

Kieleidoscope February 11 , 2015

On February 16, 2016 the Kiel School District residents will be asked to vote in a primary election for two seats on the school board. This is a very important vote as it impacts the future direction of our school district. The top four out of five candidates from the primary will move to the ballot in April.

The School Board is a group of people who are elected to make decisions about how to manage a school system. Their predominant duty is to establish policies that serve as administrators' guide for the day-to-day management of schools keeping the District Administrator accountable for implementing the policies.

According to Arthur Griffin Jr, Vice president for national urban markets for McGraw-Hill Education and veteran school board member of North Carolina's Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, "historically, school boards have been formed to keep the "public" in public education. They are uniquely American and provide the conduit that delivers the community's values and will into its schools. (*Edutopia, March 2006*). Question to ponder: What values do we as a community want the Kiel Area School District to represent? What do we want public perception of our school district to be?

With the ever changing educational environment, the need for committed governmental leaders is enormous. We must lead with a focus on preparing our students for a twenty-first century career that may not be discovered yet. As stated by Miguel de Unamuno in the Key Work of School Boards, "We should try to be the leaders of the future, rather than the offspring of our past."

Here are some qualifications from the National School Boards Association to keep in mind when voting on school board elections:

Effective school boards:

- commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction.
- make sure achievement goals remain the district's top priorities.
- have strong shared beliefs and values that meld the limitless possibilities for student learning.
- are accountability driven spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies that improve student achievement.
- have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community.
- are data savvy.
- align and sustain resources, including staff professional development to meet district learning goals.
- and their superintendents lead as a united team, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- take part in team development and training, joining with the superintendent to build shared knowledge, values and commitment for improvement efforts.

The research on school board effectiveness has noted that school boards in high achieving districts have attitudes, knowledge and approaches that separate them from their counterparts in low-achieving districts. In our environment of fiscal constraints, it is important to our school district and the community to have a group of strong members of a team who can strategically set priorities and commit to taking our school district from great to greater to greatest! Vision, accountability, policy, community leadership, collaboration, and dedication are the strongest assets to make this happen. **Please vote on February 16 and April 5, 2016!**

(Resources, Center for Public Education, January, 2011. The Key Work of School Boards Guidebook, National School Boards Association, 2015)