

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Charland a smart choice for Cedarburg School Board

To the editor:
I'm writing in support of Elizabeth Charland for Cedarburg School Board. I've casually known Elizabeth for several years. Over the past two years, I've gotten to know her much better as we both have been attending school board meetings. I'm always impressed by Elizabeth's message as she speaks at meetings and it's clear that she is concerned with kids first. Whether she's speaking about mask choice or keeping indoctrination out of classrooms, she's a strong advocate for doing what's right for all children.

The other challengers in this year's race are all "strongly recommended" by the Ozaukee Democrats who have said publicly that "schools take on the responsibilities of the parents." We need to keep this kind of thinking out of our schools and I'm confident Elizabeth will do just that.

Elizabeth's messaging is driven by common sense. It's hard to argue against any of the issues she's running on:

- Excellence in Education — Keeping our Cedarburg schools performing at a high level.

- Common-sense COVID policies — Only parents know what's best for their children's health and well-being.

- Culture of transparency — Making sure parents and taxpayers have access to what is being taught.

- Fiscal responsibility — Ensuring that our tax dollars are spent in the classroom. Prior to two years ago, I'm not even sure if I voted in school board elections, but I'm now more aware than ever at the importance of keeping our Cedarburg schools excellent! I've never before displayed yard signs or written a letter to the editor, but I feel very strongly that Elizabeth Charland is a smart choice for the Cedarburg School Board. Vote the top four on the ballot! Charland, Calzada, Leach and Stroebel!

Stacy Wilke
Cedarburg

Stroebel right choice for Cedarburg School Board

To the editor:
I am writing this letter to share my personal endorsement of Laura Stroebel for the Cedarburg School Board on April 5.

I have known Laura and her family for the last 20-plus years and because of the academic excellence of the school district all of her children received an outstanding education. I have lived in Cedarburg for the past 50 years and both my children also received an excellent education, due to the dedicated and concerned School Board. We must continue to elect the proper and concerned citizens to the School Board in order to keep this tradition alive for our present and future students.

Laura is a dedicated stand-up person that only has the best interest of our school district in mind. She is the type of person that makes our community very special. Laura is a mother of eight and a business owner in Cedarburg and she has a known track record of commitment, service and philanthropy.

I can think of no one better to entrust the ability to impact the future of our youth in Cedarburg.

Please join me and make the right choice in supporting Laura Stroebel for Cedarburg School Board April 5.

James A. Lee
Cedarburg

Cedarburg School Board incumbent lacking two-way communication

To the editor:
The Cedarburg School Board bylaw po0123. Philosophy of the Board, states "The Board declares and, thereby, reaffirms its intent to maintain two-way communications with citizens of the District. The Board shall keep them informed of the progress and problems of the School District, and the citizens shall be urged to bring their aspirations and concerns about the District to the attention of this body."

In the past year, I've emailed school board President Rick Leach six times with questions or concerns about school district policies or actions. Three times, the response I received was the same, "thanks for sharing your thoughts." Twice, I received no response, and one reply said "your request has been received." In contacting Mr. Leach, I was not sharing my thoughts, but asking for information or further discussion on policies that impact district students.

After hearing similar frustrations from other community members, I made an open records request to the district to learn how often Mr. Leach was taking this approach in communicating with district citizens. Over 200 times in the last year, Mr. Leach has used this generic response to parents and residents reaching out to him. Of course, this reply was appropriate in some cases. However, in many cases, this was the response given to parents that were asking questions about recent policy changes or feeling concerned about keeping their kids safe and healthy both mentally and physically at school.

It appears President Leach has often disregarded the board's bylaws by brushing off a considerable number of attempts from district citizens to engage in two-way communication. When you vote on April 5 and choose the best candidates to represent our community and students, I urge you to consider the board's philosophy

and Rick Leach's unwillingness to engage in a dialogue with a number of district residents.

Annie Grunwald
Cedarburg

Personal pronouns matter

To the editor:
This January, the Cedarburg School Board revised Policy 7540.06 (District-issued Staff Email Account) to restrict the information allowed in staff email signatures. As a consequence of this policy change, staff was told they could no longer include personal pronouns in their signature.

Shouldn't CSD policies support ALL students? The updated email policy removes an opportunity for staff to show support to gender diverse students. It communicates respect and acceptance of people of all genders and helps students and staff know everyone is welcome, seen, heard, safe, and valued. The Cedarburg School Board is failing our students with this policy. This policy should be revised to help the district be representative of all students.

The Trevor Project's 2021 National Survey on LGBTQ Youth Mental Health showed 42% of LGBTQ youth seriously contemplated attempting suicide in 2020. Transgender and nonbinary youth whose personal pronouns are respected by those they live with attempted suicide at half the rate of those whose pronouns are not respected. Pronouns matter! Acceptance of students' personal pronouns has potential to improve mental health. Additionally, a statement by the National Association of School Psychologists shares that students in positive school climates with support, role modeling, LGBTQ+ inclusive curriculum, and anti-bullying policies feel safer and have improved academic outcomes than those in schools with high levels of victimization.

The School Board claims to be inclusive and accepting, but their actions do not support this. Per genderspectrum.org, gender-inclusive schools recognize gender impacts all students, interrupt binary notions of gender, acknowledge and account for gender diversity, question limited portrayals of genders, support students' self-reflection, and teach empathy and respect. I urge the School Board to make changes to demonstrate acceptance of ALL students.

Furthermore, I urge readers to consider this issue when voting on April 5.

Kassy Bartelme
Cedarburg

Elect Erickson, Hammett, Maier and Malek to Cedarburg School Board

To the editor:
In my 37 years of living in the Cedarburg School District, I have never witnessed such an irresponsible School Board policy as allowing high school kids to store weapons in their vehicles in the high school parking lot. According to the current Cedarburg School District Student Handbook, page 20, Cedarburg High School students can store unloaded weapons and ammunition in their locked vehicles. Do you really think all kids lock their cars in the parking lot?

This same school board would discipline any employee who has weapons anywhere on the school grounds, including their vehicles. This is according to the Cedarburg School District Employee Handbook, page 15. No one other than a peace officer should have a gun anywhere on school district grounds.

As a mom, I took a hunters safety class with my sons at the Grafton Police Department. My husband and I took a conceal carry class at the Saukville Police Department. There is no reason on this planet, where I would have allowed my sons to throw a gun and ammunition in their trunk next to their soccer gear and cross country uniforms.

I was a high school teacher for 36 years in Port Washington. I had students that lost their lives and harmed others with guns, which was traumatic to all in the community.

The current School Board is irresponsible, more lawsuits are likely to land in their laps because of this issue. We need to elect common-sense members to the Cedarburg School Board. Vote for Kate Erickson, Ryan Hammett, Jamie Maier, and Hani Malek.

Debra Dassow
Cedarburg

Vote Stroebel, Leach and Charland for Cedarburg School Board

To the editor:
Having kept a close eye on the Cedarburg School Board election, I have been struck by the divisive tactics taken by the supporters of the "challengers," Malek, Hammett, Maier and Erickson. These four should not be afforded the luxury of going back and "keeping their hands clean" while their supporters and anonymous social media sites malign and attack Stroebel, Leach and Charland by any means necessary.

Perhaps even more shocking are the claims made by Kate Erickson on her campaign website:

"Too many of our kids, especially children of color, are experiencing bullying and discrimination at the hands of their fellow students right now in our schools."

So are our students racists? No teacher or staff member should ever feel like their life is being put in danger because we are not taking proper steps to mitigate the spread of a deadly disease." Was the School Board wrong in allowing students to be in-person learning for the full school year? I am more and more grateful for that decision as masks are acknowledged to have minimal benefit and vaccines are acknowledged to have little to no benefit for kids under 18 years of age, as they generally do not get severely ill from COVID and the long-term side effects of the vaccines on young people are not well understood.

Although they attempt to be more discreet, other candidates have made similar statements. Malek, Hammett and Maier have aligned themselves with Erickson. They advocate voting for all four candidates and have hosted multiple community-wide events together. It's noteworthy that the slate of four was endorsed by the Ozaukee Democrats. And they claim to be nonpartisan candidates?

Vote Stroebel, Leach and Charland on April 5.

Pete Pavalko
Town of Cedarburg

Stroebel recognizes roles of parents

To the editor:

Please join me in voting for Laura Stroebel for the Cedarburg School Board. While Laura places an emphasis on academic success, she values the role of the parents/guardian in a child's life both at home and at school. She recognizes that parents are the primary caregiver for their children in both settings. Teachers teach, but some areas of raising a child are the responsibilities of the child's parent/guardian, not the schools.

Cedarburg is a wonderful community, and we must establish in our schools an atmosphere of kindness and respect for each and every Cedarburg student, which includes respecting the values of all families. As I will also be voting for Elizabeth Charland and Rick Leach as well.

Michele Miller
Cedarburg

Chromy will serve MTSD, community well

To the editor:
Independent, positive, and ready to get to work, Jill Chromy will serve the MTSD well.

Jill Chromy is an accomplished businesswoman and respected volunteer dedicated to ensuring that Mequon-Thiensville schools are the best they can be.

Jill's credentials and experience set her apart. She has been in this community for 13 years and has contributed significantly through involvement with the schools as a volunteer and substitute teacher. Jill's campaign slogan is "Leadership that Listens to the Voters." She holds regular office hours, one-on-one visits with community members, and events to hear from constituents. Chromy is walking the walk even before being hired by the voters to do so. She hears the Mequon residents who want change in the district and appreciates the work that has been done to navigate the pandemic and adopt an academic recovery plan. She understands that to be the best district for all, we must seek input and engagement from everyone — parents, teachers, taxpayers, and students; those who believe our district is doing great AND those who see room for improvement.

Like so many districts, the MTSD is undergoing significant change with population shifts, a COVID recovery plan and the implementation of new communications tools. We must have steady and inclusive leadership to help navigate these challenges and see them as opportunities.

As a longtime resident of Mequon and mother of two young children myself, I believe in Jill to work diligently and respectfully to represent our community. I have done my homework and ask you to join me in supporting a solutions-oriented leader by casting your vote for Jill Chromy for MTSD School Board on April 5.

Tracy Johnson
Mequon

Support Buzzell, Lavash for MTSD School Board

To the editor:
We are writing in support of Paul Buzzell and Jason Lavash in the upcoming Mequon-Thiensville School Board election.

We are longtime residents of Thiensville who are thankful to have landed here, where we were able to raise our daughters in a supportive environment and where they could attend outstanding schools. We've always known the M-T School Board to be attentive to the needs of all our students and to be supportive of faculty and administrators, who provide a high-quality educational experience and give all students in the district the opportunity to excel. There continues to be an impressive number of students who are being accepted at a wide variety of colleges and universities, so it is clear they are getting a top-notch education in the M-T schools.

Paul and Jason are without question the best qualified among the candidates in this race. Paul has a strong background in business and finance, has previously served on the M-T School Board, and has a long record of volunteer involvement in our schools and community. Jason has focused his entire academic and professional career on public education at all

levels. In addition, his community involvements demonstrate his devotion to youth.

"No teacher or staff member should ever feel like their life is being put in danger because we are not taking proper steps to mitigate the spread of a deadly disease." Was the School Board wrong in allowing students to be in-person learning for the full school year? I am more and more grateful for that decision as masks are acknowledged to have minimal benefit and vaccines are acknowledged to have little to no benefit for kids under 18 years of age, as they generally do not get severely ill from COVID and the long-term side effects of the vaccines on young people are not well understood.

Although they attempt to be more discreet, other candidates have made similar statements. Malek, Hammett and Maier have aligned themselves with Erickson. They advocate voting for all four candidates and have hosted multiple community-wide events together. It's noteworthy that the slate of four was endorsed by the Ozaukee Democrats. And they claim to be nonpartisan candidates?

Vote Stroebel, Leach and Charland on April 5.

Minna and Mark Smith
Thiensville

Keep moving forward: Re-elect Ross to County Board

To the editor:
As a longtime resident of Ozaukee County, I want to voice my opinion on the upcoming District 19 Board of Supervisors race.

I love the natural beauty of our county — that is why my husband and I moved here 10 years ago. I want someone representing our district who is fiscally conservative but also wants to preserve our green spaces. I want to see our community re-elect Bruce Ross. In these difficult times, I think Mr. Ross with his 28 years of military service brings the planning, skill and ingenuity we need to keep what's great about Ozaukee County but with an eye toward the future and changes that may need to occur.

I know Mr. Ross has worked to lower our property taxes, reduce debt and expand law enforcement — of course there are other accomplishments, but these are the issues important to Randy and me.

Frankly, his opponent, Dan Eastman, has acted in ways I cannot and do not support. The presidential election is over. I want to stop spending our county's money on a wild goose chase to prove there was election fraud in Ozaukee County. We have some of the most talented people running the elections — they did not make mistakes. These are honorable people who did a hard job well.

I want to see our district move forward with the important issues of today and I believe Bruce Ross is the person to do that.

Kathryn Weaver
Mequon

Vote Leach, Stroebel, Charland and Calzada to continue excellences in Cedarburg schools

To the editor:
It seems as though there is some disinformation being dispensed from the Erickson/Maier/Malek/Hammett camp running for Cedarburg School Board. They seem to think exaggerating and misstating the teacher retention data in the Cedarburg School District will be beneficial to their campaign.

The district's Human Resources department has compiled a very accurate, detailed and documented analysis of teacher retention in the district. It is available for all to see on the district website. In a nutshell, it shows over the last nine years, the district has lost an average of 6.67 teachers out of roughly 212 teachers in the district per year. That is approximately 3% annually of teachers. Certainly, other teachers have left the district due to career changes, retirements, etc. — these things are to be expected. As far as teachers leaving for other districts, the figures reflect very well on Cedarburg and our fine teachers. It is clear Cedarburg remains a destination district, one in demand for those in the teaching profession. This data certainly refutes the anecdotal claims of the above candidates.

Let's continue the excellence in Cedarburg schools. Please vote Leach, Stroebel, Charland and Calzada for Cedarburg School Board on April 5.

Deb Ingrassia
Town of Cedarburg

Vote, act with love

To the editor:

Dear community members:
Though I have very strong political beliefs, you won't hear them here. WHY? Because our world doesn't need ANOTHER opinion! The world needs more love and equanimity. So, vote for who you want in the school board election, but please vote with love and hope in your heart.

Because when we act from a place of fear or disempowered anger we teach our children our own narrow-mindedness. In our community it's clear how much we value our children, and yet we've let politics and our own emotionality take center stage. The irony is that, while trying to protect our kids, our own inability to get along and listen to one another has created an even bigger emotional burden for our children to inherit.

Polarities offer the potential for partnership. It's time to let go of the judgment, resentment and fear. Go talk to your friends and neighbors who voted for someone else, bless the house you drive by with political signs that you don't agree with, and practice listening instead of speaking.

And maybe, just maybe, you'll enjoy the experience of expanding your own worldview. At the very least, we can show our children how to practice compassion and respect within our community.

Melissa Hale
Cedarburg