

Information Sheet for Board of Education Candidates

Name: Craig Mondschein
Address: 3 Arborwood Lane, White Plains
Email address: craigm9999@gmail.com
Education: HS Half Hollow Hills HS West
BA – University of Rochester
MBA – University of Rochester Simon School
Profession: Corporate Treasurer

Questions

1. Do you currently have children in the White Plains Schools or have you had children in the schools in the past?
 - a. Yes, Amanda graduated 2021 and Sabrina graduates 2024
2. There are many ways individuals can serve the community. Why have you chosen to run for the school board?
 - a. As a parent of children who have attended not only the White Plains schools but other schools as well, I feel I have the perspective and experience to positively impact the education of our White Plains children. I have been able to observe firsthand what has worked and what improvements are needed to meet the educational needs of our children.
 - b. As a community member of WPCSD Finance and Audit committee since 2017, I have gained a very good understanding of the budget and finances of the school district. I feel I can use this knowledge as a Board member to represent the taxpayers of White Plains. I will ensure property taxes are fair and used efficiently to maintain strong property values while delivering a superior education to our children.
 - c. As a parent of post high school age children, I finally have the time to dedicate to the White Plains community as a Board member.
3. What particular skills or experiences qualify you to serve as a school board member? In what school or district activities have you been involved?
 - a. As a parent of a child who had an IEP in elementary school and is now a PhD candidate, I have seen firsthand the positive impact a public school education can have on the life of a child. I have experienced the importance of Teacher, Parent and Administration collaboration to benefit our students and want to promote this approach as a member of the Board.

- b. I grew up in a home where my mother was a Reading and Special Education public school teacher and my father was a Pediatrician. My mother taught in one of the least affluent school districts on Long Island (Roosevelt) and opened the Reading lab to parents in the evening, so they were able to learn to read and write to help make a better life for their families. My father was a strong advocate at IEP meetings for his patients in the schools when requested by parents. Their dedication to helping the community, above and beyond their required jobs, has always been an inspiration to me and taught me about giving back to the community.
- c. As a corporate treasurer it is my responsibility to ensure that proper operating controls are in place to eliminate fraudulent payments and activities that will negatively affect the shareholders of my company. Similarly, as a member of the White Plains Finance and Audit committee we review the financial controls of the District and instruct the school administration to make needed improvements as they arise. As a Board member representing the taxpayers of White Plains, it is a critical role to ensure that our property taxes are being spent wisely and that proper financial controls are in place to eliminate fraudulent activities.
- d. As a Greenburgh Hebrew Center Trustee and former Treasurer, I am actively involved in the recruitment and hiring of professional staff, including religious leaders and teachers, and will bring this experience with me as a member of the Board of Education.

4. What do you think is the most important role of a school board member?

- a. A strong advocate for the very best education experience for all our children based on the needs of every child.
- b. A strong advocate for the taxpayers of White Plains to ensure property taxes are fair and used efficiently to maintain strong property values.
- c. Providing guidance and advice to the White Plains Superintendent and his team on policy and procedure issues to ensure the best possible education for our children and working environment for all White Plains schools employees.

5. What are 2-3 strengths of which the White Plains Public Schools can be proud?

- a. The incredible opportunities our children have to learn both in the classroom and outside the classroom. White Plains has done a very good job of meeting the individual needs of every student.
- b. Dr. Ricca and his team. Dr. Ricca has implemented and continuously ensures a children first approach. Everything the administration, teachers, staff and the Board do is first and foremost for our children. Educating our children has to be, and is the first priority.
- c. The financial condition of the White Plains schools is a huge accomplishment and strength.
 - i. The foresight to create capital funds which are approved by the taxpayers not only upon creation, but also prior to use, has allowed the District to effectively use property taxes on capital projects without a need to issue additional bonds or raise new taxes.
 - ii. At the onset of the pandemic the District was able to purchase and distribute iPads to every child, using existing cash in the bank account, so every student was able to continue to learn through the pandemic.
- d. The quality of the White Plains Schools employees. White Plains has been able to recruit and sustain a very high-quality employee base which translates into a positive and rewarding learning experience for our children.

6. What are the White Plains Schools' greatest challenges?
 - a. The great unknown of the NYS budget and the effect on White Plains schools is an issue for every school district. It is very difficult to effectively budget and plan when a significant amount of State aid is unknown during the budget process. It is critical that Albany supports our students with a fair and equitable budget.
 - b. The age of the White Plains Schools buildings is a huge issue. The administration has done an admirable job maintaining the aging buildings. As a member of the Master Planning Committee, we were able to prioritize the needs of the District and implement a plan to renovate the District infrastructure.
 - c. The changing demographics of White Plains. From the new construction to new members of the community the school district has to meet the needs of the community. The current demographic analysis indicates fewer students in the years ahead but with the new construction this may change. The needs of our students will continue to evolve as new families move into White Plains. The Board and administration have to anticipate these needs.

7. At the end of your term on the School Board, what would you hope to have been the accomplishment you are most proud of!
 - a. Leaving the children of White Plains better than when I joined the Board.
 - b. Allowing our children to reach their full potential as a result of the education they received at White Plains.
 - c. Through education, helping families improve their economic wellbeing for generations into the future.
 - d. The completion of the renovation and restoration of the school buildings.