

Advocacy & Policy Successes on the BOE

I am the only Board Member in the past 3 years to lead any advocacy on curriculum and instruction, guidance counseling, or technology improvements.

I am the only candidate or Board Member to create and lead a movement or initiative, in the past 10 years, that resulted in the improved performance of a public school.

(5 photos and the new video)

Student Achievement Advocacy

Edison Middle School (EMS) Makes History!

In 2014, new Math leadership was appointed for Middle School because of our efforts. On the Board, I continued the work of my 2013 Parents Coalition at EMS and ensured accountability and best practices were being used:

- Expansion of "Accelerated Math" to include all high Proficiency and Advanced Proficiency students
- Improved Math rigor for all
- Confirmed full use of Level Reading Library, greater frequency of reading complete books and not just passages and introduction of literature that challenged kids at their highest level
- Ensured standardized test prep for ALL kids
- Ensured that Math curriculum identified curriculum pacing problem.
- Called for Supervisors' accountability; generated ongoing dialogue between Supervisors and PTA

Result: For the 1st time in District history, EMS scores increased and 6th Graders achieved higher NJASK scores than they had in the 5th grade!

Engineering & CODE Piloted in K-8!

My advocacy leadership won the Launch of 2015 Engineering Projects in Grade 5 Enrichment, and Computer Code and Engineering Curricula in EMS 2016 – 2017, Expanding to LMS and RMS in 2017

- Since 2012 as a parent (noted by Principal Fitzgerald), and 2014 – 2016 on BOE, advocated vigorously –
 - Presented competitive private school information
 - Noted award winning curricula developed by our own Teacher and ready to deploy
 - Provided 20-page presentation decks of information on Computer Science Teachers Association and nonprofit efforts to teach Code in Public Schools, the curricula and resources available

My philosophy:

“CODE teaches critical thinking, and how to create, communicate, and collaborate enabling kids to innovate.”

“Children are motivated and internalize what they learn through hands-on, experiential learning, where they create a product or see clear result.”

World Language to Adopt Online Language Labs

- Advocated 2014 -16 as a best practice in World Languages and ESL based on language lab use colleges, top public schools and private schools
- Faced initial opposition by the WL department against it
- Won approval in 2016 and they are looking for a vendor to implement it by 2017

Led Curriculum Reform in English Language Arts

Advocated since 2012 as a parent, and 2014-16 on BOE in Closed and Open Sessions, providing detailed documentation of issues, parent letters, best practices for the models we used, and opportunities for improvement. Results:

- Formal teaching of grammar and syntax K-8, 2016-17 (This had stopped 7 years ago)
- Return of Guided Reading/Directed Reading K-8: In 2014, the ELA Supervisor announced in the Middle School Curriculum Meeting that “We are no longer doing Guided Reading also called Directed Reading” – I fought to reestablish this education best practice
- Middle School instruction in Latin and Greek Roots, 2016 – 2017 (60% of English Language and 90% of law, science and technology based on these root) (Study of Latin and Ancient Greek, helped me achieve)
- Return of vocabulary building, grades 6-12, in 2016 (formerly known as SAT vocabulary)
- Full implementation of in-class, “Book Clubs” with a guided component (grades 3-8)
- Return of novels and creative writing - Often eradicated under the Common Core in 2014-15
- Book lists, finally, accessible to Parents in November of 2014, so Parents could work with Teachers and Students

Launch of Enrichment Curricula for ALL K-8, Integrating HAP Curricula Content:

- Began advocacy as a parent in 2012, and won approval as a BOE Member 2015-16 in English (grades 3-8)
- Also led to rotating projects in Engineering and Social Studies for Grade-5...Expanding in 2016-17

Expanded/Improved Summer Assignments K-11:

- Helps avoid Students losing one to two months of knowledge/performance by Fall
- Note: Summer assignments are not supposed to be burdensome. They should serve as mental "tune up" that avoids kids losing up to 2 months of instruction time and Teachers spending 1 to 2 months in review instead of on new materials

“Departmentalization” (specialization) for Grades 4-5 (Example: Teachers Math degrees teach Math):

- Since 2014, I advocated for this as a best practice used in top public and private schools

Improved Performance Tracking by Class Cohort:

- Advocated for this since 2014 and it revealed performance strengths/weaknesses by course and grade level
- If you track a 5th grade class through their 8th or 9th grade year and witness their performance decline in a particular year, it helps the BOE and Superintendent identify problems in the problem year/grade

My Advocacy on C&I Helped Catalyze Action for:

- Expansion of Honors in 2015 (Still Working to Improve Criteria/Process)
- Improved rigor for Middle School Math; more funding for technology integration in the curricula
- Re-Evaluation of Gifted & Talented Program (G&T) called HAP:
 - I advocated changing the model
 - Meeting legal requirement of K-12
 - Having a separate HAP Honors distinct from regular Honors

College & Career Readiness Advocacy

Drove Awareness/Advocacy for 2-Years, Resulting in 2016 District Goal to Enhance WOHS Guidance Counseling Department and Modernize K-12 Guidance Model:

- 2014-16, identified lack of support for Guidance –
 - No Alumni Database or professional development
 - No PR/Social Media support for events
 - No professional development
 - Issues with departmental credentials
- **Consulted college admissions and career development departments**
- I presented multiple memoranda with recommendations, in Open Public Meetings
 - On service gaps
 - Missing best practices that undermined outcomes
 - Parent letters documenting issues
 - Student stories
 - College admissions feedback
- Recruited parents participation in the Strategic Plan Groups

Result: Guidance modernization is 2016-17 District Goal

Tax Payer Advocacy & Financial Accountability

Created the Fund Development Initiative

- **For 3-Years, submitted numerous proposals and cases studies supporting pursuit of corporate and foundation grants, partnerships, donations and sponsorships to grow STEAM , CODE and other academic programs, and reduce reliance on tax dollars through revenue diversification**
- **Identified strategic partners and vendors to execute**

Result: Secured 2016 Budget: 2014 – 2016 for \$50,000 investment spending to research and write grants

Advocacy for Transparency

Started airing BOE meetings on YouTube in 2016:

- **Since 2014, I advocated for this step, along with many Parents and Teachers for greater transparency and access**
- **I provided technical solutions for implementation - To make it happen**
 - During Open Public Meeting, I pointed to the Production Studio adjacent to the Board Meeting Room/WOHS Library LMC, and I listed the Adobe, Handbrake and other software they owned to transfer, render, and convert the video file to an mpeg4 and the upload to the server ad YouTube.
 - I listed the step-by-step process and how little time it required, so there were no more excuses

Result: Within 2 weeks, BOE Meetings were on YouTube

Technology Advocacy

Achieving 1:1 Computer Device to Child Ratio, Grades 3-12, Fall of 2016:

- I was the leading, often sole advocate to accelerate technology expansion, at a time when Students take tests and do 90% of assignments on a computer**
- Some BOE Members wanted to cut the budget**
- I made the case for the needed modernization step and refused to approve a budget without it**
- My technology know-how helped to make the case**
- We also increased the number of devices and carts for K-2**

Advocacy & Policy in Partnership with the BOE

In Partnership with some or all Board Members, Advocated for or Implemented the Following:

- Advocacy In partnership with 1 Board Member: Restarted Diversity Recruitment of Elementary School Teachers: In partnership with another BOE Member, addressed the dearth of Black/African American, Hispanic and South Asian American Teachers in Elementary
- Teacher Support: Advocated for greater Teacher voice, and improved change management and communications methods; and more funding for Teacher Professional Development (PD) to empower/support Teachers
- Sports: Maintained coaching staffs at competitive levels on par with top teams, and helped save Hockey Team
- Adoption of the Energy Savings Plan (ESIP)
- Adopted "Zero-Based Budgeting" for greater efficiency