy or curriculum controversies: provide leadership even if unpopular, give a voice to constituents - even ones with whom you disagree, or defer to state authorities?**

In personal, professional, and philanthropic settings, I lead by example. In the past two years as the Board President, I have contended with challenging board meetings, but I made a commitment to lead calmly and with patience. This then sets the expectation for others to also remain calm and patient. When community members make public comments or send the board email communications, I respond in a respectful and courteous manner. At times when I do not agree with an opinion a constituent expresses, I use this opportunity to consider what the board or district can learn from this perspective and reasons the community member might have a particular opinion. I look to find commonalities with others and believe that we all have the common goal of wanting the best educational opportunities for our community. We have different approaches on how to reach that goal but keeping the perspective that the goal is the same is highly beneficial.

1. **Indecisiveness on the board held up decisions on important projects, including all-day kindergarten and building expansions? What would you do to end those logjams and delays and to get the board making the decisions it needs to make in timely fashion?**

Although the decision to implement full-day kindergarten in D64 may have been perceived as a longer process, this was a historic decision that has been discussed in the district for over 20 years. Philosophical, financial, and facility decisions were involved, requiring thorough attention and discussion. However, the decision process for full-day kindergarten may have been accomplished more efficiently if the board “stayed in its lane”, trusting that administrators are hired for their expert knowledge in a particular aspect of the operation of schools. In conjunction, when board members need more information about an agenda item for an upcoming board meeting, it is a professional courtesy to share these before the board meeting, so the administrator comes prepared with the desired information. Lastly, I seek out continuous learning opportunities and have applied this to my role as a board member. Attending numerous trainings through the Illinois Association of School Boards has assisted me in being more productive in my role. I will continue to encourage other board members to attend webinars, division meetings, and the annual school board conference to become more effective board members. This then should lead to the board being more productive as a collective group.

1. **The community and board have been at odds about COVID policies, especially masking. If the pandemic worsens, those rules could return. Did you support the state-mandated orders that students should be masked on campus and practice social distancing? Why or why not?**

In my perspective, the number of community members who disagreed with the district’s policies during COVID did not represent a majority of the D64 community. Although the view from parents/guardians of children with compromised health conditions wasn’t as commonly shared, I was empathic even if one parent was concerned about their child’s health while in school. This unprecedented time presented monumental difficulties for board members and administrators. I am comfortable admitting that I do not have an expert level of knowledge in public health, so I supported the reliance on local and state level resources for guidance. District 64 effectively and appropriately collaborated with District 207 and its other feeder districts when making decisions regarding COVID protocols to present a united decision for the community.

1. **Concerns are growing regarding a new resurgence of the pandemic. If another massive outbreak of infectious disease occurs, what have we learned from the COVID-19 pandemic that will guide your decision making?**

Although I would not want to endure another infectious disease outbreak as a board member, parent, or educator, I feel that the lessons learned during COVID are applicable to pandemic and non-pandemic times. First, solid partnerships with parents/guardians assists in promoting seamless transitions for students from school to home and vice versa. Next, socialization is an important component that occurs in the school setting, so students need to have opportunities to collaboratively learn with classmates and participate in “free play” such as recess. Connected to socialization is the need to assist with student mental health. Although I would not advocate for remote learning, particularly for the younger learners in the district, this experience accelerated teachers’ use of technology to promote increased learning.

1. **Describe your experience working in a group setting to determine policy. What is your style in such a setting to reach agreement and manage school district policy? Explain how you think that will be effective in producing effective actions and decisions of your school board.**

As a trained counselor, I am a natural listener, hearing others’ perspectives with the goal understanding the varied constituent perspectives that need to be involved in developing a policy. Consultation with other school board members, other school districts, state/national organizations, and legal counsel are needed to develop appropriate policies. D64 has a policy committee with two board members serving on it; however, this group drafts policies for the full board to consider, bringing two drafts back to the board before the policy is put into place. Since policies affect school districts in present and future years, these need to be developed thoroughly.

1. **What makes you the best candidate for the job?**

As a current member of the school board, I bring four years of board experience with two years of board leadership experience from serving in the President Role. Additionally, I bring the lens of a parent with children who were promoted from D64 and have been successful in District 207 and in postsecondary education. The solid relationships I have deliberately built with District 207 board members and administrators foster continued collaboration and alignment between the districts. Moreover, I bring the perspective of a self-reflective educator with over 20 years of experience teaching in both the secondary and post-secondary level. Lastly, I bring a sense of integrity to the board member role, dedicated to doing the “right thing” for the district, even when it may not be popular with some members of the community. Overall, my dedication to public education system has been strong and varied. In a broad spectrum, I view education holistically from a pre-kindergarten level to a graduate degree level.

1. **What’s one good idea you have to better your district that no one is talking about yet?**

I have read and analyzed research touting the benefits of succession planning in an organization, which is built on the belief that the organization supports individual growth and development to obtain higher level roles within the organization. Succession planning can also be termed as “promoting from within”. Individuals are more likely to be retained in an organization if they can grow professionally into new roles without transferring to another district. From an organizational standpoint, leadership transitions may be less disruptive for the district since the culture of the district and community would be known and could be preserved. The idea of succession planning is applicable to leadership positions at individual schools and in the district office. This notion can also apply to the board. For example, when the new board members are seated and the board has its organizational meeting, the understanding should be that the board member elected in the Vice President Role would be mentored by the President with the goal of assuming the Presidential Role at the board’s next organizational meeting. This model of succession planning at the board level would also be helpful for the administration since the norms of how the board operates would present less of a learning curve for the board leadership positions.

**Answers should be no more than 1,000 characters (approximately 200 words)**