

Meet the NY Mills Public School Board Candidates

Five candidates are vying for the three open seats on the New York Mills Public School Board, with only one being an incumbent. In an effort to help voters get to know all the prospective school board candidates, we reached out via email to each candidate with several questions for information posters. Election Day is Tuesday, November 8.

Christina Peeters Kickhafer



Why are you running for the Board of Education? If elected, what will be your priorities?

I hold a masters degree in education, I have experience in public schools, youth programming and as a teacher and understand the joy and challenges of a career in education. Now as a parent of two young children I have a personal interest in the district's long term plans that my family will be involved in. My priorities are access to mental health resources for students. Identifying teachers' needs for best curriculum and tools in the classroom. Identify and hone post secondary options and opportunities for students.

Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the board of education?

I am particularly interested in advancements in curriculum, especially in practical applications, mental health resources and post graduation opportunities for students. I think the pandemic showed the resilience and flexibility in both staff and students and the ability

to adapt and problem solve. I'm very interested in applying those same adaptive skills to make students self-sufficient in an ever changing world.

What do you see as the major issue(s) facing the NYM School District? Public education?

Major issues that are impacting public education is that we are still teaching students the same way they were being taught 50 years ago. I believe it's easy to follow the same lock step methods rather than shift to methods that research shows are more beneficial. You can examine PISA scores from around the globe and see disparities in our public education system in the U.S. While change on a federal, and macro level is hard, at a local level we have the ability to reflect on goals and shift education to closer align with what students need going forward from 2022.

What should your school district do to better prepare students as citizens?

Have a current and meaningful conversation about our culture and society. Discuss all options for post graduate opportunities. That could mean college, but it could also mean, military, trade school, junior college or community college, directly to work, gap years, or exchange programs. I feel that graduates are often stuck in the box checking mentality and asking a newly turned 18 year old what they want to do

for the next 70 years is unfair unless we are having in-depth discussions about what prepares them and how to prepare them for life after graduation. I think it's really really important for students to have skills to be successful in the workforce or higher education but also know that they can fluctuate as their adulthood takes shape.

In what school district or community activities/organizations have you been involved?

National Honor Society, University of Oklahoma. University of Minnesota Youth and Community Programming, Recreation and Wellness Department. East Otter Tail Masters Gardeners.

What is your vision for education in this community?

My vision is for students to feel welcome, included, equitable, valued and heard in their school community. I want this school district to have students succeed and break negative stereotypes of small town education. My hope is for students leaving their k-12 schooling to be active and thoughtful in their civic duties, and be effective in higher education and the workforce. When our schools do better our families thrive and our community does better.