

League of Women Voters

Candidate Questionnaire – Westerville Board of Education

Candidate: John Sodt



Education: M.S. Business Management, University of Arkansas, B.S. Business Administration, Capital University

Qualifications for Office: 35 years business management experience in personnel, budgeting, and expense management; 10 years project management experience in large multi-million dollar organizations.

Campaign Website: www.forResponsibleChange.com

What should the role of the school board be in relation to the superintendent and his/her office?

The School Board is elected by the voters (taxpayers) to manage the school district for them. The Superintendent is employed by the Board, and given standards, curriculum, budgeting, and expense management objectives to carry out the day-to-day operation of the district.

The Board provides the Superintendent the resources to carry out its directives, and oversees the deployment of those resources.

The Board works in close collaboration with the Superintendent to effectively and efficiently manage the district for the community. A strong relationship between the Board and the Superintendent ensures the district's success in the education of the students.

What would you do to improve the school's financial stability?

I will work to improve district's financial stability by implementing a zero based budgeting model that funds the classrooms first before moving to other levels such as administration, operations, etc. This model ensures that student programs and services are funded as the top priority in times of financial distress.

Jim Burgess, Luke Davis, and I are running together with this "Students First" budgeting model to change the district's frequent levy history and put the district on a path of improved financial stability. With our election, these changes can happen to benefit both students and taxpayers.

If you had the power to change one thing about your school district, what would it be and why?

I would like to effect a change in the academic choices and results in our district. Westerville offers a reduced number of courses in both middle and high school when compared to middle and high schools in nearby districts.

The implementation of a Students First approach to budgeting and management will center funding on the classroom enabling increased course offerings and a focus on academic achievement. The objective will be to reduce the high schools' 40% college bound remedial rate, improve both middle and high school programming and return funding to the magnet school program.