Michelle Price (Presidents' Council Chair): Good morning.We're going to go ahead and get started. For anyone who is trying to watch live, the video that was working forever is decided not to work today, but hopefully you can at least hear what's going on.

That said, welcome to the 2023 PTO Candidates' Forum. My name is Michelle Price, and I am the chairperson of thePTO Presidents' Council. Our group is the gathering of the districtPTOs, and the presidents get together to learn about the issues that are affecting district and share information with each other.

Each of the PTOs is a volunteer,not for profit, nonpartisan organization whose ultimate goal is to enhance the student experience by strengthening the link between home and school.

Thank you to each of our PTO presidents for all of the work that they've done in planning and coordinating today's forum. We have seven candidates running for three open seats,two incumbents and five challengers.

In the years of contested board elections, the Presidents' Council has hosted this daytime forum. All candidates officially listed on the ballot were invited to the forum, and we are happy to have all seven years present today.

Thank you to each of the candidates for your time today. We are happy to have your willingness to serve the children, parents, and community of District 220.

And thank you to the community for submitting thoughtful and insightful questions for today's forum. Your input was very important for making this forum relevant to voters, and please remember to vote on April 4th.

We have been soliciting questions from the general public for the last couple of weeks. We've received an impressive amount of questions, in fact,more than we've ever received in the history of having run this forum.

From the questions that were submitted,we narrowed today's questions to those that focus on issues and ideas that were asked repeatedly. Our goal is for today's forum to last approximately two hours while giving each candidate equal time.

With that in mind, I'd like to introduce our moderator, Chris Bibby. Chris is a clinical psychologist who has worked in community mental health. He's currently in private practice and active in our community asVice President of BStrong Together. He is the husband of Tiffany, and they are the proud parents of two Grove Grizzlies, Grace and Elon.

Welcome, Chris.

Chris Bibby: Thank you for that. Can everyone hear me? Good morning. I want to start by thanking the PTO Presidents' Council for putting together a lot of effort and coordination and resources to make this happen. And as a parent, and I'm sure you are all very grateful we could make this happen, so thank you very much.

We're going to get to make informed choices when we vote on April the 4th. We want to let you know that you can hear from the candidates again on Saturday, March 11th at 10:30, when the League of Women Voters of the Palatine Area and the Barrington Area Library host another forum virtually. Be sure to sign up for this event on the library's website.

The candidates are familiar with the structure and the rules of this forum,which will be explained in each section. Candidates have been asked to not make direct comments to each other but to stay focused on informing voters about themselves and their own views. And not that we would expect any of you to do this, but no personal attacks of any kind, please.

My role will be simply to ask questions and help us to honor the time limits that we all agreed to so that each candidate has equal opportunity to share their thoughts, and we can cover as much ground as we can in the two hours. I thank you in advance if I have to cut anyone off for going over their allotted time and for understanding.

Friends, we would ask you to please not applaud or interrupt any candidate as it uses up time and we have a lot of questions to cover. We know that you will respect all the candidates and that we won't be in a position to ask anyone to leave.

It's now my pleasure to introduce the candidates, starting with the two incumbents, and then we'll have them give their opening statements.

Barry Altshuler.

(Aside - we have a mic down here. We have a mic over here.You guys keep them.)

Leah Collister-Lazzari.

(Correction of the pronunciation)

Lazari, thank you.

Katey Baldassano.

(Correction of pronunciation)

Diana Clopton.

Nelda Munoz.

Leonard Munson.

Leonard: Hello.Chris: And Matt Sheriff.

Matt: Hello.

Chris: I know those words. All right, we're going to start. We've asked each candidate to start with a 60 second personal statement. We are going to start with Barry.

Barry: Thank you all for being here. I look forward to our discussions today. My name is Barry Altshuler. I'm running for a second term on the School Board. This is going to be a consequential election. I ask that you listen, take notes,and really research because of our differences between the candidates at this table.

I am all about kids. I'm a pediatrician. I've been that, done it for 36 years. I have 5 kids who have gone through 220. They all have advanced degrees,and I give a lot of the credit to 220. And I volunteered in 220. I've been involved in 220 since our kids were in school.

I feel like I've done diligent service to our community by serving on the Board, and I want to use my experience in my second term. I want to highlight some things that happened in our first term.

We maintained being a destination district. We give excellent education. We've had a balanced budget. We've included the community in involvement, and I'm very proud of our DEI and strategic planning involving the community.

We have challenges ahead, though. Covid, learning loss, high inflation, the budget, and last but not least, I want to make sure access to curriculum and books for all students.

Chris: Thank you.

Barry: Thank you.

Chris: Leah.

Leah: So I just want to reiterate the thank yous here. Thank you to the PTO Presidents' Council for hosting this event. It's a lot of work. Thank you to the Barrington Area Library for also hosting. And most importantly, thank you for all of you spending your time today to come out and hear so much about our school district that you want to find out who's running for school board.

As an incumbent, I have four points that I just want to make. You know, I have proven leadership. I'm fiscally responsible. I want to keep our balanced budgets and AAA bond rating. I think safety and security is of utmost importance in our district for our students and our parents. I want to listen to all members of the community - students, parents,teachers, community members. Everybody's voice is important.

I'm an independent candidate. I won't accept money from PACs.

Strong schools make a strong community. I look forward to working hard to ensure Barrington 220 continues to be a destination district in Illinois and in the entire country.

Chris: Katey Baldassano.

Katey: Hey, everyone. Am I on?

Audience: Yes, ma'am.

Katey: Okay. Well, thank you, everyone,for coming out today. My name is Katey Baldassano. I am a mom to three kids in District 220. This year, I have one at every level, one at the high school, one at Station, and one at elementary. You can imagine how many emails I'm getting every day because you guys are living it, too.

We've lived in Barrington about 15 years where it's really been a privilege to be an active volunteer in our schools - being room mom, all those good fun things.

Professionally, I've worked in education for over 25 years. After being a teacher for students with special needs and facing other challenges, I've moved on and I'm currently a school administrator in a small suburban district. I get to have a job I love, serve my constituents there, and then volunteer here in our community.

I'm of course a non-partisan candidate running, as well. I am pooling resources with my slate mates, Leonard and Matt,and really have our pillars focusing on education, parent voice, and responsibility and stewardship initiativees, which you'll hear more about as we go on.

Thank you.

Chris: Thank you. Diana.

Diana: Thank you for having me today. I'm Diana Clopton. I've lived in the district for about 12 years. I have two boys, one at Prairie Middle School in sixth grade and one at Station in the Chinese Immersion Program.

I've worked in corporate America for about two decades across a number of different industries and a number of different functions - finance, sales, and marketing - and I'm really hoping that I'll be able to combine my experience in corporate America with my service to give back to the School Board.

A little about why I'm running. I am passionate about this community. I care so deeply about this community,but I've noticed that over the past few years at a societal level, we've had some polarization that's creeped into this community, and I think with the right leadership we can really unify our community and celebrate what's so great about this district because we all moved here for the schools. It's a safe district, and I want to be able to continue to celebrate that.

My principles in 15 seconds are really about the EASY principle, academic excellence - excellence in academics - acceptance, inclusive community, stewardship, and then strong community partnership with each of you.

Thank you.

Audience: Chris?

Chris: Yes.

Audience: I know I have a head cold. I'm a - and maybe… I don't know. We really can't hear. Diana, I can hear you.You've got a great speaking voice. Cheers. But I - my concern is for the balance. Can we get that mic a little bit better for our candidates?

Thank you. Thank you, Chris. That or candidates just remember, we're back here.Be loud.

Leah: Was it the little microphone that was soft?

Unknown: That microphone was really good. It was the big one that was softest. You need to hold it right up there.

Audience: Just talk louder.

Chris: Hold it right up to your mouth.

Nelda: Hello, everybody.

Audience: That's good.

Nelda: Hi, everybody. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to run for School Board. And thank you for showing up here. My name is Nelda Munoz. I am an immigrant from Europe, from Albania. As a family, we actually escaped Communism and went into Hungary - Budapest, Hungary. And then I came here

when I was 16 years old, and I did not speak English very well, but I graduated from high school with AP classes, and I know the value of education. And that is why I want, and that is why I came to Barrington because of the education and the schooling.

And that is what I want to maintain - that high level of education that Barrington once was before COVID, but we can do it again.

Thank you so much.

Chris: Leonard.

Leonard: So my name is Leonard Munson, and I'm running on the three Rs: academic excellence, listening to parents' rights and voices,and responsible financial stewardship.

I've coached in the district. I started programs for the high school, Broncos Committed many, many years ago.

I'm an advocate. I'm a collaborative leader. I spent 20 years in the military fighting for this great country, and I'm willing to fight for the great community of Barrington.

My wife is here today. I have a daughter that graduated in 2016 and went on the Ole Miss, and then my son is currently a sophomore.

And I'm a concerned parent. I know that our school district spends 80% of the school's budget is our tax dollars, and I don't think they're spending it wisely.

I also believe that we need to be collaborative with the parents. I think you have a voice.I have a voice. And I spoke at many, many school boards over the years, and I felt that my voice fell on deaf ears. They didn't even really address our questions when we brought them to the Board.

So I want to be a voice for the people. I want to be the voice for you. I want to protect your kids. I want to hire the best qualified teachers. We are ranked 80th in the state as a district. That is not acceptable to me for what I pay in taxes. So I want to support you,and I want to be your voice.

Chris: Matt.

Matt: Morning, everybody. Thanks for everybody coming out because at the core, I believe that public education is about community.

So a little about me,we have a third grader at NBS. We moved here about four years ago from Texas, where there was a lot of collaboration between the School Board, administrators, and the community. I never thought I'd be sitting in the seat here today, truthfully. I never thought much about school boards. I just assumed they kind of have the best interests of the community at heart. So either way, here we are.

I've spent 25 years in the private sector building companies, scaling them from regional to national to international brands. I think I've got a great skill set, one with negotiating, but also finding talent and ensuring that we have people with the right skill sets making decisions for growth and the best interests of companies that I work with, and I think that will apply working with the administration and the community.

Chris: Thank you. We will now proceed to the roundtable questions, which is a series of five questions that will be asked of all seven candidates at random. Each candidate will have up to 90 seconds to respond.

The first question is: What do you believe to be the responsibilities of a school board member? What, if any, professional experience with governance or education do you have and/or what personal qualities do you possess that helps qualify you to be a benefit to District 220 School Board?

And we are going to start at random with Katey.

Katey: Well, I didn't get all of that question down, and it was a lengthy one, so I will just kind of speak about that I know the responsibilities of the School Board really focus on that really zoomed out view of what's happening. Our role is policy, our role is that high level governance and responsibly stewarding your dollars.

What's the rest of my question there?

Chris: The rest of the question is experience in governance and education and personal qualities.

Katey: Okay, great. So I've worked in schools you know my whole life. I currently work in a small school program where we are constantly collaborating to create policies that are going to work to meet the needs of our very diverse learners and families. So I have worked in that experience for 10 years. I have a lot of experience collaborating, compromising, and those are really where my skills are.

I have an ability to see common ground with people. I'm very collaborative as a teacher. Even when I was teaching, that was my goal is to be collaborative. So I am a fan of compromise and coming to common ground so we can find solutions that meet the needs of all learners.

Chris: Thank you.Matt?

Audience: Can I suggest you guys all try and use that one? I think it's much louder

Leonard: Don't we have two of these? Doesn't the PTO president have one?

Michelle: Yep, I was just going to bring it over.

Leonard: Yeah, because this one works much easier. You just have to hold it up to your mouth.

Matt: So I believe that the role of School Board is really - it's the conduit between the community and the administration. We should be representing the values of the community and having local control, not state control, not federal control, understanding that there are certain mandates that come from the state and federal level. But at the core, why do we have a local school board? It's for local values. So I think that's really it. I mean I think what they do is set a standard for the administration and then give them the tools to be successful and get out of the way, let them do their jobs.

I think from a professional standpoint, it's kind of what I do every day. I mean, I work with a very diverse group of people. We definitely don't agree on everything that we talk about. But that's where we come together and we compromise for the best interests in the company.

So you know, and the big part of what I do is financial because I work in the private sector in the real world where finances and results matter. So I think it's really important that we have people with an understanding of how to budget correctly, look at projects that succeed, don't succeed, and then evaluate those and then move forward with whatever is best for, in this case, the community and the district.

Chris: Thank you. Diana.

Diana: Can you guys hear me?

Audience: Yes. We can.

Leah: I think it's that thing there with that, yeah that's right.

Diana: Okay, can you guys hear me? Okay, great.

So the role of the School Board, I mean building on what the first people said, they really do sit between the educational community and the community at large, and so the School Board is responsible for

governance, for setting the strategy, the mission, the vision of the school district based on input from all stakeholders.

So you've got your community, you've got your district, your admin and support, and you're taking all of that to really determine what is right for the district and what is right for the students. But at that point, you're really leaning on your tactical leadership of the superintendent on down to figure out the best way to communicate that, execute that vision of the School Board and the district.

The experience I have is really, again, from the private sector as well, is similar to Matt, I've experienced running strategy in big corporations. I've experienced running cross functional teams, and I think a lot of that really comes down to figuring out the root of the problem.

So when you're looking at insights, you're looking at data, what are the issues that we're having in the business? What are the issues that we're having in the school? And then using that data to formulate strong strategies to figure out how to fix some of those challenges.

I think a lot of it is about collaboration. The School Board is not supposed to micromanage the district in how they run things, but they are supposed to partner with them because they do have the stamp at the end of the day, so striking that right balance between the community and your staff and your district and not leaving stakeholders behind is going to be really important in this role. That's a little bit about my perspective.

Chris: Thank you, Diana. Leonard?

Leonard: So the role of the school board is to be obviously elected by you as the citizens and to sit on the Board and represent your interests with the newly assigned Craig Winkelman,as the new superintendent who's brand new, and so I think this Board has an awesome opportunity to drive our school district back into the top of the state.

And I think our job is to drive policy, and we need to make sure the policy is supporting education, and I don't believe we're supporting education right now. I don't think all of our focus is on education.

That is the Board. We're the Board of Education, so if every decision we put forth isn't based on the value of education for the student that's sitting in the classroom, we are missing the boat and we should be elected, or we should not be elected and we should be removed at the end of our term, which is why I started to run for the Board because I think this Board has done us a disservice.

We paid a lot of tax dollars to this Board, and I don't think it has done us service. My son sat in the basement for a year. I worked in the healthcare community. I have lived through COVID where people actually died. Okay? I've lived it. I've watched it. I wore a face mask for many, many months. Why? Because the residents there were susceptible. Our students were not susceptible. That's a fact. And you can follow the science.

Now, as a School Board Member, I have to evaluate risk and help the school district, the superintendent, the administration drive that. I'm a leader. I've been in the business sector. I spent 20 years in the military before I retired. I'm a business leader, and I make decisions based on facts. If I always had my agenda, I wouldn't have a staff, and I run a business unit right now in Northbrook, and I have to be collaborative. Okay.

Chris: Nelda.

Nelda: Okay, as a School Board member, if I am elected, my job would be overseeing the policies. The policies will have to have the wellbeing and protection for the kids. Education number one. And parents' voice is heard and bringing respect back into the community.

Other one, fiscal responsibility. Obviously, we need to make sure that any projects approved or not approved, it is actually benefiting Barrington, District 220.

Next one is overseeing curriculum. We have a problem. There is no approved curriculum this year. There was no approved curriculum last year until April, one month before the end of the school year. I was told that for next year, some of the policies for the curriculum next year are approved. Why? Because we are under election time. But again, there is no curriculum approval as of right now, and that has to be fixed.

Thank you.

Chris: Leah.

Leah: Can you hear me with this one? Okay. All right. So could I ask you a favor? Can you reread it again? It was so complex of a question.

Chris: Ok, you probably want to move that up because they probably can't hear you.

Leah: Okay, so if I do that, okay.

Chris: The question is, what do you believe the responsibilities of a School Board member are? What, if any, professional experience in governance and education do you have? And what personal qualities do you possess that help you to be a benefit to District 220 School Board?

Leah: Thank you so much. Okay.

Chris: I would hold that a little closer.

Leah: It's still not doing it. All right, here we go. Sorry. The School Board has a role here. Our main job is to hire the superintendent and manage the superintendent and work with policies and follow our policies.

However, I'm here as a School Board member to represent our community. So to listen to students, to listen to parents, to listen to taxpayers, to listen to teachers, because all of their voices are important, and if there's some concern, some of those members of the community come to the School Board and say, "Hey, we would like you to pay attention to this. We would like you to pay attention to that." And so having communication with the community is really important.

We have opportunities for that through the Board meetings, through email, through phone calls, through the PTO Presidents' Council, where I'm the Board rep, where I talk to that, the leaders of our schools, our parent groups. They have great input.

We also set our policies, so our mission statement: Empower personal excellence in every learner. I believe in that. We're starting with that. Then we've had the Framework 220, the strategic plan we've been working on for the past two years. It's coming to the time we're going to start making action out of it and having it happen. We have to use our community's values and listen to our community as a Board to work together so we can get things done correctly.

Just to be clear, Dr. Winkelman is not new. He's been in the district for 20 years. He was the Deputy Superintendent and an administrator on the administrative team, so thank you so much.

Chris: Barry?

Barry: Thank you. Last but not least, I hope. So School Board members. First, as it's been said already, we employ a superintendent who employs educators and administrators, and they guide us and we guide them. It's a two way street.

The other thing that School Board members do is they interact with the community. We represent community values, and we have to very clearly communicate what the school's purpose is and what the school's plans are and what the school's policies are. So we represent the community values. We are the community.

As a School Board member, you need to be collaborative and you need to be diligent. And as I say, I feel like the last four years, I have been taking a deep dive in. It's important that a School Board members delegates and does not micromanage. The School Board members do not make the little itty bitty decisions. We kind of look at the big picture, and we guide both the community and the administration.

Me personally. I've advocated for kids my whole life. I have educators in my family. My father, my father in law, and now all my kids are in the education community. So I feel both as a physician and as a father and

an educator that I am perfectly suited to continue to become a School Board member, to advocate for the kids. Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Candidates. We're going to move to question number two, which is: How many School Board meetings have you attended in the last calendar year? And also, which Board of Education committee are you most qualified to sit on and why? We're going to start with Leah.

Leah: Okay. So thinking back, I think I've been to almost all of the School Board meetings in the past year. I believe I missed two. As far as the committees that I'm on, during the time that I've been on the School Board, I've been on the finance committee, and I've also been on the equity committee. I've been the PTO,Presidents' Council School Board representative, and the BHS PTO School Board representative, as well.

You know, at the beginning of two years ago when we rotated positions, School Board members asked to be on certain committees and were assigned to committees, and it was kind of some of both. I've enjoyed being on the finance committee. I've learned a lot about the finance and the budgets and how to keep balanced budgets and keep up the AAA bond rating. While I've been on the equity committee, I've had an opportunity to feel successful that our Board accepted - hold that one - wrote an equity statement, passed it, and then in 2021, the new board all 7 members reaffirmed the equity statement. I feel like our district is growing in that area and we're moving forward. The state of Illinois or the Illinois State School Board is now measuring our progress, and it's called the equity continuum. And so that will be on the Illinois State Report card in the future how we're doing in that area, so I think it's very important.

So I think it's important that you know when you're running for School Board that there's more than the meetings and there's going to be extra time and homework.

Chris: Thank You. Katey?

Katey: I began attending the 220 School Boards much more frequently beginning summer of 2020, really just kind of in response to the Board keeping schools closed for so long, limiting students' access to that appropriate learning environment. So I've spoken frequently at them, really talking about our youngest learners who are really always my focus since I have this education experience. This calendar year, I think I have attended nearly every single meeting, and any that I miss or have to leave early, I have watched online.

So when it comes to committees, I think that's a really exciting piece of it because it's really a chance to dig into some of these things a little bit more. I believe that I would be really qualified to do some of the PTO linkagethat Leah just mentioned, especially because I am so knowledgeable of schools, especially

because I have such a value on gathering stakeholder input professionally. That's what I do with user information to drive decision making, so I love the idea of a committee that helps me to connect even more with the community at every different level.

I think I also would be qualified to serve on the policy committee. I'm very familiar with schools and school policy. I participate in a lot of the policy digging in at the administrative level where I work. And I also just have this really laser like focus on our most important constituents, which are our students and their learning and that is a really great place for me to shine and give my skills.

Chris: Thank you. Barry, you're next.

Barry: Thank you.Good question. I think as a School Board member, I have one of the best attendance of all the members. The one meeting I remember I missed was a special meeting that was called that wasn't even a scheduled meeting because it was all the community uproar about COVID. We were on vacation. So I take pride in being at the meetings and participating in the meetings and adding my due diligence to our meetings.

I'm currently on the facilities committee and, partnering with that, I'm also on the referendum committee to make sure that we are spending our dollars correctly, and I have to say, we are on time and on budget, so I'm very excited about that.

I'm also on the insurance committee. That's the committee that works with the teachers and the educators to make sure that they have a competitive insurance policy, so it's important that the administration supports the teachers and that they feel like they're getting the good extra services besides just salaries.

And I'm also involved with the Government Advocacy Committee, which is more like Ed Red, which is advocating for our students on a state level and even on a national level.

The one committee that I'd be very interested in is the Finance Committee. I've always watched from a distance because I haven't been assigned to the Finance Committee, but the finances are so important, and I know it's so important to our community. So to really take a deep dive in the finances, our financial director at the school is just phenomenal and we learn so much from him.

So being involved is very important, and I'm proud of the fact that I am involved.

Chris: Diana.

Diana: So I've attended a little less than Barry and Leah in terms of School Board meetings. I started watching a little bit more online around COVID, too, because that's when I was really curious about some of the school openings and some of the challenges that we were having. But over the past year, I've attended one live, but I've attended probably 10 virtually so that I can make sure that I'm staying up to speed on what's going on in the district.

In terms of committees, I believe I can immediately be able to give back to the Finance Committee. Most of the start of my career was in finance. I spent about 10 years, so that would be the one that I'd probably be able to dig in and contribute to really meaningfully and quickly.

But there's a couple of other committees that would be really interesting to me.

I think the PTO one is a great one because it's a chance to get back into the schools and really understand some of the challenges that the district may be facing and be that voice up to the Board.

But the equity one is also really interesting to me, too, and I think some of that is because it's become so polarized. I really want to be able to get in there and figure out how we can solve some of the conflicts that we're hearing in the community about it and drive a little bit more transparency so that people understand the root of what we're doing is about inclusive community. Inclusive community drives academic excellence. They're all really interdependent, so I think I would be really passionate about something and understanding that a little bit more.

Chris: Matt.

Matt: So over the past year, I've probably attended personal - physically five, maybe, meetings, but I've watched most of them online.

Then as far as committees, I think I'm very interested in safety and security. I've also served in the military. I've provided security to high level dignitaries around the world. I also currently volunteer as a deputy with the Lake County Sheriff, so I'm in security briefings weekly about what's going on in the county. So I'm pretty passionate about that,especially with a lot of the things we're hearing in schools, particularly around shootings and things like that. I think there's a lot of things we can do that a lot of school districts and Board of Education members don't necessarily think about, that aren't things that you see up front. They're not metal detectors, they're not things like that, but I think there's a lot we can do around providing counselors to kids that have issues ahead of time. Let's not wait till something happens. Let's get ahead of it because I think many times we understand kids that have issues. So let's get ahead of things like that.

I'd be very interested in the equity committee. As someone who had a traumatic brain injury 13 years ago, I understand physical disabilities, and I also understand some learning disabilities, so you know getting that cognitive skill back. So I think that that's a side of our equity that has gotten lost over the last couple of years.

Chris: Leonard?

Leonard: I've attended most of the meetings live, and I've also spoke several times at the board meetings. I've probably attended more than most of the Board members. I am a committed person. If I

throw my hat in the ring, I'm committed. You can tell my wife, if there's a Board meeting, we probably wouldn't be taking vacation. That's just how committed I am. I don't take my vacation days at work. Why? Because I'm committed.If I'm not there running the business unit, how can I expect my lowest level employee being there? So I'm a committed person for one.

I coached in this district for many, many years, and I've had parent meetings, I've never missed a game. I went two years without a knee replacement surgery. Why? Because I couldn't coach. So I'm a committed person, and I would beat all the Board meetings as a Board member, and I will continue to be even if I'm not elected.

The other thing is that I can work on any committee. Why? Because I'm collaborative. It's not Leonard's way. It's your way as the community, and it's how the district needs to go, so I could be on buildings and grounds. I could be on the equity committee. Why? Because as a business unit leader, if I'm not equitable in my hiring, I am not the best, and I always want to be the best.

And so when I look at the teacher negotiation, I spent 20 years in the military, and I worked as a government contractor with my own company for eight years. So I understand contracting. I understand how you have to negotiate. There is a give and take. There is a collaboration. It's not one way; it's multiple ways. And as a committee member, I would sit on it, I would evaluate all the opinions, the facts, and hopefully I could separate the opinions from the facts, and I would make an educated, critical thinking decision.

So I could really sit on any Board. I spent 20 years - I could be on the safety board. So I feel that I'm very competent and committed.

Chris: Nelda.

Nelda: Hello. Okay.As you guys know, I have attended many, many Board meetings as on the side of parents speaking out. And if I have not been in person, I have watched it over YouTube.

The committees that I would love to join would be curriculum. Curriculum is lacking direction. I cannot say it enough that it needs improvement. Teachers have no guidance, as I said,that there's no approved curriculum. Therefore, teachers don't have the exact guidance, especially the new ones. The older ones, I get it. They can just copy whatever they did the year before. But the new ones, they need an actual guidance.

Another one, definitely, I would join even the immersion programs, supporting that program, the CI, the Spanish, second language programs. I am all for it.

And definitely, policy. Policies that actually will empower the parents, the children, the teachers, Barrington, you know, community as a whole.

Thank you very much.

Chris: Thank you, Nelda.

Okay, question 3, again up to 90 seconds to respond. If elected, what is an area in our district that you would like to reform and how?

And we're going to start with Barry.

Barry: Thank you for the question. So I would like to really look at, and this would be a deep dive for everybody in this room, the kind of community collaboration, the community dialog. Our community is divided. I've heard that from families, certainly as School Board members, we've kind of felt the pressure in the room, and I think we really have to sit down with people who agree with me and don't agree with me, people who have differing opinions, sit down and really agree to disagree and talk about how we can do a better job of communicating. We've got to get rid of the threats and the misinformation, and we have to learn to respect each other. We have to fight intolerance. We have to embrace all viewpoints. The loudest voices are not always the voices of the majority, and we need to represent the whole community.

As a School Board member, I want to be a voice of the community. So certainly, we can look at issues within 220, you know working and learning and social emotional, and there are so many- the budget. But as far as I'm concerned, the thing that's the most dear to my heart is really the community involvement. And I just think it's very important that we have constructive conversations. And so I would look for the whole community, if I'm reelected, to come together and talk and have one on one conversations to improve the dialog.

Chris: Thank you, Barry. Diana.

Diana: Thank you. So if I'm elected, I think there's three areas that I would want to look at. Building on Barry's, now I'll double down on it, but really that unifying the district. I think we need to lean into collaboration and civil discourse so that we can solve some of the challenges that we're having as a community.

The second one that I want to look at is when you look across our elementary schools, you see there's an achievement gap of those that are coming from Sunny Hill in terms of readiness for the middle school versus some of our other elementary schools, so I'd want to try to dig into that to understand where we may need to lean in and provide some resources to help get them to where the other elementary schools are, as well.

And then the third one is really around academic mobility and accelerating readiness for our students at all academic levels, regardless of where they are in their journey. So for that, to me, what that means is

we need to have the flexibility in academics to support those that need to be challenged at the top. We've got really gifted students in this district. How can we continue to push them so that they're meeting their achievement goals coming out of the high school?

But then there's some at the bottom that we need to lean in and give a little bit more resources so they're able to be successful, as well. And then the third bucket of that is we've got the top one at the bottom, but let's not forget about the middle. How can we make sure that we're supporting those students so that we've got the resources to make sure they're accelerating and they're not left behind?

So those are the three things that we would look at.

Chris: Nelda.

Nelda: Okay, so. Do you mind repeating the question one more time?

Chris: If elected, what is an area in our district that you would like to reform and how?

Nelda: Okay. So in today's society, we're all moving on into high tech, right? Computers, new technologies, and whatnot. And we need to not rush so fast into the new technologies in classroom, in libraries, you know, at home. We need to analyze, you know, is this for everybody, and how we can bring the entire community up to speed in moving on forward.

I have experience in technology because I work in the field where we build all the cell phone towers. So if you have connection, make sure you come to me and thank me on that one because we actually put the new antennas and radios and 5G, 6G, you know, technologies moving on.

And we need to also look at the health. Health and what benefits our kids. Is this benefiting? Is this harming? So for example, iPads, they're eight hours all day at school, and then they're expected to have another three or four hours homework at home. Is that healthy for the eyes? Is it causing any harm? So we have to look at everything, balance. That would be me that I would be looking into.

Chris: Thank you, Nelda. Katey.

Katey: So I really am of the mind that the three issues that I mentioned when I opened are the most important priorities for our district to focus on.

However, the most important thing is our students and their learning. In recent years, there's been some distractions from this focus,and I really support policies that will restore really a laser like focus on excellence in academics. Only about 50% of our students are meeting reading and math standards

overall. And in our middle schools, it's less than 40%. And we have one school at Sunny Hill where less than 20% are meeting those standards, and that's unacceptable.

I really support how we can continue to intervene early to make sure that all students are on a path to meet their learning goals, but I also believe that we must hold each other accountable. We can't lower standards or take away challenge. We have to continue to meet the needs of unique and diverse learners by offering core academics that challenge all students, so I really am in support of partnering with fellow board members to support our district leadership to find solutions to get our students back on track and advocate for all students to have access to opportunities and interventions they need to thrive in our schools.

I also support continuing to hire and retain excellent teachers who will focus on teaching fundamentals, academics, while also giving them opportunities for leadership and teamwork and service.

Chris: Thank you, Katey. Leonard?

Leonard: So I've already spoke a little bit about it,but only when you're in the majority of Board three can you say,"We'll have to agree to disagree." Because as a board member, I can't walk out of that room, agree to disagree unless I have the majority, right? That's how you get to be able to make that decision, "We'll just disagree on this, and you don't have a choice." So anybody that sits on a board that says, “We'll just have to agree to disagree and this is the way we're going to do it moving forward” is not collaborative in nature, and I want to be collaborative.

I spent 20 years in the military teaching survival and evasion, resistance, and escape. I've taught students in Iraq, I've taught students in Germany. I've taught through educators that didn't speak English. I had to have an interpreter. So I understand the education process to inform, persuade, and entertain. And you've got to drive education. We have got to drive education. And when we agree to disagree on the education of our students,we're doing them a disservice. I don't have all the answers.

I don't know Matt, and I don't know Katey. I didn't know them until a month ago when we kind of decided to partner together to be on a slate because I think we all come from varied backgrounds, very measured responsibilities. I come from the Pacific Northwest. I don't know where they come from, but I know that we could sit down and have a discussion, come to an acceptable, critically thought out decision,and move our district forward. Not agree to disagree because that's not a solution. If you're married,you know that's not a solution. Right? Am I wrong? It's not a solution because I could say, "Well, we'll just agree to disagree and we're going in the car now." Well, that doesn't mean she's going to get in the car. So it doesn't work like that. And on the Board, we've got to be collaborative. We can't agree to disagree

Chris: Matt?

Matt: At the end of the - fundamentally, what we're all doing here is about education, and that's what public education is all about. You know our kids on average are about two years behind, and it doesn't matter how we got here, but we're here.

So I want to collaborate with the administration and solve that problem. What can we do? I don't want to get distracted by a lot of the shiny things on the sidelines. So that's got to be first and foremost. That's why I moved to this district. I mean, I moved to 220 because of the educational system. And I feel like we're letting our kids down. I'm not pointing any fingers. It's a matter. It's a fact. It's happening. So there's that.

The other thing is I think we do have a communication transparency problem with the community. Once again, I'm not pointing fingers, but I'd like to... you know, like I said, in Texas,we had a very collaborative Board of Education that met with the community on a regular basis. I would rather, instead of having public comment, which that's fine and dandy, but I'd rather do like fireside chats where we can talk back and forth, maybe not get gaveled and told to sit down. That's important to me.

And then the last thing is the financial stewardship. I mean, look, it's our money that pays for this district, so let's make sure we're spending it wisely. That doesn't mean cutting programs. It just means let's be smart about what we're doing.

Chris: Thank you, Matt. Leah.

Leah: Okay. So just to reply to a couple of things that were said… Is the mic working? There you go. Why am I having trouble? I need to think of my theater kids and focus on that. Okay.

So just to reply to a couple of things, I completely agree with Barry, what he said about communication. We need to continue to work on our communication as a Board and as a district. We need to bring back civility to our communication. There was one meeting right after Dr. Hunt came where there were police escort for community members and Board members. We don't want that. We want a civil conversation.

Okay, one more thing. Are we doing well post COVID as a district? Covid was difficult for everyone. Scores dropped for everyone. It was difficult. Everybody persevered. And now, based on 2021 and 2022 data, Barrington 220 performed better than 90% 90% of the districts across the state in math and better than 91% of the school districts across the state in English Language Arts. Barrington performed better than 96% of districts on the SAT, which is used as a high school benchmark.

As a Board member, I will advocate to continue keeping additional staff to make our students learn and thrive.

But then to the rest of the question,what would I really want to work on? What do I think is the most important thing? I think bringing our district into the future is the most important thing. We want leaders who are innovators. Oh, no, I ran out of time.

Okay, so all the pain points, I believe, in from the strategic priorities of the Framework, 220, I think it's important. It's what our community values and wants, and I'll work hard to finish that work.

Chris: Okay, thank you, Leah. Question four, again, this is up to 90 seconds to respond.

Leonard: How do we rebut something? Can I rebut something, please?

Chris: You may not. We are going to have a series of questions later on where you're going to be able to provide them at that time.

Leonard: Thank you.

Chris: Number 4, what is your motivation for running for School Board? On what platform are you running? Leonard, we're going to start with you.

Leonard: Beautiful. So I'm running on a platform of the three R's - restoring academic excellence,restoring rights and voices of parents, and fiscal responsibility, stewardship, being responsible with our finances. Our taxes pay for the school, and I want to make sure we're responsible. That's my basic platform. And that just all centered around education, education, education.

And I have the 2019 stats for proficiency reading on an SAT was 64% in 2019. The proficiency on the SAT in 2022 was 54%. That didn't happen in two years. That stat did not happen in just COVID. We have to stop blaming things on COVID. It was a blip. The Bubonic Plague was a blip. We can't continue to blame that on the current, you know, year because that 54% of our students who were proficient on the SATs, which gets them into a good college, is not acceptable to me.

So I want to sit down, and I want to look at driving academic excellence for all schools, from Sunny Hill School to the best grade school that we have. You're going to probably potentially hear a stat, but one of our school districts, one of our grade schools did really good on some score and testing. That is awesome. But do you know, Sunny Hill is only rated about a 31% proficiency rate? They belong to District 220. You should be outraged about that.

You want inclusivity, you want equity? Let's go to the lowest common denominator, not the kids that are at the top on the SAT test, why? Because they're going to be successful regardless. There's always a left and a right.

Chris: Thank you, Leonard. Leah.

Leah: So my motivation for running for the School Board is that I've been on the School Board for four years. I've been doing my best to work hard for my community, for students, for parents, for teachers, and for community members. I want to give back to this community. I care deeply.

It's been an unprecedented four years, and we got through it and we're moving forward. We want to move to the future with our Framework 220 and our plans for the future. It's been exciting to talk to many community members about their dreams and goals for Barrington 220. We don't want to stand still; we want to go forward.

So my four basic things that I'm running on and that I stand for are being a proven leader through these tumultuous times, making sure we keep continued excellence in our schools, and that we keep it as a destination for educators and for administrative staff. I think fiscal responsibility is super important. I promise to maintain balanced budgets to keep our AAA bond rating.

I think that safety and security is paramount for our students and our staff. During my time on the Board, we've made sure that we eliminated the mobile classrooms at both Station and Prairie Middle School and at Grove Elementary. We've made sure that every building has a safe and secure entry.

During COVID, we did the best we could through hard times and listening to changing data to keep our schools open and our students safe. I promise to be a voice for everyone in the community, even those who aren't often heard, students, parents, teachers, and community members.

Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Leah. Matt.

Matt: As I said, we've been here about four years. We didn't move to this district for our daughter to get a mediocre education. And you know what, look, everybody has data in their businesses. We all manipulate it. And it's frustrating to me to say we're in the 90th percentile when the fact is we're average. We're like C. We're like C students. So there's still 30 some percent that are failing. And so it frustrates me to hear things like that because I think if we don't get to come together and start solving problems, we're going to be mediocre. And that's not, I think, what any of us want for our kids.

Look, I am running on a slate with Leonard and Katey, and we're about education, we're about your rights, and we're about financial responsibility. But the truth is, we have got to start being honest about the problems we have in this district and at the state level. And with local community control,we can solve a lot of those problems. We can push back on the state. That doesn't mean we want to get in fights with them, but it's about what we need to do for our kids.

So I just think it's so important to be honest about some of this data. Let's not manipulate it to make it look better than it is. The facts are the facts, and our kids, many of them are failing.

Chris: Thank you, Matt. Diana.

Diana: First motivations, right? Motivation and then the platform?

Chris: Correct, motivations for running.

Diana: Okay. So I'll start off with why I'm running and my motivation. My motivation has always been about the kids and this community. We moved here to the great community. We moved here fo the great schools, and I still do believe that we have great schools.

Have we had some challenges over the past few years? Yes, but a lot of schools have had challenges, and so I really want to be part of the solution to help get our kids back to where they need to be.

My platform is called the EASY platform because when it's about kids, it should be easy.

The first one is excellence, about academic excellence. I want to push to try to make sure that the D220 continues to deliver the best, most innovative, well ranked, well rounded educational experiences for our students. I think that it leads the personal success for them beyond 220, so that has a component of personalized learning, fostering the acceleration of their careers and their success, and that's going to take different levels of leaning in.

The second one is about acceptance. I think it's so important to build an inclusive community where kids feel psychologically and physically safe because we know if they feel valued, heard, safe in their schools, in the environments, they can really do their best, and that's really what we want them to do. We want them to go beyond Barrington, where they have much success at however they define that.

The third one is about stewardship. I'm committed to being a thoughtful financial decision maker.

And the last one is about you, so I have 15 seconds. And that's really my commitment to partnering with the community, the administration, and all responsible stakeholders and making sure that every voice is heard and every voice is valued in this community as we continue to build strategic plans.

Chris: Thank you, Diana. Barry?

Barry: Thank you. If we look at a platform, I'm just going to kind of list some things. I want to represent our community values. I truly do. I want a curriculum that is available for our diverse population. I want books that are available for our diverse population. I want to encourage critical thinking in our students, not just RRR: reading, writing, arithmetic, but if we want well rounded students, it's more than that. We want to expose our students to different ideas so that they can appreciate that not everybody's the exact same as they are. We want to recruit and retain high quality and diverse educators. And we want to put a lot of power behind the social emotional learning and the diversity initiatives that we have.

We can't look at one rubric, like one test score and determine that our district is failing. Our district is thriving. And I'm not putting down the test, but we have to look at more than just the test scores. 85% of our kids have gone to college, have graduated and gone to college. We have more AP scholars and more National Merit Scholars than we've ever had. Yes, we need to look at ways to bring up the bottom.

When we look at equity, it's not bringing down the quality, it's bringing up the quality. It's bringing the kids that need extra help to get them to meet their potential. So that's what my platform is.

And I am not on a slate, which I think is a scary thing.

Chris: Thank you, Barry.

Leonard: Barry and Leah have names on the same sign. That's a slate.

Chris: Hold on. Just a second. We're not going to respond to each other.

Leonard: I have a right to be on the PAC.

Chris: Okay, we're not going to attack each other. Nelda.

Nelda: Again, you know me, as coming from a different country,speaking so many languages, to me, education is very, very,very, very important. Yes, everybody can graduate from high school and go to college. That doesn't mean that we have prepared them for life.

So I think as Barrington, which has been high quality, that's why we moved here for, right? We got lazy during COVID, okay? Just to be blunt. And we need to get back. You know, teachers need to actually get into the classroom full of energy and teach. Teach material.

Kids, smaller age at least, ok, they're like sponges. This is the time to put as much as possible information in their heads. History, world history, chemistry, biology, chemistry, physics. Where are those three courses? Why are they hidden under a science? Where's biology? Where's chemistry? Where's physics? Chemistry, you're right. I said that.

So anyway. Other districts, they're doing different things such as synchronized swimming. Barrington doesn't have that. Why not? You know, we need to bring education, sports, and listen to the parents and definitely put the money where it's needed.

Chris: Time, Nelda.

Nelda: I'm so sorry. Thank you.

Chris: Katey.

Katey: Well, I am running for School Board really to bring more voices into the conversation, so that really aligns with one of my Rs, which is the respect for voice and rights of parents, and I do feel like the last several years has left many parents feeling like their voices and feedback has been disregarded. I think that's really only served to divide our community more, so I am running to really make sure that we can continue to use parent feedback to drive our decisions to move our schools forward.

I love the public schools. I've worked in public schools almost my whole career. I love teachers, and I just really love seeing students learn, so it's exciting to me to get to be a part of that. I'm really running to ensure that we can work to serve all students and really focus on what is working in different schools and replicate that in other schools because all kids deserve to be able to read and write and do math and learn those skills.

We have to focus on all the different groups in our schools, not only, like we said, only the top achievers or things like that. I'm really motivated by my desire to make sure that every kid receives an amazing education in our schools, but also that we are being really responsible with your money.

We have to make sure that our spending aligns with our priorities and that we're putting money towards programs and initiatives that make a difference for our students.

Chris: Thank you, Katey. For our last round table question, there are a couple of questions in this. What do you feel are the most pressing budget concerns for the district in coming years? Given the educational requirements of the state and district and the strategic initiatives of the district, where would you be willing to make cuts ,and what budget areas would you protect? Please be specific. We're going to start with Leah.

Leah: Give me all the hard ones first. I'm ready! Let me just grab my notes, though. Alright.

I'm not afraid to cut the budget and be conservative and help our taxpayers when it's needed. During COVID, we didn't know what would happen with our tax base and our expenses or what our expenses would be, so we were very conservative and trimmed our budget.

If I was going to trim the budget, I would be reasonable about class sizes,and I wouldn't cut educational related programs, extracurricular activities, or sports. I want to make sure that we have reasonable class sizes. I think this is the values of our community.

Roughly 80% of our budget is from local property taxes, and roughly 80% of our expenses are teacher salaries and benefits. We are a school district and people business. Historically, our teacher and staff contracts have been tied to the CPI, the Consumer Price Index, which is close to inflation. Unfortunately, we have had unprecedented high inflation at 7%. We need to be competitive in the market to attract and keep quality teachers and administrators.

This year, we did not do DSEB funding to finance our typical $3 million worth of summer repairs to give our taxpayers some relief. We're going to have to have a tight budget. We want to continue staffing for mental health through COVID, and we will lose our federal ESSER funding that has paid for this for the past few years.

I would advocate to keep additional staff to keep our students' mental health safe. I want to follow the values of our community. I'm okay with pruning our budget, but not chopping off branches.

Chris: Thank you, Leah. Nelda?

Nelda: Okay, so definitely, I would spend more money on teachers - qualified, high qualified educators for our students. I would never cut cost on that one or the quality.

I would question extra administrators being hired for whatever reason. Is this benefiting the community, and is it benefiting our students? And is it necessary to spend extra money for different administrators to be hired?

Another thing, I would definitely look at the finances,how it's being distributed.

Is the number one reason to actually supply the teachers with the supplies that they need in the classroom? Parents pay between $300 to $500 a child for classroom supplies. And guess what? The teacher get a refund for only $50, and plus they spend out of their pocket. That is not okay. Where is my rest of my dollars going to? Right? So we need to make sure we supply our teachers with everything that they need to educate our children to the best ability. Thank you.

Chris: Katey.

Katey: So in the last 10 years for District 220, our enrollment has gone down,our spending has gone up, our home values are down, our taxes are up, but our achievement's down. So I really support more transparency to our taxpayers on the cost of different programs and initiatives that make a difference for our students.

I know there are several programs that have not necessarily been evaluated based on their outcomes, and responsible search of a finance really means doing that. It doesn't mean that you approve every tax levy or every fee increase that comes our way, but we really need to be able to step back, again, taking that zoomed out view that a board member does to look at what is working and what is not.

So I would support cutting things that are not making a difference for our students. We have to tie our money to what works. We know small class sizes works. We know using a proven curriculum works. We know strong leadership focuses on creating collaborative learning environments, where teachers have time in their day to collaborate, works for kids.

We're going to focus on those things. I do think it's worth looking at the bussing contract and trying to create more competition. That's what gives us good deals on things is when there's more competition. And the current way the policy is written, we only have one bus company ever bid out for that. So I would like to be able to create more competition so we could get a better pricing on the bus in which costs our district a lot of money.

Chris: Thank you, Katey. Leonard?

Leonard: So, the budget. I'm a business owner - or I run a business unit. When my top down gives me a budget, I've got to stay within that budget. At some point in time, this district is not… We've already lost students. We're losing parents. The state of Illinois is losing parents, so the Illinois budgets are getting cut.

80% of our tax dollars fund the school. So I would look at all the programs. I would do an assessment on all the programs. Katey mentioned the bus company, $14 million, okay, for that bus company. We added $1.5 million when we changed the start times to the school. I'm not sure that was a business decision based on finances and education. I don't think the parents in this community supported it, so I want to make sure that our budget is looked at.

I don't know all the programs that are in the school. I know a fair amount of them, and there are a lot that have never been evaluated. What is the return on our investment? Every person sits down at the table and says, "What's the return on my investment?" I'm going to go to dinner whereI get the best bang for my buck. And we have to do that as a school board, and I don't think we've really analyzed all that.

We spend $8 million on administrators. No one in this room can probably tell me how many administrators we have on the staff. That's not transparent. We spent $8 million. Is it necessary? Is it driving academics and education at the lowest level? I'm not sure it is.

We spent $8.5 million on extra duty, overtime, stipends, and subs. I don't know what all is in all of those buckets, but maybe we need to evaluate that. And that goes back to the teacher's union contract. We got to probably look at that and give and take and not have a… We'll have to agree to disagree and add more funding.

Chris: Thank you, Leonard. Diana.

Diana: I think everyone at the table is going to recognize that we're in high inflation times, and when that happens, we all have to pinch our pennies a little bit and figure out where we can trim and find efficiencies.

If we were looking at our budget or where there might be some opportunities, I'd want to look at all of our programs. I'd want to go line by line and start figuring out where the opportunity is to make a trim. At the root of my decision is going to be protecting what makes our district great, so we need to make sure we always have a strong educational system.

What's going to be right for the kids? What differentiates us as a district versus some of these other districts. We have many programs that are so great. One of the reasons we moved here was the resources for kids that need a little bit more support in the system. Our district is able to provide that. And so I want to make sure that we're protecting that.

I want to make sure that we're protecting some of our programs, like the language programs, because that's another reason people move here. We have to protect what's great about our district. But there's some opportunities. And so I think we have to be willing to make cuts where we need to make cuts.

But if some of those cuts come to looking at class sizes, that's a discussion we need to have as a community, because that's going to impact property values. That's going to impact ratings, so we have to think about that holistically. And I think we have to go high, medium, low prioritization when we do the work and figure out where there might be opportunities to try and list opportunities to find cuts. That would be my approach.

Chris: Thank you, Diana. Barry.

Barry: Thank you for that question. I think as a Board Member, the budget is one of the toughest thing to deal with and to represent the community and make sure that we continue to have high quality education. I want to be clear, though. The budget process is an open process. The community is invited to our budget meetings and really can question - more than the board members - the chief school business official who knows the numbers and is really our best adviser.

We do revisit programs regularly, you know I don't want to link COVID, but that's slowed down some of the revisiting, but we're always looking to make sure we're getting the best bang for our buck.

As has been said already, inflation is going to have a big impact on the budget over the next couple of years. And we cut yearly. We went from a million dollars during COVID to, thankfully, less than that over

the last four years. But we're always tightening our belt because our expenditures potentially are going to be higher than our revenues. Our revenues are limited. We do not run a school district like we do a private corporation. We we are not for profit. Our shareholders are our students and our community, and that's very important. We cannot use the same principles.

So I advocate for incremental cuts, maintaining class sizes as best we can, maintaining core curriculum, but also, remember, our money protects the community's investment in schools, protects the referendum dollars, and the budget process is done yearly with community involved.

Chris: Thank you. Matt?

Matt: So I agree with Barry. Our school district does not operate like a private industry, and maybe it should. Maybe that's one of the problems because when they run out of money, they just go back to Daddy and say, "We need more money." That's not the way it works in the world. You have to manage your finances. And I don't believe that that means cutting programs that benefit our children or the community. But I do believe you've got to take a hard look at where we are spending money that's not benefiting the community.

I had the opportunity to meet with Dr. Hunt the day before he resigned So don't blame me, but I don't blame him. I really like Dr. Hunt. But he told me that there were 12 or 15 programs that haven't - one of them has not been evaluated in 12 years. That's just strange to me.

I think we need to sit down and look at programs and look at things that we can do where we're not always putting pressure on the taxpayers. And I don't think it should come at the expense of education.

Chris: We will now proceed to the selected response questions. This is a series of questions also gathered from the community, assigned to two candidates at random. Each candidate has up to 90 seconds to respond. After assigned candidates have responded, each candidate can use their one single, one minute rebuttal. Please raise your hand if you'd like to use this. Candidates do not have to use their rebuttal.

The first question: What do you believe are the top two issues facing the school district, and how do you plan to address them? We're going to start with Barry.

Barry: Start with me, you said - I'm sorry?

Chris: Correct.

Barry: Thank you. So again, some of this may be repetition, but for me, the top two districts, are community dialog, our community is divided. I have to just respond to what Leonard has said. We vote on every subject, and the Board talks about every subject. And sometimes the vote is 4 to 3, sometimes it's 6

to 1 ,sometimes it's 7 to 0. But people will be disappointed with our vote. There are going to be people that don't like what our vote was. And I apologize, when we do vote, we are voting with the community values and what we think is for the best - for our students, for our faculty, and for our community. Sometimes people won't agree with that. But again, it's the threats, it's the misinformation. We've got to really look at that. That's a huge problem in our community right now. Sometimes it's the outside influences that is having that effect. And it's not just in this community, but that's one huge issue.

The other thing I want to mention when we talk about issues in this community is the fear mongering that's occurring. I think there's a lot of people in our community that are afraid of the changes that are happening in society. They're afraid of the diverse voices in our community. They don't admit that things are changing, that things are not the way they used to be. And as a result, we see threats to curriculum and book availability. Equity has to be embedded in our curriculum, and we have to make sure that we represent the whole community.

Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Barry. Leonard.

Leonard: So that's a great question. I thank you for the opportunities to speak about it. I'll just jump on the books real quick. Do we know how the books were reviewed to get into the school district? Four people review it: a teacher, an administrator, a parent, and the fourth was a librarian. So three of those members are in the district, so I'm not sure that represents the district.

And we talked about books.I'm not for banning books. I would hate to have that happen. But I do think we might need to not agree to disagree, but we might need to come up with some control measures and guardrails to put in place to make that effective for everybody because people are frustrated.

We're talking about fear mongering. Call me. I will escort you to the school district meeting, and I will escort you home from the school district meeting. I am a service before self, and I'm a committed person.

I want to make sure that everybody has a voice. I want to make sure that everybody is listened to. So we've got to look at the education of our district and make sure that it's one of the driving principles.

We can talk about budget. So the park district is going to put up a levy. We just got home rule, so that's another dollar out of your pocket. We just raised the school by 6.9%. We're going to ask for a referendum for a fine arts center. At some point in time when you're spending other people's money, you have to look critically at all of the lines.

And it's not that we want to cut anything, or I wouldn't want to cut anything,but we can't continue to spend other people's money without doing some critical thinking. Because everybody in the district, you're going to go to the library board, you're going to go to the other districts, and you're going to hear that they're going to ask for more money, too.

Chris: Thank you, Leonard. Would anyone like to rebut? All right, second question. What do you feel are the programs or attributes that differentiate the district and draw residents here that you will protect and continue. On the other hand, if you had to cut $5 million in funding, what would your recommendations be? The first person is Nelda.

Nelda: You know, at times, this diversity comes in discussion. I can tell you, Barrington is the most inclusive community you can ask for, the most kind, the most hardworking, and values what we have in our lives. And I want to make sure I keep that. And I respect it. And we have to bring also respect back to the children, to the parents, to the teachers in the classroom. But foremost, that respect also comes when the district is transparent. We need that back. And this is priceless.

I would never cut anything such as transparency from the district to the parents and respect from the parents to the district and to the - in the classroom.

I guess I'm out of time, but yeah.

Chris: You still have time for the question.

Nelda: Oh. Okay, sorry. Also, I would hire more parents to actually take a look at all the curriculum material being put into the libraries, into the school libraries, not the library here. I'm talking about the libraries for all ages. There's no reason why an 11 year old needs to -

Chris: Ok, Nelda. Time.

Nelda: Okay, no problem. Yep. There's that one.

Chris: Diana.

Diana: What programs would you protect, and what programs did you kind of -

Chris: What programs and attributes differentiate the district and draw residents? And if you had to cut $5 million in funding, what would it be?

Diana: Gotcha. Thank you. I think I talked about this a little bit earlier. There are a lot of programs and services that our district offers, that a number of districts don't have. That's one of the reasons we moved here and we really like being here, so I think if I were to think about programs and resources that I will protect - anything that's going to help some of our students that need a little bit more support, I mean I

think that looks like support for academics - English, math - but then also means support for Social Emotional Learning.

There are a lot of different resources that kids are getting that many people aren't super aware of, and I'd want to make sure that we're protecting them because that's helping all students proceed through our district, and I think that's one of the things that makes us unique.

I think there's also programs like our language programs. Both of my kids went through the Chinese Immersion program, and I love that program because it teaches them to think differently in addition to learning a different language at such a young age. I think programs like that are unique, and you don't find that around here, so I'd want to protect that program, as well.

There's also programs like our Transitions program, which helps students that have special needs continue on and develop life skills that are so important to help them beyond 220.

Those are programs that are superb and are experiences that I'd want to protect.

Now, 15 seconds. What would I cut in $5 million? I don't like this question. What would I cut in $5 million if we had to cut $5 million? I would really want to look at what are some of those lower performance programs that are adding educational impact, just evaluate them, not necessarily, but just evaluate them. If there's 12 and 15 there that we haven't looked at, turn that back. That's where I would go next.

Chris: Would anyone like to rebut? All right, moving on. Number 3, do you support a referendum to build a fine arts center at the high school?

Audience: Chris, you've lost your microphone. I'm sorry.I'm going to go talk. I'm the voice of this story. I need you to speak up, please, because I think these questions are really important. Thank you.I don't know if the battery died.

Chris: Yep, the battery died.Thank you for that.

Audience: Just that, Chris.We'll be with you.

Chris: Do you support a referendum to build a fine arts center at the high school? Why or why not? We're going to start with Katey.

Katey: All right. So one of the things I love about a referendum is it does give the community a chance to give their opinions. So I would support a referendum to go before the community so they could give their input if they would like to put their tax dollars towards that. That is the right thing to do for it. And then if the decision was made that the community wanted it, well, I would support it because that would be my role is to support what the community would be advocating for.

That was short. I know I have other time, but any other questions?

Chris: Great. Thank you. Matt?

Matt: I agree with Katey. I mean, at the end of the day, our role is to represent the community. So if the community thinks that a Fine Arts Center is going to benefit us, I think we put it up to a vote and we go for it.

I mean, I'm all for it. I love the idea of expanding that. From my understanding, that hasn't been improved on in decades, and there's a lot that can come from it. We could potentially look at renting that space out when it's not being used and generating some revenue. So yes, I'm for it.

Chris: Great, thank you.Would anyone like to rebut? Is that Leah?

Leah: Yes. Are there fine arts in the house? I think there are. Lovers of the fine arts? Music, choir, theater. As it was already said, I'm not really rebutting on the agreement, right?

I think this is an opportunity for our community to have extra learning space. We can't fit a whole class in high school in the auditorium if we have a guest speaker. We can't fit a whole department, like the history department, if we can bring someone in.

This is an opportunity to get more space and have more educational space, let alone improve our fine arts and our performing arts center and share it with our community. So yes, I think we might need to look and talk to our community.

We're looking at places now, we're touring, we're finding out what the needs and wants are in the community because if we put a referendum forward, it's a lot of work. You guys know that. And we want to make sure that it's what the community wants and it's going to pass. So we want a lot of community input,and we'll be looking for a lot more. So stay tuned.

Chris: Okay. Would anyone else like to rebut? All right. This has got a couple of questions. The Illinois School Report Card has added diversity, equity, and inclusion recently to the rating system. And the district's score has an impact on property value. If elected, where does this fall on your priorities, and what specific programs and initiatives would you expand on, eliminate, or change? What do you feel the district can do better to support the marginalized communities within the school? Or do you believe there is sufficient support already in place?

Audience: Can I add a courtesy to ask you read it to them again?

Chris: Absolutely.

Audience: They don't know who's getting it, but that other one was really short. It had like 5 parts to it, so...

Chris: The Illinois School Report Card has added diversity, equity, and inclusion recently to their rating system. This has an impact on property values. If elected, where does this fall on your priorities, and what specific programs and initiatives would you expand on, eliminate, or change? What do you feel the district can do better to support marginalized communities within the school, or do you believe there is sufficient support already in place? All right, we're going to start with Leah.

Leah: Glasses are always a big help. Okay, so this is true.This is happening. The Illinois State Board of Education is requiring this information to be on the Illinois State Report Card. It's going to affect how we're evaluated by the state. So all schools are going to be evaluated on this.

We've been ahead of the game because we've had an equity committee that's been working on this for a number of years. We also know that our community feels this is important because it came up in the strategic plan. It is one of the strategic priorities, inclusive education. And we have an equity policy that the prior board wrote and approved, and last share with the current board in 2021, unanimously approved.

This new requirement is called the equity journey continuum. You can read more about it. We're not on an island. Fortune 500 companies are also hiring directors of equity and inclusion to promote diversity. Studies show that people with different lived experiences share diverse ideas and promote success. This also goes hand in hand with our Social Emotional Learning.

So. What to do better? What to actually work on? So it's important to have culturally relevant literature in our schools. Studies show that if you're in a kindergarten class and you read a book and there's an African American doctor, there's an Asian nurse, and everyone's represented, everyone does better.

The second thing we need to work on is improving the diversity of our staff. We want our staff to look like our students. That makes our students happy, that gives them a better opportunity and better education.

Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Leah. Leonard.

Leonard: Yeah, this is another great question because when we look at that report card, I know there are a lot of factors on that report card and equity certainly is one of those and diversity is certainly one of those, and I certainly support that as you've all heard that.

But I also want to make sure that we look at that report card as a whole, not just one independent item on that. So also from the Illinois Department Report card, we in 2019 were 59% on able to read and we were at 55% out of every hundred to do math. We're currently at 52.4% and 46.1%. I think most parents would say that they want their student to be able to learn, to read, and to write, and pass their SAT and get into college. I don't think you get on a plane and say, "I hope I have a very diverse crew in the front of this plane today." I think you ask these folks, I want everybody to get the best education that we can give them. And I want every teacher that stands in front of them to be qualified.

Find a teacher that does not believe in diversity and inclusion, they shouldn't be a teacher. Everybody should believe in that. We should believe that as a society, and I believe our community is awesome, and I think our community is extremely diverse. And that's what makes us great.

And so we've got to stop fighting about some of these things that I think detract us and look at the whole. What are we doing educationally to make sure that our students are learning in the classroom? And we could hire more diverse teachers, but does that drive education success?

Find me successful people; they're always successful. Find me a busy person;they can always do more. It's the other two thirds of the class that we've got to worry about.

Chris: Would anyone like to rebut? Diana, we'll start with you.

Diana: I'll just build on it because I think one of the things that I really appreciate about the new framework, which the community has voted, is that inclusive education is a part of it. I don't think diversity and inclusion detracts from academic performance.

Being able to tell holistic, accurate factual history that represents the people in this community and in this country does not detract from academic performance, and I think that we should stop drawing that line.

The more that people understand about each other, the more that people understand about our history, the less they'll repeat the mistakes of our history. Having that cultural community, that strong community that we hear, that enables us to learn, helps academic performance.

And I think the only other thing I will say in the last 15 seconds, there are a lot of voices in this community that are heard. So I think that's the opportunity for this community is to make sure that we're talking to all stakeholders and all voices are heard in this community.

Thank you.

Chris: Okay. Katey, did I see you next?

Katey: Yeah, thank you. Just wanted to just add on just briefly that beyond that is the rating, it says that equity is about having high expectations for every learner and providing supports and resources so every learner can meet those expectations.

And so just a gentle reminder that equity is about resources and student needs. And I think that as long as our Board continues to focus on that, it will make all of our students be more successful.

Then just one other piece is that I was a special education teacher for many years, and really some of my greatest joy was supporting our students with disabilities to be a part of the school and the community, and I would love to see that as an opportunity for our district to grow in a little bit.

When I hear parents told, "Yourchild can't come to our school." "Your child is ready to start picking up trash in the hallway." That just breaks my heart. We need to be schools that are welcoming and inclusive of all students.

Chris: Thank you, Katey.Would anyone else like rebut? All right, our next question. How should the district and schools choose what books are available at various levels in the school libraries and curriculum? Are there specific books that you would consider removing from student access, and what guides your decision making? And a gentle reminder that we're not going to clap or interrupt the speaker while they're addressing this. We're going to start with Diana.

Diana: That's another big question. Okay.I'm sorry. Can you say it again?

Chris: Yes. How should the district and schools choose what books are available at various levels in the school libraries and curriculum? Are there specific books that you would consider removing from student access, and what guides your decision making?

Diana: Okay. So I think about books and curriculum in a framework. So that should always support the development of our students, academically, socially, emotionally, all of the issues of how to support the development across the board. When it comes to books, at the Board level, we're responsible for that strategy, that mission, that governance. We're setting the vision based on community input of where we want our district to go. Again, we're partnering with the administration and staff to come up with recommendations on how we implement that.

So in terms of books, it should always be based on the order of standards. It should always be pushing our students to learn more. It should always be pushing our students to grow.

Are there specific books that I would ban? I don't believe we need to censor books, but I think the framework and guardrail should always be what is appropriate in the learning and development for our kids at the appropriate levels.

And that's the framework that I would use when thinking about what is accessible to our kids in the school libraries versus the regular libraries.

Chris: Thank you, Diana.

Diana: I think we got everything.

Chris: Now, Matt.

Matt: Great. So obviously, this was a fun topic the last year or so. Look, we have policies. I think what concerns me regarding the books, because I think we're talking about the books that everybody was all worked up about the last year to year and a half.

I don't think it's the subject matter that parents were excited about. I think it was that the books were very sexually explicit, and some of them had ratings that were 16 plus, and obviously, we have 13 and 14 year olds that have access to these books, not to speak of what they have access to on their iPads.

I think that as adults, we can do better. We can still provide materials to children that want to… Whatever the subject matter is, but maybe that aren't as graphic. You know, there's plenty of books out there, and I think we can do better when it comes to… And I don't know if it's a rating system or some other better system that we need to put in place, but I've got to believe there is.

And we just need to ensure that the people that are making these decisions are free of, you know, some kind of ideology. Let's just make sure we're educating kids, and, you know, we're not trying to push agendas on them.

Chris: Thank you, Matt. Would anyone like to rebut this? Nelda.

Nelda: Yes. Hi. We need to stop the popular political agendas. Ok? I don't care what the… Politics needs no place in the school. I think all these books,it's all political agendas. It has no value when you have books.

Ok, I would like to ask whoever approved these books during the Board, two people having fellatio relationship material, okay, pictures, how are they educational for 11 year old? Please explain. I would like to know. Where's the educational value of that?

Chris: Thank you, Nelda. Anyone else?

Barry: I guess I need to respond.

Nelda: Yes, please.

Audience: That mic is dying.Barry, that mic is dying.

Barry: All right, I'll just speak as loud as I can.Thank you.

Audience: Thank you. Thank you.

Barry: Okay. So I just want to remind the community that we've had a process and policy in place. We've revisited that process and policy, and the Board unanimously agreed with the process and policy.

Parents should be involved in their children's education. Parents should be involved in making decisions about the books that their kids are exposed to.

Our community is a mosaic of individuals with different needs, different backgrounds, and different perspectives. We have trained professionals and educators who make these decisions. We need to respect them.

As a Board, we certainly have to review them. And the Board is ultimately responsible for, you know, what books and curriculum are available, but the Board should not micromanage what our educators are doing.

We need to ensure availability for diverse populations. And unfortunately, what may insult one set of parents may be very necessary for another set of kids. So we have to find that happy medium, and that's not easy.

But again, diverse education means diversity in books and availability of books.

Chris: Thank you, Barry, anyone else? Okay, Matt.

Matt: So, it absolutely is the Board's job to rebut the administration. That's what we're here to do. We're here to oversee them. So I disagree with that fundamentally.

But number two, nobody wants to ban anything, and nobody wants to take away books. We want to ensure that our children, they don't have access to materials that if you or I walked down the street and shared these with children,we would get arrested. Right, Officer?

I mean, I'm just telling you that that's the way it works. So we have got to do better. This is a smart community. We have a good Board. We have great administrators. Let's do better. Let's find solutions to it so that the community is happy.

Chris: Thank you, Matt.

Nelda: I would like to respond to that one.

Chris: No, I'm sorry. We can't do another rebuttal. There's a one minute rebuttal after all of them have passed, we'll redistribute.

Nelda: Thank you for clarifying it. It's okay. On the next one.

Audience: No, there's only one rebuttal per candidate.

Chris: Thank you. Okay. Anyone else … who has one available? We're going to go to our next question. The district has an annual vote on the tax levy that funds the operating budget. How would you choose to vote on the tax levy and why? If the levy amount results in an unbalanced budget, what specific programs or activities would you cut or eliminate?

Audience: Could you? That's another one. I'm sorry, I didn't do that on the last one.

Chris: Absolutely.

The district has an annual vote on the tax levy that funds the operating budgets. How would you choose to vote on the tax levy, and why? If the levy amount results in an unbalanced budget, what specific programs or activities would you cut or eliminate?

Nelda?

Nelda: Okay. I'm going to go back to my thing. I am running here for School Board for all the things that we have spoken so far, but I have to say that the School Board so far, you know, saying that they have been listening to the parents and whatnot, specifically to the questionable materials.

They're not listening.There have been petitions. Over 2,000 parents have said, "Hey, there has to be some a regulation on these materials." And guess what? There was also another petition that was for it, right, to have these material, which is okay. It's a free country. That is the beauty that we have in America, that we have a free opportunity to have your opinion, your opinion, and everybody's opinion. And theirs was only 300, right?

So which one was a higher value? I mean, a number of petitions, right? District chose to go with the side of the minority. Again, whenever I hear people saying that book banning, nobody wants book banning.

But. To have a bandaid in elementary school or anywhere, you get a phone call, "Hey, Mrs. Munoz, can I please puta bandaid on your child?" Sure.They have to get an approval.

Chris: Thank you, Nelda.

Nelda: But hey, for these folks, no,we cannot have an approval.

Chris: We have to pause now.

Nelda: I would like to have an approval. I'm sorry.

Chris: Barry?

Barry: Thank you. I just want to remind the audience the question was about tax levy, and that's what we're going to talk about here. The Board is responsible for the tax levy. The Board is responsible for the budget, and the Board obviously wants to represent the community with our budgeting.

We want to make sure we spend our money according to the community's desires and, of course, the community's values. Our tax levy is limited by the state. We can't just ask as much as we want from our taxpayers. We are limited, and that's good. I think we need these limits so that some boards don't go overboard.

When you look at your tax bill from the education - from 220 - you're going to have the levy, you're going to be paying back referendum money, and there's also an extra little piece that people aren't aware of: you could pay bonds. We can access a certain amount of extra dollars to pay for things like upkeep of our schools and our capital projects.

This year, we did not take any bond money. So when we look at the total levy, we actually did less than what we could have done given by the state. Again, reminder, we're limited in revenue. Expenditures are what we have to keep under control. It's not an easy process.

So our budget, if we need to limit, we do incremental cuts. But since 80% of our budget is salaries and benefits, and 80% of our income isfrom property taxes, we're limited, and we do the best that we can. Under inflationary times, that's not easy to do. Thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Barry. Any rebuts?

Leonard: Well, I can add something. So when it comes to budget, we got to look at programs. And so kindergarten is one of those examples. If you want your kid to go to full day kindergarten, you pay $3,777. There are 443 kindergarteners in our district. Forty-six of those go to half day kindergarten, which means - let's go back ot the bussing contract. Every one of those 46 kids has to have an opportunity to get a ride home. Did anybody call those 46 people and ask them why their kid isn't in full day kindergarten? Maybe they can't afford it. Maybe they don't have the ability to pay that $3,777. We should probably take a look at that because in the bus contract, that is another line item on the budget to get those 46 kindergarteners home.And so that bus has to be there.

So when you're looking at programs and cutting things, I would, you know, would I do a levy? Absolutely. Everybody's going to do a levy, everybody's going to do a bond, everybody's got more money to get from your pocket, but we've got to make sure that we're using those dollars wisely, and I'm not sure they're evaluating some of those programs to make sure that they are acceptable. And that's just one example of many within the school district that should be evaluated.

Chris: What has the Board done in the last couple of years? And if you're an incumbent responding to this, what are you most proud of having done? Katey, we're going to start with you.

Katey: All right, well thank you. I think that the new Framework 220 is a wonderful accomplishment that this Board and our community should really celebrate. I thought that it was a really positive process. I was able to be in a focus group and go to the coffees and participate in the two day process, so it was a really excellent example of gathering stakeholder information and in using it to make those decisions. And I thought they also did a really excellent job of taking it through some different review processes, so that is a real celebration.

I also think that we can really recognize the Board for finding and hiring Dr. Hunt. I really thought he was a really positive leader during the time that he was here, and it's unfortunate that he left, but that is definitely an accomplishment. And also that they were able to make a decision and hire someone new so quickly so we don't have a real tremendous gap. We obviously hired from within, so the learning curve is really going to be really short because he can hit the ground running, so those are just some of the things that come to mind that we should really recognize the Board and the district as a whole for.

Chris: Thank you, Katey. Leah?

Leah: So, Katey, thank you so much. I appreciate your thumbs up on the decisions we've made in the past two years, so…

Leonard: You have to use the microphone. They can't hear you.

Leah: Oh. Yeah, that one doesn't work… Oops. All right. So. Just to repeat what I said, thank you. Can you hear me now, everybody? Back row? Ok.

Thank you for the nice compliments you gave us. I'm proud of those accomplishments being on the Board, as well. I just want to start off by saying I think we have exceptional students, wonderful teachers who are willing to go beyond the call of duty during tough times, during new curriculum, extra training, new initiatives. I also think we have a great administration, and we've had a pretty good bench this year, so we could fill a vacant seat, right? What else? I'm proud of our strategic plan, our referendum getting passed - seeing it happen - getting the additions at Station and Prairie Middle School and at Grove.

I think it's great that we're an innovative, forward-thinking school district, and we want to be a leader in the nation in education; we don't want to go backwards. In this ever changing world, we need to invest in innovation and change.

We have national recognition. Niche ranked us A+, third best K-12 district in Illinois and the 12th best school district in Illinois. We've had 11 National Blue Ribbon Awards. The Chicago Tribune named Barrington 220 as a top workplace in Chicago in 2019, 2021, and 2022.

We have a Standard and Poor's AAA bond rating for the past 15 years and are one of 88 in the country. We've had a balanced budget. I'm proud of all the programs we have - dual language, Chinese Immersion, special education, gifted, Project Lead the Way, the Business Incubator, Pathways and Transitions program, fine arts, sports, and co-curriculars. Go Barrington!

Chris: Thank you. Next question. In your view, what is the role of community opinion in casting a vote at a Board of Education meeting? How would you balance the input from administration and other experts with community opinion, specifically parent input? I should re-ask that. In your view, what is the role of community opinion in casting a vote at a Board of Education meeting? How will you balance the input from administration and other experts with community opinion, specifically parent input? We're going to start with Diana.

Diana: I think as a School Board, our job is to sit between the community - the broader community and the educational community. So it's going to be very important to balance the perspective of the community and the parents in the community. But I think it's a fine balance between what parents are giving feedback on and also what the experts are digging data, doing research, using their expertise to bring their perspectives forward. So I think it's always going to be a fine balance between the two. I think it's on our Board to weigh how we think about that. But we never want to not take advantage of the experts that are coming to the table with well thought out, well researched data when they're bringing us recommendations.

I think it's always going to be a time for it. I think that's the balance that the Board has to figure out. You can't not listen to the community because that's our role. We're the voice of the community when we're partnering with the district, and so I think you have to make sure you're taking all of those perspectives into account, but not negating the time and research that we're investing in when people bring us recommendations.

Chris: Thank you, Diana. Nelda? I'm just going to sneak that (mic). You got one?

Nelda: No. Okay.It's not working.

Leonard: That one works.

Chris: You got one?

Nelda: Oh, it's not working.Sorry.

Leonard: You have to speak into it.

Nelda: I think I spoke about this one. Each Board member needs to listen to the parents, needs to meet with them. If there is concerned parents and they're speaking out, we need to find the core reason behind it. If there's surveys that are conducted, then you need to evaluate. You know, there is a majority here. There's less number for this side, and we need to come to negotiations.

We cannot all agree in Barrington. We will disagree, just like Barry said, right? Agree to disagree. So we are going to have disagreement. But can we come to a common ground that everybody - we can actually make happy? Okay, we have to. That's the Board job. And again, it is very crucial to come together, listen to each other, and when you have disagreement, not to start hating each other, but respectfully listen and come to a common ground. Respect.

Chris: Thank you. Nelda. We've got time for a couple more questions. We're going to end right at 11 30. Thanks, everyone. The CUSD 220 School Board voted to approve the ISBE Resolution that School Board elections should remain non-partisan and that school board members should not solicit, accept, or receive either a donation or a financial contribution from special interest groups, political action committees, or political parties. Do you agree with this decision? Why or why not? And have you accepted donations or contributions from one of those aforementioned groups? This question goes to Barry.

Audience: Do you need this the second time?

Barry: Yeah, do it one more time just to be clear.

Chris: You bet. The CUSD 220 School Board voted to approve the ISBE resolution that School Board elections should remain non-partisan and that school board members should not solicit, accept, or receive either a donation or a financial contribution from special interest groups, political action committees, or political parties. The questions are: Do you agree with this decision? Why or why not? And have you accepted donations or contributions from one of those aforementioned groups?

Barry: Thank you for the question. I will answer the last question first. I have not accepted any donations from anybody outside of Barrington, no other political action committees, no other groups. I feel very strongly that the School Board should continue to be non-partisan and nonpolitical.

Our goal is the values of our community. Our goal is taking care of the children and educating them and keeping, retaining good educators. None of that is political. None of that is Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green Party.

I'm very concerned that there is an Action PAC that is supporting candidates in this election. They're getting money outside of 220. They're getting money from some very ultraconservative groups. When it comes down to an important vote, who are they going to answer to? The community or the special interests that have funded them? So I am very concerned about what's happening. And it's not just happening in Barrington, unfortunately. School boards and other local elections are unfortunately being hijacked by outside forces.

I want to represent our community. And I think that's a very important distinction when you look at voting next month. So I want you to really look into that and look into where the money is coming from for some of these candidates because it's outside of Barrington.

Chris: Thank you, Barry. Matt?

Matt: Illinois's dirty little secrets. So I am endorsed by a PACs here in Barrington that is supported by local donations. That is a false statement. That's it. They endorse me. They don't give me any money. They've made some signs, wonderful. I'm also endorsed by the Barrington Observer, there's about four other groups that I'm aware of that are going to endorse me in the next couple of weeks. So that's that. I haven't taken a dime from anybody.

I'm not a political person. I'm fiscally conservative, but I run down the middle of the road when it comes to politics. You don't hurt me, I don't hurt you. We can get along just fine. That's the way I believe things work.

You know, the other side of that coin in Illinois politics is -I find it funny that the governor has attacked, you know, conservative groups, endorsing candidates when he himself said, I want to support Democrats running in local elections. I mean, so if you want to find the cause,just go to the governor of the state.

And the question that I would ask back is, I would like to see transparency. I can tell you the Action PAC, I vetted them. They're transparent; they're registered with the state. Look at it - see where the funds come from. They don't hide anything. I would like to see where candidates get their money because I find a massive conflict of interest when you're endorsed by the school unions or teacher's unions. And then, I mean, we have a School Board member currently who did receive money from them. So that to me is a massive conflict when we negotiate that contract.

Leonard: Can I add something to that?

Chris: Nope.

Leonard: So if someone has something....

Audience: No, no, no.

Chris: We are going to hold to the structure that we agreed to there before we started out. Next question: Are you supportive of our current administration and the work that has been done on the strategic plan so far? Do you support all six of the strategic plan goals? Or would you remove or deemphasize any of them? I'll repeat.

Are you supportive of our current administration and the work that has been done on the strategic plan so far? Do you support all six of the strategic plan goals, or would you remove or deemphasize any of them? Please be specific.

Audience: I know you read it twice,but can you get one more?

Chris: I sure can. Are you supportive of our current administration and the work that has been done on the strategic plan so far? Do you support all six of the strategic plan goals, or would you want to remove or deemphasize any of them? Please be specific. Katey, we'll start with you.

Katey: All right. I did already talk a little bit about the strategic planning process that I was able to be a part of, and it really was a pleasure to be able to work on that. And I really just appreciated that it was a real positive experience related to diversity of knowledge, diversity of experience, diversity of thought. And it was really a great experience in compromise.

I'll never forget hearing one of our current Board members say that they don't have to compromise, and I am so not of that mindset. We have to compromise. And that is what makes me really invested in the strategic plan. It was constructed with administration,staff, community input. And again, I said already, I feel really passionate about soliciting stakeholder input. And that was really that process at work.

So in terms of these six goals, six goal areas, I am really in agreement with all of them since that's what the community wanted. I'm really happy to see that the learning and academic excellence was prioritized, and I'm really hopeful about the action plans that are going to be coming our way to target some of the needs.

As we've already said,our high school student proficiency and SAT scores has fallen, both reading and math. Only about a little over half of our students are meeting reading and math standards, and at the middle school, it's closer to 30.

So I'm really, really hopeful that this strategic plan is going to address some of those gaps so we can ensure all students are meeting their learning goals.

Chris: Thank you, Katey. Leonard?

Leonard: So I'll start by saying absolutely, I'm In favor of all six of those standards. I think they're fantastic. I think it's a great framework to educate our kids, so I support them. For those of you that don't know, it's personalized learning, future readiness, inclusive education, health and well being, community partnership and communications, and stewardship.

And I believe in that framework. I think that we are doing a great job on some things, but I also think that a portion of our community is not being served correctly. And so although I support all those, I think we need to dive deeper into each one of those and make sure that we are evaluating the education process and make sure it's working.

An example is personalized learning. So my son is an athlete. He shot in the driveway last night for about 30 minutes in the cold, maybe 45 to 50. Once he gets 50,000 steps on his Fitbit, guess what he doesn't have to do the next day? Go to PE class.

Now, if I knew that my son could get50,000 steps and not have to go to gym class, I would have picked another class for my son to be in. I would have put him in reading, writing, math, because I disagree that my sophomore gets to sleep in for an extra hour because he got 50,000 steps on his Fitbit. Is that learning at the lowest level? Because my son could put it on the dog and throw the ball 50 times and get 50,000 steps on his Fitbit. That doesn't mean that he's getting an education.

So I support with the framework,`but I also think there's got to be a transparency because if that teacher has 30 students and all of them get 50,000 steps on their Fitbit, what does she do for that hour?

Chris: Thank you, Leonard. We're going to move to closing statements. And of course, I would imagine our candidates would be happy to stick around and answer the additional questions.

Audience:How long do they have?

Chris: They have 30 seconds. Each candidate was asked to prepare a 30 second closing statement. We're going to start with Matt.

Matt: First of all, thank you all for coming out today. One of the reasons we fell in love with this area is because there's a ton of community involvement. And it doesn't mean we agree on everything, but there's great involvement.

But I'd also like to take, you know, some of the standards that we saw down in Texas, with - I'd love, you know, if we get elected, to get more community involvement. We've got a wealth of knowledge in this community, and I'd love to have the parents, grandparents, you know, involved in the school system more. So thank you.

Chris: Thank you, Matt. Barry.

Leah: Microphone, please.

Barry: One more microphone that we all share. Empower personal excellence in every learner. That is our guiding principle. The Board should represent the community and should reflect the community's…

Aside: Your microphone:

Barry: Oh. Sorry. The Board should represent and reflect the community, and I feel like I have done that for the last four years. I want to continue to do that - to represent our community, access to books, access to a diverse curriculum, and balancing a budget. So please consider that when you're voting.

Chris: Thank you, Barry. Leah?

Leah: I ask for your vote on April 4th. If reelected to the School Board, I promise to listen to all stakeholders - students, parents, teachers, community members - and make data driven decisions based on the values of our community.

I believe I've been a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars. I am committed to working diligently to maintain the investment in our schools and by extension our community. Strong schools make a strong community. I look forward to working hard to ensure Barrington 220 continues to be a destination district, both in Illinois and the entire country.

Chris: Thank you, Leah. Nelda?

Nelda: Okay. My name is Nelda Munoz. I would love to have your vote. As parents, you will get your voice heard once I am part of the Board. Transparency has been lacking. There has been, for example, I was told yesterday - health care… I'm sorry, health class was all about good eating habits. But I get to find out it is all about sex trafficking yesterday, apparently, and it's okay.

Chris: Thank you, Nelda. You've used your time. We're going to move forward please.

Nelda: And my opt out form was actually denied.

Chris: It's time to move forward.

Nelda: We need to fix it, and I will fix it.

Chris: Thank you. Katey?

Katey: Well, thank you so much for hosting this event for our community and our online watchers. It would be an honor to serve my community and every student in District 220 by serving on this Board. As you consider all these candidates, I would ask you to consider if our district and our students are better off than they were four years ago, and if not, maybe it's time to make a change.

I hope it's clear how much I care about families and students and their learning. And if I earn your vote in this position, I will do my very best every day to serve you and your children.

Chris: Great, thank you, Katey. Diana?

Diana: Thank you all for having me. I'm really excited just for the opportunity to be here and talk to some of you - or all of you. I am passionate about this community. I'm hoping I'm going to get an opportunity.

I'm committed to every student in this district, and I want to make sure that we're pushing to take what's great about this district and accelerating it, and that's really what it's about for me. I want to make sure that we're empowering our students to be great and that academically, intellectual skills, socially, emotionally, and then they're coming out with those strong education.

So I ask for your vote. It's about the EASY principle. Check out my website.

Chris: Thank you, Diana. Leonard?

Leonard: So I'll be quick, obviously I've got 30 seconds. This is a non-partisan election, so I hope that all of you came here today with an open mind and you are here to listen and to learn and not judge and not have a preconceived notion.

I'm a very serious person, and I take my children's education extremely serious. I'll just leave you with this quote because I think we've got away from it. And most of you that are well read will understand it. "I look to the day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their character."

Chris: Thank you, Leonard. I want to thank all of the candidates, and I'm going to turn it over to Michelle.

Michelle: So this time, I'd like to thank each of you candidates for taking the time and participating in the candidate forum. Thank you also to Chris Bibby for being the moderator today. You helped to conduct a smooth running forum during this two hour time period, and we truly appreciate it. A huge thank you to all the PTO presidents again who worked on the planning and the execution of today's forum. Without their assistance, this event would not have been possible. And thank you also to all of you who submitted questions for the forum today. Without that, it's impossible to have the questions and know what the candidates truly care about.

It is our hope that the information discussed today will give you a better understanding of the Board of Education candidates' positions and their goals. Please remember to vote on or before April 4th for the three open candidate positions.