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## MTI VOTERS 2009 School Board Election Questionnaire

Please respond to each of the following questions. If you wish to add/clarify your response, please attach a separate sheet and designate your responses with the same number which appears in the questionnaire. Respond to the questions asking for narrative responses in this fashion. ***Please submit your responses to MTI Headquarters (821 Williamson Street) by, Friday, January 2.***

### General:

1. **If the School Board finds it necessary to change school boundaries due to enrollment, what criteria would you, as a Board member, use to make such a judgment?**

The process of changing boundaries is very emotional for the community that will potentially be affected by the moves. There is no one way of changing boundaries that will make everyone happy. Therefore, I think the Board has to be consistent when evaluating and making these changes. The first guiding principle for me is that the change has to be a long-term solution. I do not believe that boundary changes should be used as a band-aid to address any issue. Another consideration is to avoid creating schools with high concentrations of low income families. Following this, my next consideration is to keep bus routes no more than 45 minutes, one way. Another consideration is that every effort should be made to keep geographically and historically defined neighborhoods together and to consider the proximity of students to a school when redrawing boundary lines. However, I must also say that due to the differences in the geography of the school attendance areas, as well as the distribution of low income students in relation to a school, the final consideration is important but may not always be possible.

2. **If the School Board finds it necessary to close a school/schools due to economic reasons, what criteria would you, as a Board member, use to make such a judgment?**

If the recommendation of closing a school was brought to the Board, I would want to know the information listed below before making a decision. I would use this information to construct a cost-benefit analysis.

- i. In the big picture, why was a certain school chosen
- ii. Financial savings associated with closing a school
- iii. Additional costs associated with moving children to a new school
- iv. Are the "new" schools set up to support the needs of the incoming students
- v. Demographics of families that would move to a new school
- vi. Plan for staff at school being closed
- vii. Projected growth for the attendance area of the recommended closed school as well as for the new school
- viii. Future numbers (capacity, low income, etc.) for new school
- ix. Affect of changes on the middle and high school tracks
- x. Is this a long-term solution to the stated problem

3. **If the School Board finds it necessary, due to the State-imposed revenue controls, to make further budget cuts to the 2009-10 budget, what criteria would you, as a Board member, use to make such a judgment?**

My first priority would be to keep as many cuts as possible away from the classroom. My hope is that our new strategic plan will drive some of the decision-making if it was necessary to cut, meaning that we would budget to support our plan. I am an advocate at looking at processes in the Doyle Building to see where we may be able to save money based on efficiencies.

**4. Identify specific MMSD programs and/or policies which you believe should to be modified, re-prioritized, or eliminated, and explain why.**

When we interviewed Dan Nerad for Superintendent, we talked with him about program evaluations. I strongly believe that programs have to be evaluated and we need the data in place to do so. The superintendent has committed to developing a schedule of program evaluations that will be on-going. As part of the Board's new committee structure, we will also be having regular data retreats. I look forward to obtaining information so we can effectively evaluate programs. In conjunction with this effort, will be involving community in the development of the strategic plan. The strategic plan will provide a framework for program focus and evaluation.

Regarding policy, I would like to look at all of the board policies to ensure relevance. I am a believer in some form of policy governance and question whether all of the board policies should actually be board policy as opposed to administrative policy. I advocate continuing to look at the student code of conduct and related policies (i.e., suspension and expulsion) to ensure relevance, effectiveness and consistency. We have to ensure these policies work for students, staff and school. There is still work to do.

**5. What should the District do to reduce violence/assure that proper discipline and safety (of the learning and working environment) is maintained in our schools?**

I believe a consistent (equitable) behavior support system should be in place across the district at all school levels. There should be expectations for a consistent response from administrators at all schools. In addition, any response to a behavior incident needs to be done in a fair and timely manner.

I am in favor of the restorative justice-based system being implemented in the elementary schools. It is a cooperative approach that focuses on community building and a culture of mutual respect. The focus is on the behavior as a bad choice, not the student as a bad person. With the high mobility of the MMSD, a consistent program like this, implemented across the district, is needed so children will understand rules and behavior, irrespective of attendance area. I also strongly support on-going staff training on how to respond to difficult situations.

I support the use of security officers in our middle and high schools and would support increasing numbers if the situation at a given school required more staff. Engagement in school is critical. Many discipline problems arise because students lack a sense of belonging. I was an advocate for the positions at our 4 high schools that focus on the "high flyers" and work with them to help keep their focus in the schools. I am concerned about cuts we have made to the social worker, psychologist and guidance positions and would like to see data on how this has affected discipline and school climate.

I strongly believe that there are children in our schools who need to be in different learning environments which would benefit both the student and the school. I support looking at our alternative programs to see if there is a way we can accommodate more children, including increased middle school and elementary offerings.

I support Spencer Black's past budget amendment to allow school districts to spend \$100 per child over the revenue cap for security related expenses.

**6. Do you agree that the health insurance provided to District employees should be mutually selected through collective bargaining?**

YES                       NO

**7. Explain your concerns/proposed solutions you have about the District's minority achievement efforts.**

This question requires a lengthy answer. Rather than get into details, I have put my thoughts in more of an outline response. Although we have made small strides in closing the gap, we have a long way to go before we can say we have been successful for all of our students.

In order to effectively address closing the achievement gap, we need to look not only at our schools but also into our community. Social, economic and educational factors come into play when looking at a child and their ability to learn. Therefore, we must look at these factors when looking for ways to increase achievement efforts. I recommend 2 books on this subject: *Class and Schools* by Richard Rothstein and *Toward Excellence with Equity* by Ronald Ferguson. Rothstein outlines 3 tracks that should be pursued to narrow the achievement gap. I strongly agree with these tracks. I have listed the tracks and then some specifics for the MMSD.

1. In-school improvement efforts that raise the quality of instruction
  - a. Culturally relevant curriculum
  - b. Increase efforts in the recruitment of minority teachers
  - c. Increase efforts to get people of color involved in the schools through mentoring programs, Schools of Hope, etc.
  - d. Teacher training in cultural competency
  - e. Increase successful programs like Schools of Hope to all school levels
  - f. Continue with development and implementation of programs like AVID
  - g. With the high mobility rate of some students, we must look at ways to help stabilize students' school experience by ensuring supportive and consistent enrollment processes across the district.
  - h. Consistent expectations and discipline across schools
  - i. All children must be engaged in a high level, challenging curriculum
  - j. Resources must be allocated to equitably address needs
  - k. Continue with the implementation of the SLC initiatives in the high schools and evaluate the implementation of different options of "strands" for our students
  - l. Evaluate our alternative education programs and determine if there is a need for additional programs to meet the needs of some of our students
2. Expanding the definition of schooling
  - a. Increased access to school activities and reading in the summer through MSCR programs, increased library hours, expanded summer school offering
  - b. Implement 4K in Madison
  - c. Expand programs such as Play and Learn and Mobile Play and Learn (see info below on Born Learning initiatives)
  - d. Re-evaluate the parent involvement policies and find better ways to bring parents into the schools (i.e., Franklin has a very successful parent involvement program)
  - e. Increase community partnerships to bring programming to our children during non-school hours (through Fund 80 we just funded 12 programs)
3. Social and economic policies that enable children to begin/attend school more equally ready to learn
  - a. Continue the work to enroll families in BadgerCare Plus
  - b. Continue the development of partnerships with the health care providers in the community to provide services to schools (i.e., GHC adoption of Leopold; St. Mary's adoption of Lincoln)
  - c. Housing patterns need to be evaluated for future development
  - d. Develop ways to educate parents on how to support their child's learning experience
  - e. Continue our involvement with the United Way "Born Learning" initiative (I was a member of the planning delegation) where the community goals are:
    - i. All children are screened for developmental delays through medical providers, professionals or community-based programs
    - ii. All children have access to high quality early childhood experiences that encourage positive development
    - iii. All caregivers have access to resources that help them become successful as their children's first teachers
    - iv. The Dane County community is aware of the link between high quality early childhood experiences and school readiness

## **8. Explain your position regarding four-year-old and all-day kindergarten programs.**

I fully support all-day kindergarten programs. I believe it provides a tremendous value to children and families. I support the concept of four-year-old kindergarten although there are issues that need resolution. This program establishes a strong foundation for success in school and life and would be instrumental in addressing academic achievement for all students and would certainly play a vital role in helping to close the achievement gap. Not only is 4K an investment in the future of a child, there is research that shows that a 4K program yields long-term budgetary savings in many different ways including reduction in special

education expenditures and increased teacher-retention rates.

**9. Would you support the Early Learning Initiative, if it violated the MTI/MMSD Contract ban on contracting out?**

I would not support violating the MTI/MMSD contract ban on contracting out.

**10. Should planning time for elementary teachers be increased? If yes, how could this be accomplished? (see Contract provision attached.)**

I strongly believe that ample planning time for teachers is essential. With all of the challenges being faced by our teachers on a daily basis, planning time is critical for them to be effective in the classroom. I have not looked into this issue for our elementary teachers so would like to see an analysis of how planning time is actually used. This may provide an opportunity for the development of some efficiencies regarding other requirements that take up the teacher's time and thereby free up existing planning time for actual planning.

**11. Given that the Wisconsin Association of School Boards rarely supports the interests of the Madison Metropolitan School District, do you support the District withdrawing from the WASB?**

No, I do not support the district withdrawing from the WASB. Personally, I have found membership in WASB to be very helpful in developing contacts in other school districts. I have also attended a number of their seminars and meetings for school board members which have provided very useful and informative information. I have found membership in WASB to be beneficial.

**12. From what sources do you believe that public schools should be funded?**

I believe that public schools should be funded with tax dollars and think we should look at a systems that fund schools with tax dollars beyond property taxes.

a. Do you support further increasing student fees?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                        X   NO

**13. Do you support class sizes of 15 or less for the primary grades?**

  X   YES                      \_\_\_\_\_ NO

**14. Do you oppose:**

a. The use of public funds (vouchers) to enable parents to pay tuition with tax payers' money for religious and private schools?

  X   YES                      \_\_\_\_\_ NO

b. The expansion of Charter schools within the Madison Metropolitan School District?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES                        X   NO

My primary focus is on the support of the current schools in the MMSD. I believe that many of the people who are calling out for charter schools are doing so because they believe the current schools are not addressing their needs. If this turned out to be true, my preference would be to look at addressing the needs through existing schools rather than creating charters.

**15. List MMSD staff and Board member(s) from whom you do or would seek advice.**

As Board president, I work with all Board members. I also seek advice from past board members such as Nan Brien, Barbara Arnold and Carol Carstensen. Depending on the issue, I talk with many different teachers and/or principals to get feedback on what is happening in the schools.

16. **Is your candidacy being promoted by any organization? If yes, please name such organization(s).**  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES                        X   NO                      \_\_\_\_\_

17. **Have you ever been employed as a teacher? If yes, please describe why you left the teaching profession.**

While not formally “employed” as a teacher, I did receive a BS in biology, chemistry and secondary education. I was certified to teach in Massachusetts and had completed my student teaching. At that time, I made the decision to pursue more advanced science training and received my MS in molecular biology. I was a teaching assistant in graduate school and have kept involved in education at Promega, the company at which I work.

18. **Do you support the inclusion model for including Title 1, EEN and ESL students in the regular education classroom? Why/why not?**

Yes, I support the inclusion model as stated above if it is determined by the student’s IEP (Individualized Education Plan) team to be in the best interest of the child. I believe inclusion maximizes individual growth and affords a sense of belonging to all involved. I once read, “Children that learn together, learn to live together”. That is one of the great benefits of inclusion. I think inclusion is a philosophy that must be shared by the district, schools and families, if it is to be effective.

I believe in order to have a strong inclusive program, there must be good communication between administration, staff and parents; there must be an adequate number of staff in the classroom; and all staff must have appropriate training and resources to deliver a differentiated and challenging curriculum, so all children benefit.

19. **The Board of Education has moved from the development of policy to becoming involved in implementation of policy; i.e. matters usually reserved to administration. Some examples are when it:**

- a. Decided to hear parents’ complaints about a teacher’s tests and grading.
- b. Decided to modify the administration’s decision about how a State Statute should be implemented.

**Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of policy which the Board has created and the implementation of State Statutes.**

Yes. I believe that a policy governance model in the Board-Superintendent relationship is critical to moving this district forward. With the Board’s new committee structure that will start in January 2009, we are moving in that direction. The Board should create policy and then delegate to the administration the implementation of the policy. The Board should be responsible for, and be held accountable for, ensuring that policy is implemented in a manner consistent with the goals/direction of the Board.

**Do you believe that the Board should delegate to administration the implementation of State Statutes?**

Yes. The Board should create policy and then delegate to the administration the implementation of the policy. The Board should be responsible for, and be held accountable for, ensuring that policy is implemented in a manner consistent with the goals/direction of the Board and consistent with the State Statutes.

**Would you support the Board exploring a means to make their meetings more efficient?**

Yes, we have actually taken some steps to making our meetings more efficient. Our move to consent agendas for the routine approvals has made the meetings much more efficient. We have also moved to a 2-step approach to meetings meaning that we do not meet and vote on the same night for big issues. We have recently reduced our committees from 7 to 3 and they will be run in a governance model. This should increase the efficiency of meetings as well. Any other suggestions for increasing efficiency without precluding a time for public feedback and discussion are welcomed.

20. **Do/did/will your children attend private or parochial schools during their K-12 years? If no, and if you have children, what schools have/will they attend(ed)?**

No. My daughter attended Leopold Elementary and Cherokee Middle Schools. She is currently a junior at West High School.

Legislation

21. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the revenue controls on public schools and return full budgeting authority to the School Board?**

YES       NO

22. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion which would direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to oppose any legislation which would authorize a tax freeze and/or a taxpayers bill of rights (TABOR)?**

YES       NO

23. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to eliminate the Qualified Economic Offer which restricts free and open collective bargaining for teachers and would enable teacher wages to be established through negotiations between the parties?**

YES       NO

I believe that teachers and support staff need to be paid fairly and would support collective bargaining. I do believe that the QEO and revenue caps need to be removed together.

24. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will restore Collective Bargaining under Wis. Stat. 111.70, as it existed before the passage of Revenue Controls and the QEO?**

YES       NO

I have not read Wis. Stat. 111.70 so how I will answer this question is that I am very supportive of removing the QEO and revenue caps as a package. I believe the entire funding formula and related laws have to be addressed.

25. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to prohibit the privatization of public schools via the use of tuition tax credits (vouchers) to pay tuition with taxpayers' money to private or religious schools?**

YES       NO

26. **Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will maintain or expand the benefit level of the Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Act?**

YES       NO

27. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will increase the retirement formula multiplier from 1.6% to 2% for teachers and general employees, i.e. equal that of protective employees?

YES       NO

With the caveat that we have to be aware of the economic times we are now facing.

28. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will prohibit public employee residency requirements?

YES       NO

29. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will eliminate and forbid restrictions to free and open collective bargaining for the selection of insurance for public employees (under Wis. Stat. 111.70), including the naming of the insurance carrier?

YES       NO

30. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation which will guarantee free and open collective bargaining regarding the establishment of the school calendar/school year, including the right to begin the school year, via negotiations between MTI and the District?

YES       NO

31. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to request the introduction and promote the passage of legislation to forbid the work of employees organized under Wis. Stat. 111.70 (collective bargaining statute) to be subcontracted?

YES       NO

32. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to seek passage of legislation which will require full State funding of any State-mandated program?

YES       NO

33. Will you introduce and vote for a motion to direct the Wisconsin Association of School Boards to seek passage of legislation which will provide adequate State funding of public education?

YES       NO

34. Do you support a specific school finance reform plan (e.g., School Finance Network (SFN), Wisconsin Alliance for Excellent Schools (WAES), Andrews/Matthews Plan)?

I do not have enough details at this point in time on the plans in order to make an informed decision.

Your Campaign:

35. Are you, or any of your campaign committee members, active in or supportive of the "Get Real", "ACE", or "Vote No for Change" organizations?

NO!

**36. Name of Campaign Committee/Address/Phone #/Treasurer. List the members of your campaign committee.**

Name Silveira for School Board

Address 5760 Barbara Drive, Fitchburg, WI 53711

Treasurer Currently Tammy Peyton. After first filing will be switching to Barbara Katz.

Committee members: Carol Carstensen, Barbara Katz (I will not put together a more formal campaign team until after the filing deadline of January 6)

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Signature

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Date

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