



- **How long have you lived in Hudsonville?**

I have lived in Hudsonville for over 14 years. I grew up in Kent City and lived in southeast Michigan for 16 years before moving back to the west side of the state.

- **What experiences do you have with local governance?**

In January 2014, I was appointed to the Ottawa County Community Action Agency (OCCAA) Advisory Board. I served as the vice-chair in 2015 and 2016, and I am currently the chair, a position I have held since January 2017. At the completion of my current term (Dec. 2022), I have informed OCCAA that I will not seek reappointment.

I was appointed in September 2018 to fill a vacancy on the School Board and successfully ran for re-election in 2020. Prior to my appointment on the Board, I served on the school's Sex Advisory Board.

- **What do you see as the primary work of the board of education?**

I view the work of the Board as very collaborative. We work with the superintendent, administrators, teachers, support staff, parents, students, and the community to develop a vision and goals for the school district that are responsive to the values, beliefs and priorities of our community, while advocating for the needs of the district. The Board is also responsible for establishing and reviewing policies that affect our students.

Since the Board responds directly to and is elected by the community, the Board's decisions should reflect the community interests in district matters with the consultation of administrative staff. The Board relies upon the information provided by the District administration, so a working relationship between the two is essential to ensuring a quality education and a responsive school district. The Board also serves as the community's platform for voicing their concerns and addressing their needs in the district. Finally, the Board plays an important role in holding the district accountable for results including student achievement and fiscal responsibility.

Not only does the Board monitor student success and teacher performance, but we also evaluate the performance of our superintendent. Since the superintendent leads the district and is one of the most influential voices in shaping our vision and goals, our evaluation of his leadership is essential to strengthening our district. This process requires honesty that identifies the superintendent's strengths and weaknesses with the hope of improving and solidifying his working relationship with the Board.

- **Why are you running for the Board of Education? If elected, what will be your priorities?**

Currently, many in the community have lost trust in the Board and district. Our working relationship with the administration has had challenges that have weakened the district's transparency and communication with parents. The district has not always followed established processes, which have hindered transparency with Board members and parents. For example, as a Board member, I did not know about the details of the district's DEIB initiative, despite asking questions, until I received some key information through a parent's FOIA request. The Board must know about what the district is doing to best represent the community.

We need to restore transparency. In addition, I believe the Board needs to be available (outside of formal Board meetings and work sessions) to hear from key stakeholders including our dedicated teachers, parents, and students. An active Board that listens to its stakeholders will demonstrate our transparency directly to the community.

Our decisions need to be made based on data. Data that is presented without bias to paint an accurate picture of our district needs. Decisions also need to be made based on the most complete sense of knowledge possible: data does not always get me there, so I ask questions. The data I receive guides my questions to make them informed and pointed. The implementation of district book guidelines provides another example. Parents should have the decision regarding what books their children read. We still have a lot of work to do on book guidelines, but I believe we can find a solution that meets the needs of teachers, students and parents.

During my four years on the Board, I have always asked questions when necessary. I will continue to ask questions as the Board grapples with different, and often difficult, decisions. I will continue to ask questions that reflect the interest and concerns with our community members. I prioritize restoring honesty, transparency, and communication between the Board and the administration to best serve our students, teachers, and parents. The Hudsonville community is a wonderful community in which to live and raise a family. I want to keep our school district as a primary factor for what makes our community a great place to live.

- What particular experiences or skills have prepared you to serve as a board member?**

I am diligent and do my homework on various issues facing the district. I work hard to understand the issues so that my questions are informed and provide a better understanding to the Board and the community. For example, I have observed RULER/SEL in action in our classrooms and have met with three teachers, a principal, and two assistant superintendents regarding the classroom application of RULER. I have also met with concerned parents regarding RULER/SEL. These opportunities helped me to prepare questions and to advocate for teachers and students while also listening to parents.

I am an experienced student advocate and understand the importance of education as an associate professor of nursing at Grand Valley State University. In 2018, the GVSU Alumni Association recognized my work in the classroom and the impact I have had on alumni by awarding me their Educator of the Year Award. This year, my fellow faculty members acknowledged my work advocating for students and achieving academic success by awarding me the GVSU 2022 Outstanding Teacher Award. I am recognized for being collaborative and meeting the needs of all students.

- In what school district or community activities/organizations have you been involved?**

As a Board member, I have rounded in different schools and acknowledged the work of our dedicated teaching staff. I attend various school related activities as a Board member and I serve as the Board liaison to the Hudsonville Education Foundation Board of Directors. Although my children are now graduates of Hudsonville Public Schools, I was active as a room parent and volunteer at Forest Grove Elementary School.

I am an active member of St. Sebastian Catholic Church, and I am involved in variety of professional organizations including serving as the Faculty Advisor for the Kirkhof College of Nursing Alumni Committee and I am an active member of Sigma Theta Tau International (the National Honor Society for Nursing). When my sons were younger, I was also active in Boy Scouts of America Troop 146 and Cub Scout Pack 3149.