

Doings Joyce Easter Fitch

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Name: Joyce Easter Fitch

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Length of residency in district: lifelong resident

Education:

Knox College – BA English, French Secondary Education

National Louis University – MS Educational Technology

University of Chicago – Cognition and Communication

Occupation:

Current: Educational Consultant.

Past: Teacher in District 102

Director of Technology in District 102

Civic activities:

Director of SaltCreek American Art Foundation, Nettie

McKinnon Gallery

Political experience:

2 terms on District 102 Board of Education, currently Vice President

Why are you running for office?

In the 2 terms I have been on the board of education, we have been able to accomplish a great deal by re-allocating resources, sometimes even saving money. I would like to help a new board accomplish even more while staying within our financial means.

A few of our accomplishments were starting a full day kindergarten, programs for pre-school, talent development, autism, a robust summer school and closing the minority achievement gap. We added a bussing program, and put in place a cost savings of over \$2.5 million annually.

I am uniquely qualified for the school board because I have a educational expertise and also knowledge of the workings of school districts in general, and particularly district 102. I have experienced several referendums in 102, and I have been a part of strategic planning in the past.

After the election, we will have 3 board members who have been on the board for 2 years, and we could have 3 members who have never been on the board. A new superintendent is starting in July, and the initiatives we address will include strategic planning, a hard look at finances, legislative actions, and new and energized focus on communication.

Having been a lifelong resident of District 102, I see the diversity of the 102 community as an asset. I was a teacher at Cossitt and Park so I understand the importance of programs

we put in place to meet our diverse student population's needs, and the need for good training for our staff. As Director of Technology in District 102, I obtained a good knowledge of the complexity of school funding. This has given me insight into the importance of working to obtain funding other than just from the taxpayers. As a board member, I have knowledge about the entire operation of the school district.

What are the top three issues facing the board, and how would you would address each?

It is hard to pick the top 3 issues because there are many important issues for the board to address in the short term and they are intertwined, but I will address finances, legislation and strategic planning. Good communication is a part of all of these.

We are currently in deficit spending and need to focus on how we will live within our means and remain in the black. The new superintendent has experience with needed budget cuts and will bring new eyes to our situation, which should help us when we take a deep look at finances.

We also need to deal with the state legislature and the demands they place on the district and our taxpayers. We receive unfunded mandates like Common Core and PARCC that cost us money and time. The legislature is entertaining bills that would remove money from our state aid, which already is not fully paid. SB16 would take 2.6 million from District 102. The state legislature could possibly put the responsibility of the pension funds they neglected to pay back on the district,

which will be a large expense for us. We need to get our stakeholders involved to help work with the legislature on the many school related items they are considering that affect schools. I would like to have a Legislative Committee of constituents to stay current on these issues with the help of the Board's political watchdog group, ED-Red. That group, along with the Parent Advisory and Financial Advisory Committees would be a great mix to collaborate with the board to get more community involvement.

Strategic planning would also help us focus our attention on our priorities. We need our stakeholders involved in this process to determine where to focus time and money. A sound foundation of stakeholder committees, staff involvement, and even student involvement would move us in a focused direction. We need to understand what educators and stakeholders value in educating our kids. If we find a referendum is necessary, we must have the community collaboration to determine our priorities. The 102 community has always valued education, and I don't expect that to change, but I am sure they will want us to keep within our financial means.