

Ben Scheerer - Candidate for NMPS School Board of Education

Briefly describe the skills, qualifications, and experience you possess that make you the best candidate for a school board position.

I have been a trustee on the NMPS board since March, 2021. During this time I have served as a member of the finance committee, ensuring that we have leveraged our finite funds to best meet the needs of our outstanding educational and extracurricular programs, student and faculty safety, as well as navigating through one of the most challenging periods in the school's history.

Additional qualifications (which led me to a board position in the first place) include:

- Providing an additional lens that would offer contrasting perspectives, viewpoints, and unique contributions to help guide, manage and solve issues that face the school system - much of this coming from my experience with large, diverse school systems in both Grand Rapids (Forest Hills) and Jefferson County, Colorado.
- Drawing from my over 20 years of experience in business, I lend a viewpoint that contributes to our curriculum and investments by offering insight and guidance into the skills, trends and demands from a state, federal and global perspective.
- I participate as a team player and collaborator with a shared point of view and ethic that embraces the NMPS board's "standards of practice".

What do you see as a school board member's role and responsibility in the effective administration of schools?

The primary role of a school board member is to set and manage policy that directs the overall course for our school's strategic plan. As part of this, board members work closely with the superintendent and administration to ensure that these plans are properly defined and integrated into our goals and objectives on an ongoing basis.

As a board member I am impartial, objective and always looking out for the best interests of the school (students and staff) as well as the community. During my limited time on the board I've participated in several meetings and/or town halls with students, staff and parents to help solve and/or improve difficult and contentious situations for a pragmatic outcome. I have always had an open door policy and I am happy to discuss any school matter with anyone in the community who wishes to reach out to me.

What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing North Muskegon Public Schools, how can the school board address them, and how will you build community understanding of and support for these issues?

I not only see these as issues, but more as priorities which can always be improved.

- **Ongoing academic excellence** - This includes ensuring and continuing our high standards and variety of academic offerings, from STEM to fine arts, sports, and extracurricular activities.
- **Student and faculty safety** - Obtaining new and ensuring ongoing funding support for school safety including both physical as well as psychological circumstances - allowing our students to thrive in an environment that is conducive to learning and productive social interaction.
- **Fiscal responsibility** - Overseeing school finance and ensuring that we are prudent in our budgets, spending and leveraging all the resources that are available to us.

In times of shrinking revenues and budget cutbacks, decisions often must be made regarding budgetary priorities. Please outline your budgetary priorities as specifically as possible.

Fiscal responsibility is paramount to the success of our school system. I fully supported efforts in the 22-23 school year to consolidate food service, building/lands maintenance and bussing with partner school systems and the city - saving us the costs of replacing positions (from previously retired personnel). We must always find opportunities to make our budget stretch while continually increasing the level of service to our students and staff, but at the same time seek and apply for all state and federal funding opportunities that will benefit our school system.

Please list any organizations with which you are affiliated or to which you belong, those who sponsor or endorse you, and those from which you have requested and/or received funding.

My campaign is self funded. I have not sought, nor received any endorsements. The school board position is a non-partisan role and I strictly adhere to that designation as an impartial, fair and compassionate board member, parent and member of the community.