

BETHLEHEM AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
BOARD CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS

The Board Candidate Interview Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Bethlehem Area School District was held on Monday, December 12, 2011, at 8:15 p.m. in the Auditorium of East Hills Middle School, 2005 Chester Road, Bethlehem, PA 18017. BOARD VACANCY INTERVIEWS

Members present: Directors Bonilla, Burkhardt, Cann, Follweiler, McKeon, Ortiz, Vidanage, and President Faccinnetto – 8 MEMBERS PRESENT

Others present: Dr. Joseph Roy, Superintendent of Schools; Stacy Gober, Board Secretary; administrators, members of the press and other interested citizens and staff members. OTHERS PRESENT

President Faccinnetto stated: Shannon Patrick, thank you very much for applying and your interest in the school district and serving on the school board. If you would like to take a minute or two and tell us anything you want about yourself. You don't have to and then we will go around and each person will ask you one question, and at the end you will have a chance to ask us any questions. SHANNON PATRICK INTERVIEW

Ms. Shannon Patrick stated: First of all thank you for the opportunity, I appreciate it. I was originally from South Jersey, grew up in the Haddonfield Memorial School District. I moved here to Bethlehem about 11 years ago. I have a 4 ½ year old daughter who will be attending Hanover Elementary. I am a proud business owner of a doggie daycare in Bethlehem on West Broad Street. I have been there almost six years, and in addition, I am also a founding member of the West Broad Street Business Association in an effort to help our residents stay and spend and patronize the businesses of West Bethlehem. I wanted to apply for this position because I do have a big interest obviously with a daughter getting ready to enter the school, and I want to be an active part of her education, and I felt what better opportunity once the vacancy opens. Again, I thank you for the opportunity.

Director Bonilla asked: What is your view of charter schools and why?

Ms. Patrick stated: I feel charter schools do serve a purpose. I don't think all of them do. I feel that if a charter school is not for a very specific purpose, if it is pretty much teaching everything that the public school is teaching, I don't think it should be granted a charter. I also don't feel that the school district should be responsible for policing those charter schools. The school district and the board has enough on their plate, and if the state is going to give out the charters to schools, there should be stricter oversight to those schools. I know there is a big mess going on with a few of them right now. The burden

of them is now falling on the individual schools, but I do think that they do serve a purpose, but I think there has to be more oversight with them.

Director Burkhardt asked: How do you perceive the current educational programs of the Bethlehem Area School District, and is there anything you would change?

Ms. Patrick stated: I love, especially, coming from the school district that I came from; being Haddonfield in South Jersey, there was a big emphasis on the advanced placement. There was a big emphasis on extracurricular activities. I think the offerings available to the students are wonderful especially compared to some of the other school districts. I know it is a hard pill to swallow when budget cuts come up, and you have to pick this over that, but I think that kids in Bethlehem Area School District do receive a wonderful education. Is there room for improvement? Always, isn't that the goal, but I feel too we have to get the parents more involved. The stuff being taught at school has to carry home, and the teaching shouldn't just be within the classroom. I think there is always some things that you would like to change but some things are out of your control. I have a concern with block scheduling, and again I haven't done enough research on them, but just from an outsider point of view, I'm not sure if that serves the needs of the individual student the right way. Case in point, I don't think it necessarily sets the child up for success in the sense that when you go away to school, you have a lot of things to budget. I'm privileged enough to have two employees at my business, both in high school, and it seems like they have a lot of time on their hands and it seems that they could be doing more with their time and I hear a lot of complaints. "Oh I have four tests, or I have this and I don't necessarily think that is real life." I think I went to school with eight periods a day, and I think I turned out ok. That is something I would like to explore more.

Director Cann asked: What type of relationship do you think should exist between the board and the superintendent? How would you see working together?

Ms. Patrick stated: I think it is definitely a partnership. I think as a superintendent you are coming directly from the school. You are kind of in the "trenches." You see what goes on, but I also think it is important to the board coming in bringing in different strengths. It is also a good opportunity to look at some areas that could probably be improved. I think it is very important to have an open relationship and obviously there is going to be conflicts or disagreements, but I think both have to work hand in hand.

Director Follweiler asked: What do you believe are the major responsibilities and the primary role of a board member, and how much time are you willing to commit to this work?

Ms. Patrick stated: I think one is definitely to be a liaison with the parents and the families that are attending the Bethlehem Area School District. I consider myself extremely approachable. I've come from a marketing background, I grew up doing sales. I think it is very important that someone feel comfortable to approach you if they do have a comment or concern, and you have to take all of those comments and concerns for what they are, you can't blow them off. Time wise, I seem to find more hours in my day. I understand that this is not a show up at a meeting once a month. Obviously this is something considering my daughter is going into the school district next fall that I take very seriously, and I actually was thinking about throwing my hat in the ring back for the election and time wise it wasn't something I was able to commit to. So that is why I took a step back and with these being a two-year position, I felt it was a great opportunity to get my feet wet knowing the time and the commitment that would be required.

Director Faccinnetto asked: How would you allow for more community input in the school board's decisions?

Ms. Patrick stated: I think first of all getting more people to these meetings. It is a little upsetting knowing how many children attend these schools and how many people are sitting and it seemed like most of the people were from the press. I think whether it is possible getting some type of parent captain for each school, for each class, for each grade level; someone who can come here and be a part of the conversation. As Mr. Burkhardt, he was not aware about the All City Band. If parents were more involved, that would have been brought to everyone's attention before it was a concern of the families. I seem to take on that role currently with my daughter's daycare. I seem to be the PTA mom who is constantly trying to get people involved. and I definitely think that parents have to take a much more active role in their children's education. I'm not sure if that quite answered the question, but we need to fill these seats.

Director McKeon asked: What experience and qualifications provide you with the skills and knowledge to be an asset to the Bethlehem Area School District?

Ms. Patrick stated: I have a strong business background. As I mentioned I am marketing major. I am a business owner within the city. As many of you probably know owning a business there seems to be that seven year curve, and if you can get there you are doing pretty good, and I am almost there. I definitely have the passion for it. I have one little girl, and she is my world. So if I can do something that is going to make a positive impact on her, I am going to give it a 110 percent. I am very persistent as I am sure some of my friends and family would tell you, and I don't take no very well. I bring a lot of enthusiasm to the table. This is a little intimidating so I am not quite

beaming with enthusiasm today, but I definitely show up to whatever I am doing giving 110 percent with a smile on my face, and I'm going to give my best.

Director Ortiz asked: What do you see as the main challenges facing the Bethlehem Area School District today, and how will you address them?

Ms. Patrick stated: I think the main thing is to make the minimal amount of cuts, obviously money is a big factor, but certain things that Mr. Faccinetto had mentioned, even not to bring it up again, the All City Band, if there is an opportunity thinking outside of the box, that we can get volunteers in an effort to keep certain programs, I think that is absolutely beneficial. My concern is that these key activities or programs or classes that really help mold a child when they are in these schools are being cut. My high school most people when they go to college they always dream about going back to college. College is great and all that, if I could redo my high school years, I would in a heartbeat because I feel that is where I had a chance to come and find myself, and I was able to flourish and it gave me opportunities to do things that I never would have had, and also too it exposed me to new things that I never would have thought of doing. I was very shy, and I was able to participate in a number of activities and clubs and student council and was really kind of able to find my niche going forward once I graduated. So, that is definitely a concern of mine. It is something that I would work towards, thinking of different ways that we can keep certain things.

Director Vidanage asked: Could you briefly give us your thoughts on school funding, federal and state support, tax reform, Act 1, and tax increase limits?

Ms. Patrick stated: That is a hard one. I'll be honest, that is probably my biggest area of opportunity. The financial part of it, I would say from what I have learned about the Act 1, obviously there are certain limitations that are put on the school district with regards to raising taxes. I think that there are ways that you have to be creative financially. There are going to be certain limitations that are going to be put on you. It is very frustrating to see that the school budget has to be done before the state budget is done. So you don't know exactly what the state is going to be helping you out with, but I think that is where you really have to get creative, and you have to make the minimal amount of cuts and make your dollar go as far as possible.

Dr. Roy asked: If you were not selected to fill the board vacancy at this time, would you consider running for an elected position in the future?

Ms. Patrick stated: Yes I would. As I said, I definitely want to be an active part of the education of my daughter, so if it didn't work out for me this round, there is a very good chance that you would see me again.

President Faccinetto stated: Thank you Shannon, that is all the questions we have, do you have any questions for us?

Ms. Patrick stated: I think my main question is if you could pick your ideal person, what would that be.

President Faccinetto stated: A lot of impressions that I had before coming on the board certainly changed a bit when you do come on the board and you start to see how things work. So, everybody would answer that question differently. Somebody who is willing and dedicated and open to learning I think are the key things. To commit the time it takes to read all this stuff and have an open mind to fully understand what you are voting on would be my answer.

Director McKeon stated: That having grown up in the sixties and I wasn't one of them at that time, but they were all looking to change the world overnight, it can't happen here. You are one of nine. You do allegiances, but you get eight other different opinions than your own. Some may be very close to them; some of them may be on either end of the spectrum. This is my second term. First year, year and half, under totally different circumstances than what exists now, was a very large learning experience, just to understand what we do and we don't all get, its not a rubber stamp here, everything is done in the committee meetings, which people don't really understand. If you only show up here, it looks like we are rubber stamping everything that comes down, but it has already been discussed and shredded apart hopefully in the proper manner.

Ms. Patrick stated: The only other thing I would like to add about myself is I don't come into this situation claiming to know it all, or to be an expert on every topic that you are going to go through in the course of a meeting. But I do come in here as I mentioned with enthusiasm with a willingness to learn, the dedication to show up when I need to, and to do my best for my children that come through this school district.

Director Ortiz stated: I believe that is the key. This is all about children and that is basically. It is not just a building. It is not just a bus. It is the kids. When I came in I have learned so much and that is one thing I will treasure, the things that I have learned. I make mistakes, and we are going to make mistakes, but it is not just about us, it is just about the children.

President Faccinetto stated: Thank you very much. We will have two other interviews tonight, and then next Monday at 6:00 p.m. at the Ed Center on Sycamore Street is when we will make our appointment, and that is a public meeting, and we certainly hope you will attend. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can direct them to the superintendent's office, and they will be happy to help you.

Ms. Patrick stated: I thank you all again for the opportunity to night.

President Faccinnetto stated: Thank you for coming tonight, and thank you for applying for the position. We all have some questions for you, but if you would like to start out with a little description of why you applied, or why you think you are most qualified to be a school board member.

DAVID SANDERS  
INTERVIEW

Mr. Sander stated: My name is David Sanders, life long resident of the City of Bethlehem, and anyone that knows me, I am pro Bethlehem. There is nothing better than the City of Bethlehem. I own a few properties in Bethlehem. At one time, I owned quite a few properties. My most achievement in life is my family, and it is easy to say that education is important, but I would like to give you one example that stuck with me for many years and it still sticks with me. It is very special to my family. I am a father of five, and I have sat at three graduations with three of my children. At the end of the third one, my wife put her arm around me, gave me a kiss, and said "Well, you done it, they all graduated." And you think that that is not very hard to do except for one thing those three particular children were from my first wife, when we got divorced, and I am talking now over 20 years ago, my youngest son is 36. I got custody of those three children, and to get custody of three children that long ago was not easy to do, and you say well did it work? Absolutely, in 15 days my number two son is going to retire after 24 years of the United States Navy, and that same ex wife is going to put her arms around me, and we are both going to hug, and I think that is quite an important proof of what education does today. Things have changed a little about education, no doubt about it. I am not sure a mother and a father today that are divorced and single can raise children and get them educated, but it is very important to look at that particular part of our life. It is easy to educate children that are intelligent, come from a well blended family. I sit on the Board of Bethlehem Housing, and I had the opportunity to move forward. Some of the children, there is children raising children. They are young mothers, and whoever the father is, it is very difficult, but there is programs out there, and we have educated some of our mothers so that they can educate their children. We made sure that those children get an education. In Bethlehem Housing when I started on that board, we had over \$200,000 in a savings account, and nobody was using it ,so I found Mr. Jose Rosado, I am sure you have heard that name in Bethlehem. He was on my committee, and we started handing out scholarships and some of those scholarship children are coming back now and say they have graduated, and they are moving out of public housing. I have sat with Mr. Jose Rosado on his CAPERS program, Help Is Education. But I've seen the need for education. This might be just something that would be enjoyable for me. I do know there is more to the Bethlehem Area School District Board than just education, it is also part of our city. When you go to sell property in this city, if you are in a good school board, it means a lot. I've sold six properties in the last five years and two of them were to families that wanted to move forward. I've helped educating six

families to buy houses in the City of Bethlehem through a program that we have for people that would never have bought a house. All six of those families own their own home, they have children that are going to Bethlehem Area School District, and I think it is very important, and I know the change, I know what changed just in the computer world. It is hard to believe what children can learn today. I have a four-year-old grandson that is teaching Pop Pop how to use a computer, play angry birds. It is amazing, but what is more amazing is what the teachers even in the pre-school, none of my children had pre-school. It is amazing, my second two children that graduated from school, and one became a federal employee and is working in the federal government. Her brother works for H&R Block as the number two programmer in the East Coast. And I have said to that youngest daughter, my stepdaughter, you know we are waiting for grandchildren, and she says. "Oh dad she says our school system is made up of trailers." She lives in El Paso Texas so they have got to get their five or six years in so she can get to a good area school district. Hopefully it will be shortly. So that is why I am here tonight. I play well with others, work well with others. If you don't, ask my first wife because I will tell you what, it was tough; it was a challenge for me to do that. But we have done it and I have done it in the past. Being self employed has given me 24 years of education to let me know what our community was like. I never thought I would survive 24 years in Bethlehem. But I am still there and things still look good for our city. Our city, and I was just told this as recently as last week, is still the number one in the retailer market for selling houses in the Lehigh Valley. That is quite an accomplishment for our city and for our school board, to be number six school district in the state. And then we still have people looking to buy houses in your city. That is quite an accomplishment, and I like to be part of the future that is why I am here tonight.

Director Bonilla asked: What is your view of charter schools and why?

Mr. Sanders stated: I am going to be honest with you, I'm not positive. I don't know too much about charter schools and that is the truth.

Director Burkhardt asked: How do you perceive the current education program of the Bethlehem Area School District, and what would you change if anything?

Mr. Sanders stated: Well I wouldn't be able to change anything because I don't know exactly being that most of my children are not in school, but from what I am told that the way of the future is in the computer industry, the computer world. I think I understand it that we are not teaching children to write anymore, but because they do everything with email, and they have everything at the fingertips. I also think I would teach the children what they are going to need in the future, and this generation needs things that are completely differently than what I learned in school.

Director Cann asked: What type of relationship do you believe should exist between the board and the superintendent? How do you see us all working together?

Mr. Sanders stated: I think it should be a working relationship. I think the school boards job is to make sure the superintendent is doing his job. His job is to run the school system. His job is to make sure the teachers, and the principals are doing their job. I think you need a good working relationship. I think if you lose that relationship, you lose your grounds. I think you lose your priorities.

Director Follweiler asked: Mr. Sanders thanks for coming. What do you believe are the major responsibilities and primary role of a school board member? How much time are you willing to commit to this work?

Mr. Sanders stated: The first question, as much time as it takes. When I do a job I get into it wholeheartedly. I take everything I do in life serious. I put my time in it. The role of the school board is to oversee the administration, to make sure they are doing what is qualified, and to make sure they are doing their job.

President Faccinnetto asked: Mr. Sanders. How would you allow for more community input in the school board's decisions? That does not count having the deli be your own personal office and speaking post.

Mr. Sanders stated: Well the deli works for me. It is easy to sit around and talk and say remember when and I am close to that group, the remember when group. But, it is just so hard today to get people to sit and pay attention to what is going on until it is too late, but if you can get young people involved, if you can get young board members, I'll be honest with you I am old, I am not denying it, but with age comes experience. I have seven grandchildren, one great grandchild. If you can keep the young people involved in your family, and if you can pass that on to keep them involved, I think it might work, but it is a very difficult thing to do is to get people involved. We are the sixth largest school district in this state, and how people were here tonight sitting behind me watching what is going on? Unfortunately that happens throughout the city, many and many times. The best I would say is try to get young people involved, the youth.

Director McKeon stated: Welcome back Mr. Sanders. My question is what experience and qualification provide you with the skills and knowledge to be an asset to the Bethlehem Area School District?

Mr. Sanders stated: I think being a father, being a parent, knowing the difference. I was at a meeting not too long ago and a man spoke and he spoke

about a four leaf clover and his comments were, we spend the whole time looking for something different and in this case, we are all different but we are all looking for that same four leaf clover. I think if we can work together, I think we could accomplish something, and I think knowing the difference, I had the privilege of being the longest running chairman on the Bethlehem Housing Authority, and I know I've brought this up before, but it gave me a great insight to different cultures in life. We are all looking for education. We have so many different programs out there that we have educated, but it still gets right back to you need to educate young people.

Director Ortiz stated: Good evening Mr. Sanders. What do you see as the main challenges facing the Bethlehem Area School District today and how will you address them?

Mr. Sanders stated: I would say probably the main challenge is finances. Finances are in any business. In my own business, I had to go through some economical changes. I had to eliminate stuff that don't make money; I had to move forward with stuff that did make money. In the BASD, we want the best education for our children. It is not easy sometimes to finance all those programs. Sometimes you see there are two people on the bus that seats 40 people. Why isn't there more people on the bus? I think I heard you talk about a program that we had to cut. Looking for ways probably to do that. I say finances is your biggest challenge in the BASD today.

Director Ortiz stated: How would you address them?

Mr. Sanders stated: It is hard to address finances if I don't know the other side of the coin. If I knew how much money is available, and you know what your most important product is, which in our case is our education. If you had a choice between teaching someone how to use a computer or how to get something across, educating a child today compared to maybe a child who played in the band or playing in a roller skating program, which of the two, yet you need to get the balance, you need to get the education part and it is a tough decision. That is why you need nine people on one board to try to get together on the same decision. That is how I would address it.

Director Vidanage stated: Briefly give us your thoughts on school funding, federal and state support, tax reform, Act 1, and tax increases limits?

Mr. Sanders stated: I am always disappointed when any organization relies on funding from the state, or from the federal government. You are relying on found money. When you get found money its great when you get the money to take care of that program, but if you are going to rely on it, you better make sure it is going to be there in two years or next year. If you read between the lines, it was a great thing when the Casino came to Bethlehem and gave \$10 million to the municipalities with \$10 million coming to the City of

Bethlehem, but we gave \$4 million of it away to Allentown right off the bat, and then we got our accounting money and everybody started grabbing. If you read, Hellertown for example, they hired two police officers and they didn't realize that next year they might not have the money for those police officers. I am not too sure that was a good sound decision. To hire somebody with somebody else's money, and I know for example, the state particularly they change their mind from one day to the next. My wife and I are very fortunate and it has been a big controversy in Pennsylvania about the Marshallese drilling and all the gas that they found. My wife and I sit right smack dab in the middle of that and it has been a huge controversy especially when it comes to money and how this state is going to divide it. Everybody is under the impression nobody is paying taxes on it. Well I can tell you that I am paying state taxes on that money for every nickel I get I pay it all. And not everybody is being upfront with it. But I am not fond of relying on state and federal money to run programs. I think you should make sure those programs are self sufficient. If you get state and federal programs, it works. As I sit here, I use Bethlehem Housing again. We are going to be cut over \$2,000 or \$3,000 this year of our budget. We have to make that change. We were fortunate we had some people retire. Some of those people aren't going to be replaced, and jobs are our most important asset right now. But unfortunately they are funded by federal dollars. Bethlehem Housing can't afford to hire another inspector. We just lost some of our funding for it. So I am not fond of federal and state budget money.

Dr. Roy asked: If you are not selected to fill the board vacancy at this time, would you consider running for an elected position in the future?

Mr. Sanders stated: If I am not appointed I will be disappointed, but I will not run. If you want to know the answer, I will tell you why, and if you knew a little bit about me, I am married 20 years as a man I probably have the best wife a man could want, but the last time I ran for an elected position I came home one night and my wife was crying and I said "Honey what is wrong?" She said to me the guy and lady next to me were saying some stuff that she had to leave, and I promised my wife I would never run again. However, this is an appointment and she says go for it. So I went for it. That is the reason Dr. Roy, and I am sorry but I am a little bit romantic you might call me. Old School.

President Faccinetto stated: Thank you Dave, do you have any questions, for us or anything else you want to say.

Mr. Sanders stated: No, I just wish you well in your decision, and if I don't get the appointment, I will still support you in the deli every day.

President Faccinetto stated: Thank you very much. We will make our appointment next Monday night at 6:00 p.m. at the Ed Center on Sycamore

Street, and we encourage you to attend.

President Faccinetto stated: Good evening Mr. Weikert! Thank you very much for coming, for applying, and expressing interest in being part of the school board. We each have some questions for you, and we will go around the table and ask those, but if you would like to start out by giving a statement about why you are here, and what interest you have in applying and being a part of the school board.

DAVID A. WEIKERT  
INTERVIEW

Mr. Weikert stated: Thanks for having me. I am Dave Weikert. I have been a Bethlehem resident for about the last fourteen years. I am deeply invested in the district. I have kids that are six, nine, and eleven, and my wife is a product of the district and also a kindergarten teacher in the district. I follow what is going on. I hear it from my wife and my kids. I hear the good things that are happening in the district. This is tough times. Tough decisions need to be made, but these need to be smart decisions, and I want to be part of that and that is why I am here.

Director Bonilla asked: What is your view of Charter Schools and why? In full disclosure my youngest is attending Lehigh Valley Academy. Mainly it is a full-day kindergarten and to make the best choice as parents, these are tough choices. We are trying to make the right ones. Hopefully it is. We don't know where he will go next year, but I am torn if you could start over without any kind of info structure, and you know exactly how many kids you are going to need to educate next year, it is a lot easier I think. So, my wife is a public school teacher, my father was a public school teacher. I went to public school. I struggle with the Charter School dilemma. So the answer to your question is I don't know. I guess it depends on each one, but it is a tough one, I don't know where we are headed. It's tough for the district because you have to plan for kids even though they are not necessarily coming here and then the money goes away.

Due to an emergency, President Faccinetto allowed Director Vidanage to ask his question so that Director Vidanage could leave.

Director Vidanage asked: Can you briefly give us your thoughts on school funding, federal and state support, tax reform, Act 1, and tax increase limits? Since you have a clientele with your profession, there are a lot more tend to be older and how would you advise them, because the older folks seem to be having lots of complaints about paying school taxes.

President Faccinetto asked Director Vidanage to please stick with the same questions for uniformity.

Mr. Weikert stated: It is a balance. No one likes to pay taxes. I don't know of anyone who likes to pay taxes, but I am vested in the district and the most

reasonable people, if they are getting good value for their money, and feel involved in their local schools, it makes it a little easier to write that check. That was the brief non-specific answer, but as I said, it is community involvement, that is the answer. When people are involved they feel like the monies are being well spent, then it gets a little easier to pay those taxes.

Director Burkhardt asked: How do you perceive the current education programs of the Bethlehem Area School District? What would you change?

Mr. Weikert stated: I like what I see and hear. I like what Dr. Roy and Dr. Silva are doing. I have been to a lot of parents nights, and I hear folks complaining, principals talking about the cuts, and I know it is tough, but some how and I know from my kids and all the kids in the district currently, we have to do the best thing that we can with what we have and that means being creative. So, specific educational topics, could I tell you which ones I would get rid of or keep? No. All City Band I attended last year. I stood in line for the hour while those 180 kids, those parents, grandparents, all those taxpayers walked in, and I know when they left, they were happy. So that is one if we could keep.

Director Cann stated: What kind of relationship do you believe should exist between the board and the superintendent?

Mr. Weikert stated: A good one, a close relationship that is not adversarial. You have got to make this work, and if the community thinks that everybody is not working together, more public outcry, people don't want to pay taxes; they don't understand any increase in taxes, so working together.

Director Follweiler stated: What do you believe are the major responsibilities and primary role of a school board member? How much time are you willing to commit to this work?

Mr. Weikert stated: As much time as it takes, but primarily being a good listener, that part about working together, having an open mind to creative solutions. Helping come up with those creative ideas. So as much time as it takes is the answer to your question.

Director Faccinnetto asked: How would you allow for more community input in the school board's decisions?

Mr. Weikert stated: It would be great to see more parents and more teachers attend these meetings. My wife said you will be surprised at how few people are there, and I was as a parent, I'm shocked. Wow, this is a big district. Sixteen elementary schools and I look behind me and there are not many folks here. So, I don't know how you get those people to come, but part of it is getting people involved. Things like All City Band and it sounds silly, but

that is how you get people involved. You get good feedback, you get support, you get creative ideas, listening people. Dr. Roy having an open door to his teachers and the community ideas, good or bad, because you will get all kinds. But having that open door, it is a public school district and people have a say.

Director McKeon asked: What experience and qualifications provide you with the skills and knowledge to be an asset to the Bethlehem Area School District?

Mr. Weikert stated: I am a certified financial planner by trade. I'd say what qualifies me most is being a parent, in addition to like all of you being a taxpayers in the district. As a parent, I am deeply vested. I want the best for kids, but I also want to balance economically the best we can because I am a taxpayer too, so what qualifies me. I don't know that I need to bring any qualifications, other than being a parent, a good listener, being able to think things through and work with my peers.

Director Ortiz asked: What do you see as the main challenges facing the Bethlehem Area School District today and how will you address them?

Mr. Weikert stated: Money is a big one. I guess the environment and making it a positive place for kids, teachers and the community. I mentored at William Penn Elementary School for about the last fourteen years and those kinds of programs are fantastic. Getting the community involved, that is the biggest thing now, showing them that tax dollars are being well spent and that the district is being careful and smart about how they spend their money. How would I make that happen? Like I said before, by being a good listener I'd be contributing.

Dr. Roy asked: If you are not selected to fill the board vacancy at this time, would you consider running for an elected position in the future?

Mr. Weikert stated: Possibly. I don't know much about the process as far as regions. I don't have a lot of political ambition, other than the fact that I am a parent and I am deeply vested in the district. Yes, I would.

President Faccinetto stated: If the board would allow me, I just want to reread you the question that Director Vidanage asked before he left. You touched on the tax increase, but the first part was if you could briefly give us your thoughts on school funding, federal and state support, and tax reform.

Mr. Weikert stated: We have to do more with less, but we've got to be smart about it. The funding federally from the state doesn't seem to be increasing and it doesn't seem like it will increase any time soon. So we have got to make it work. As far as tax reform, again, some people you are never going to convince, they never think taxes should go up, but if you get the community

involved, it will be a lot easier and I don't have every answer of how we do that.

President Faccinetto asked Mr. Weikert is he had any questions for the board or anything else you would like to say.

Mr. Weikert stated: I like what I see. I like what Dr. Roy and Dr. Silva are doing, and I am talking as a parent now. What I have seen and what I hear from my kids when they come home, they are talking less about things that are cut. My sixth grader tonight said, you could tell them the slushy machine at Nitschmann could come back; it was taken out because of cuts. I said I don't think that was taken out because of cuts, that might have been health reasons and I am not sure it ever existed. So, I voiced his concern while I was here.

President Faccinetto stated: If there are not other questions, then we will make our appointment on next Monday at 6:00 p.m. at the Ed. Center on Sycamore Street. We invite you to attend in the event that you are appointed. It would be awkward if you didn't attend and weren't there to take your seat. So we highly encourage that, and if you have any questions in the meantime, you can contact the district office, and they can help you with that. Again, thank you very much for coming.

President Faccinetto stated: That concludes our three candidates that we had set to interviews tonight, and as I just said we will make our appointment next Monday.

The interviews concluded at 8:51 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Attest,

Stacy M. Gober  
Secretary

SMG:pag