



# TOGETHER WE CAN Give Our Children a **COMPETITIVE EDUCATION**® **MARK ROBERTSON**

**RE-Elect Mark to the West Orange Board of Education!**

**I am YOUR ADVOCATE and the ONLY INDEPENDENT VOICE on THE BOARD of EDUCATION!**

**MARK'S VISION:** To endow our **Children** with a world class, **Competitive Education**®... **Parents** with a supportive partnership, to help their kids... **Taxpayers** with relief and with top schools that raise property values... **Teachers** with a greater voice and our highest respect... **Administrators** with our support...and, in the town **"Where Innovation Lives,"** endow **ALL of West Orange** with schools ranked in the top 25%, engineering and CODE programs K-8 and corporate partnerships...West Orange Public Schools will be a beacon attracting progressive businesses, and aspirational families.

**MY MISSION:** To measurably produce improved Academic Performance, along with College and Career Readiness

**MY QUALIFICATIONS:** Tax Payer with Kids in WOPS, Community Leader, Business Executive and Former Educator

- **WOBOE:** Vice President of the Board, NJSBA Delegate, Legislative Alternate and PR Committee Member. Led advocacy for over 20 improvements and new initiatives in Curriculum and Instruction (C&I), Guidance model modernization, and Fund Development
- **Yale Graduate:** With a BA in History, credits and research experience in the sciences and psychology
- **1 of 2 BOE Members with kids in WOPS** (daughter in 5<sup>th</sup> and son in 10<sup>th</sup>)
- **Only BOE Member with Education Industry Experience: Education Non-Profits, Social Work, and Tutoring Urban Youth**
  - For UNCF and INROADS: Strategic planning, research, scholarships, career development (internships, leadership training), fund development, alumni relations, marketing/PR, corporate and college partnerships, and diversity recruitment and training
  - Former psychiatric social worker: Case management, crisis counseling; managed a socialization program for Schizophrenic clients
- **Community Leadership Serving Children and Families:**
  - **Member of 4 WOPS PTAs in 10 Years:** Mt. Pleasant, Edison Middle School PTA Board VP, Liberty, and WOHS
    - 2012, at EMS, started District's 1st **PTA Curriculum Committee**, led a 300-person **Parents Coalition, improving performance at EMS**. On the BOE, continued EMS accountability/advocacy **raising scores to historic levels**
  - **10-Year Scout Leader:** As Pack 10 Chair awarded **Council's Pack Chair of the Year**; former Council Board; Troop 2 Committee
  - **8-Years MTL Coach:** In-House Soccer and Basketball coach and former Trustee
  - **West Orange African Heritage Organization:** Member and Sponsor
- **30-Years of Corporate and Nonprofit Management:** Strategy, marketing, business development, digital publishing, partnerships

## **"A-B-C" Education Excellence Platform**

- **A: Accountability & Advocacy:** Advocacy and administrative accountability for student achievement, budget control and transparency
- **B: Best Practices in Education:** Incorporate best/most effective practices used by highest performing public and private schools
- **C: Competitive Education**®: Empower students with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed to compete globally

**FOCUS FOR THE NEXT 3 YEARS: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS & TAX RELIEF**

- 1. Finance/Budget: Fund Development growth and corporate partnerships to expand programs, and reduce budget for tax relief**
- 2. Student Academic Performance:** Increase focus on "kids in the middle" and the economically challenged 44% on "Free and Reduced Lunch"; advance CODE and STEAM in elementary and middle schools; raise performance of ESL students; improve support to/partnerships with parents focused on their roles in student achievement; make Washington and Hazel a focus for STEAM and performance improvements; enhance rigor in non-Honors K-8 courses; steward Enrichment K-8, and Guidance, HAP and Honors reform
- 3. Enhance College/Career Prep - Increase Conversion Rates/Outcomes and Career Readiness:** Address college acceptance rates, early college and career planning K-8, internships, career mentoring, alumni partnerships, improving standardized test prep and upgrade the High School Guidance Counseling services; develop vocational alliances and workshop program for Special Services
- 4. Create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Environment:** Eliminate school overcrowding; and create learning labs and STEAM programs
- 5. Improve Stakeholder Relations:** Finalize Teacher Contracts and institute a Teacher Recognition Program. Conduct annual Teacher/Parent/Student "Climate Surveys"/focus groups.

**TOGETHER WE CAN give Our Children a **COMPETITIVE EDUCATION** © and give Tax Payers RELIEF!**

## Mark A. Robertson's Advocacy Leadership & Achievements on the Board of Education

- **Provided Unparalleled Leadership on Curriculum Reform and Administrative Accountability to Improve Student Performance:** Sparked awareness and led advocacy for Curriculum and Instruction (C&I) needs for Superintendent and BOE. Led advocacy for C&I reforms for English, Math, Enrichment, HAP/G&T, Honors, Standardized Test Prep, non-Honors rigor needed, World Language/ESL needs, and more
- **2014, Continued Advocacy for EMS Improvements:** Called for Supervisors' accountability; generated ongoing dialogue between Supervisors and Parents; demanded greater ELA rigor and standardized test prep for ALL students (not just for the lowest scoring 10%); fixed math pacing problem. **Result: 1st time in District history, EMS 6th Graders scored higher on NJASK than they had in the 5th grade!**
- **Created the Fund Development Initiative to Reduce Reliance on Tax Dollars 2014–2016:** Secured investment spending budget; identified grant writing consultant. Submitted proposals and cases studies supporting corporate and foundation grants, partnerships, donations and sponsorships **to grow STEAM (Science/Technology/Engineering/Art (Design)/Math, and to sponsor building projects that reduce school overcrowding.** Proposed **fundraising** via an **"Alumni Annual Campaign"**
- **Drove Awareness/Advocacy 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; presented multiple memoranda with recommendations in Open Public Meetings, on service Gaps and missing best practices that hurt outcomes (supported by parent letters, student stories and college admissions feedback;) Recruited same parents' participation in the Strategic Plan Groups. Combined data, information and testimony demanded action
- **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 Teachers; and provided presentation decks of information on Computer Science Teachers Association and nonprofit efforts to teach Code in Public Schools
- **World Language's Adoption of Online Language Labs 2016–17:** Advocated 2014–16 against initial WL Dept. opposition
- **ELA Curriculum & Instruction Improvements:** Advocated since 2012 as a parent, and 2014–16 on BOE in Open Sessions, providing detailed documentation of issues, best practices and opportunities. **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
  - Middle School instruction in Latin and Greek Roots, 2016–2017 (60% of English Language and 90% of law, science and technology based on these roots) (Study of Latin and Ancient Greek, helped me achieve)
  - Return of vocabulary building (grades 6–12) (formerly known as SAT vocabulary)
  - Return of novels and creative writing (Often eradicated under the Common Core)
  - Book lists, finally, accessible to Parents in November of 2014, so Parents could work with Teachers and Students
- **Launch of Enrichment Curricula for K-8, Integrating HAP Curricula Content:** Advocated since 2012 as a parent and 2014 on BOE; began in 2015 for English (grades 3–8), plus rotating projects in Engineering and Social Studies for Grade-5
- **Expanded/Improved Summer Assignments K–11:** Helps avoid Students losing 1-month of knowledge/performance by Fall
- **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
- **Enacting "Departmentalization" (specialization) for Grades 3–5 in September: Example:** Teachers Math degrees teach Math. Since 2014, advocated for this as a best practice used in top public and private schools
- **Improved Performance Tracking by Class Cohort:** Advocated since 2014; revealed performance weaknesses by course and grade level
- **Started airing BOE meetings on YouTube in 2016:** Since 2014, I advocated for this step for greater transparency and access, and provided technical solutions for implementation
- **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
- **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
- **Co-Led advocacy to launch 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 School
- **Sports: Co-led effort to maintained coaching staffs at competitive levels** on par with top teams, and helped save Hockey Team

*(The opinions expressed herein are solely my own and do not necessarily represent that of the West Orange Board of Education)*