

ELECTIONS 2012

Keys to the Candidates: R-BB school board

League of Women Voters of Bloomington-Monroe County
October 4, 2012

RICHLAND TOWNSHIP

Mathew C. Shockney

Debra Walcott, no reply

What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking?

SHOCKNEY: Served on an education committee at a private school, was elected to their school board, and occupationally has overseen fundraising, building projects, and budgets.

In view of declining state support, what are your strategies for funding public education?

SHOCKNEY: RBBCSC must keep costs down, adopt accurate budgets reflecting real needs with reasonable goals, and long range plan with reality not false hope. RBBCSC must keep, recruit, and grow enrollment through quality education and extracurriculars since state funding is attached to students. RBBCSC needs accurate numbers for those qualifying for free and reduced lunch to get the additional funding multiplier. RBBCSC needs to market and brand our success and vision to attract new students, grants, and private donors. RBBCSC should look at ways to rent facilities when not in use. We need creativity not higher taxes.

What needs would you focus on as a school board member?

SHOCKNEY: I listed much of what I would focus on in the above question. My overall focus is to listen to those I represent and make well informed decisions based on my values.

AT LARGE

Larry Thrasher

Brian K. Werner

What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking?

THRASHER: Familiar with work of Board and community. Ellettsville business owner 20 years. Worked for RBBCSC over 20 years. Served on RBBCSC school board 8 years.

WERNER: Studied psychology at IU Bloomington; 16+years' public service experience as a police officer; father of two daughters in RBBCSC; very involved in school activities.

In view of declining state support, what are your strategies for funding public education?

THRASHER: Do not raise taxes-spend your money on the best educational leaders possible from available pool of superintendents, principals, and teachers. Partnering with local businesses and industry. Spend money on WHAT WE NEED NOT WHAT WE WANT.

WERNER: Regardless of deficits or surpluses, expense reduction committees should work regularly to identify potential savings at every level of the district, as well as include long-term forecasting with every budget process. We

need to utilize historical trends and data with forward-looking estimates over more than just a few budget cycles. We should identify and understand drivers of past trends, and how they apply today and beyond. The goal is smaller incremental adjustments to the proposed budgets to achieve a balanced budget annually, instead of large swings from a budget crisis one year to a surplus the next.

What needs would you focus on as a school board member?

THRASHER: Technology is a must in today's educational institutions, so our students will be able to compete in the global economy. Be wise with our money and COMMON-SENSE.

WERNER: Leadership, both within the administration and on the board. My vision for the school board is one of a "think tank" mentality, where ideas can be presented by everyone and molded by the group into one solution. Administrative leadership should encourage involvement by all board members to build a consensus rather than division, as the job of the board is to ask questions, be involved and represent the people. A sound financial footing is also critical, as well as continued improvement of technology integration and streamlining, for educational purposes and possibly cost-saving measures.