



2017 LUCAS COUNTY VOTERS' GUIDE

Toledo City School District Board of Education

Term of Office: 4 years

To be elected: 3

- Q1. *In the position you seek, what do you consider are the most important issues to be addressed, and what would you do about them?*
- Q2. *What do you bring to the position that another candidate cannot?*

Polly Taylor Gerken

Education: BS: Criminal Justice. M. Ed: School Psychology Ed.S Counselor Education

Occupation: School Psychologist, Psychoeducational Consultant, Trainer

Qualifications: Over 30 years of experience in education. I worked my way through college and graduate school as a secretary for TPS- where I learned how schools work. Then I worked as a school psychologist where I learned what students and teachers need to succeed. Now I have 3½ year's experience as a school board member. I believe experience matters.

Questions:

- 1) The most important thing we need to do in TPS is to increase graduation rates, which means offering a wide range of appropriate options to make sure students are college and career ready. As a Board member it is my job to ensure that Superintendent Durant has the appropriate policies and resources in place to make this happen.
- 2) I bring a unique set of experiences that include having multiple generations of my family attend TPS, including my 7th grade granddaughter along with my 30+ years in education.

Ruth Leonard

Education: Bachelors of Science in Child Behavioral Psychology

Current Occupation: Substitute teacher in TPS

Website: Ruthfortps.com

Qualifications: 8 years as an educator, B.S. Child Behavioral Psychology, working towards my M.Ed. In Educational Theory and Social Foundations.

Questions:

1. Homeless epidemic, creating a culturally relevant curriculum and building partnerships between the schools and the community. I plan to work with organizations that are already in place to continue their efforts to eradicate homelessness, work with the curriculum director to ensure there is a diverse level of content being taught in the schools district wide and partnering with small businesses in the community to ensure that they are celebrating and recognizing the positive work that our students are accomplishing.
2. I bring a young perspective to the position. I bring 8 years of classroom experience as not only an educator but also as an advocate and activist. I have the Educational background that not only acknowledges what is necessary to be an effective classroom teacher but also an effective community leader.

Christine Varwig

Education: Bowsher H.S. graduate; attended Eastern Michigan University and UT

Current occupation: Gift Shop Manager

Website: www.chrisvarwig.com

Qualifications: I am currently serving a 4 year term on the TPS Board of Education. While on the TPS Board of Education, I have held the Vice-President position for 2 years and now serve as President. I serve on the NW Region Ohio School Board Association Executive Committee, OSBA Board of Directors and Strategic Plan Committee, and serve as the Federal Relations Network Representative. Prior to being elected to the TPS Board of Education, I served as the President of the parent groups at Beverly Elementary, Byrnedale Jr. High, Bowsher H.S., and the TPS Parent Congress.

Questions:

1) I consider graduation rates, career tech opportunities for students, Head Start/pre-school expansion, Schools as Hubs programs and parent engagement to be some of the most important issues to be addressed for the position I seek. I believe working with our local trades and the business sector to create stronger partnerships with our district and provide opportunities for our students to be key components to increase our graduation rates. It is critical for our district to continue to work with the Federal and State governments to increase funding for Head Start and Pre-School expansion so therefore I would continue to lobby on behalf of our youngest students. I would like to work with our partners in the community to expand our Schools as Hubs program because I see those as wrap-around services for our families. Parent engagement is crucial for student success. I have established Toledo Parent University where sessions are free to our parents and there are no barriers to attend.

2) I think all candidates have unique skillsets. I can only speak of what I have done. I have established Toledo Parent University, revitalized the TPS Foundation, advocated for district-wide recess and the TPS Fine Arts Festivals, developed comprehensive plans for Athletic Facilities, and spearheaded installation of a fully-accessible playground in the few short years on the TPS Board of Education. I will continue to advocate for our students and public education.

Bob Vasquez

Education: Master of Public Administration

Current occupation: Administrator

Website: www.bobvasquez4tps.com

Qualifications: Experience includes government relations, community engagement, budgets and finance, and human relations. Experience working with troubled youth in the community.

Questions:

1) Currently the most important issues are increasing the graduation rate and to raise the overall academic achievement of all students in the district. The district has implemented a number of programs to support the students. I am the chairman of the Board's Family and Community Engagement committee that was established to increase family and community support for our students.

2) I utilize my combined work experience, education, and proven experience as a current Board member to solve the many challenges that face an urban school district.