

VOTER GUIDE – NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION **BLOOMFIELD HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Tuesday, November 3, 2020
POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA

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7 Candidates for School District Board Member for **THREE** 4-year terms

CANDIDATES for SCHOOL BOARD THREE 4-year terms <i>Vote for no more than THREE</i>	Question 1 (150 Words or less): Please provide biographical information and explain why you are running for School Board and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position that you are running for.	Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top three (3) Priority Issues facing your school district and what actions would you take to address them if elected to the school board?
<p>DIMA EL-GAMAL 4713 Maura Ln. West Bloomfield, MI 48323</p>	<p>My background summary below allows me to serve in various ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bloomfield Hills District resident since 2004 • Two district Alumni students including a 2020 Senior • Doctor of Philosophy in Civil/Environmental Engineering, Wayne State University (WSU) • Managing Principal Stantec Consulting, Ann Arbor • West Bloomfield Township Planning Commissioner, Vice Chair • WSU Advisory Board Member and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Member • Bloomfield Hills Schools (BHS) Global Champion Parent, PTO Council Volunteer Award, Scope & Design Task Force Member, and Multi Cultural Celebration Committee. • Co-founder of the Muslim Families of Bloomfield Hills Group • Bloomfield Youth Assistance Recognition Committee Member • Co-Chair of the Friends of 1001 Inventions Michigan • Muslim Unity Center Interfaith Committee Education Liaison & Former Board member. <p>If elected, my goal is to give back to the District that gave my two kids an excellent education & and a safe environment</p>	<p>I am passionate about educational excellence that fosters mental wellness and creates inclusive environments for all students. With my over 25 years of engineering expertise I will support the district with the bond improvements. One of my priorities is to work with the Superintendent and the Board (including Mrs. Southward & Mr. VanGemert, if elected) to have the BHS pioneer incorporation of mental wellness as a graduating requirement. With the Superintendent leadership, BHS District can become one of the first districts in the nation to have a graduating class that has gone through mental wellness programming. With this programming we prepare our students to face life with all its challenges that allows our graduates to face the world and its problems. I also want to examine the district's curriculum and infuse it at all levels through an equity & inclusion lens. I plan to drive advancement by translating my passions into action, and I would be honored to win the District Vote</p>

BLOOMFIELD HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT (Continued)

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<p>NICHOLAS HAUGEN 216 Woodedge Dr., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>DID NOT RESPOND IN TIME FOR INCLUSION</p>	
<p>RENITA JAMES 237 Alice Ave., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302</p>	<p>My family and I have lived in Bloomfield Township since 2010. As a former elementary school teacher, I knew early on that I had a passion for education. Making a difference in the lives of youth was and is still my top priority. Now as a proud parent of a thriving 9-year-old daughter, I have kept this same tenacity by dedicating countless hours to ensure the success of her education. Currently, as a public servant for the last 18 years with the State of Michigan, fourteen of those years as a Departmental Analyst. I understand what it takes to have integrity, character, being diverse, having compassion, and a voice for the voiceless. I have a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science and a MBA. If elected, my top commitment will be ensuring that not only my daughter’s best interests are being heard and met, but the community as a whole.</p>	<p>Reopening Schools: Recently, the school board approved for the in-person and distance learning criteria that transition into a hybrid learning model within a few weeks. If the hybrid model is successful with keeping everyone safe by keeping the COVID-19 infection numbers down, then by January 2021 if elected, I will support the initiatives for in-person learning.</p> <p>Mental Health: The impact of student mental health during COVID will have a lasting effect on their social and emotional well-being because of all the self-isolations, being in small groups, and adjusting to new changes. Resources should be provided on an ongoing basis to address the mental health.</p> <p>Literacy: Literacy in the early stages is crucial, otherwise by the time a student reaches the 3rd & 4th-grade level, it may be too late for resolution. If elected, I will continue to support implementing learning tools that addresses different learning abilities.</p>

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<p>SIVA B. KUMAR 177 E. Long Lk. Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>I am running because I believe in giving back to the community and hope to leverage my experience in strategy and execution to benefit BHS. I believe effective education should combine academic achievement with strong social and behavioral skills.</p> <p>I work as a senior director at DWH Corp, a consulting firm. I have served in leadership roles at firms around Detroit including Meritor, Ford and Tenneco. I have over 30 years of experience in Strategy, Business Development & Finance and have worked with boards to manage interests of multiple stakeholders. I also serve as an advisor at Inventev, an electric vehicle startup in Detroit.</p> <p>I came here as a grad student from India 32 years ago. I have an MS in Engineering from Wayne State and an MBA from the Ross School at the Univ of Michigan. My wife and I have lived in Bloomfield Hills since 2015. Our two children recently graduated from the IA and are both students at the Univ of Michigan, where one is a junior and our youngest is a freshman.</p>	<p>My priorities are:</p> <p>1) equitable education for all - students of color, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, Special Ed students and ELL students continue to perform significantly below average levels. We need to do more work to identify the reasons for such disparities and have concrete, measurable actions to eliminate such gaps.</p> <p>2) As a board member, I will work with BHS administrators on prudent investment of our \$200 mil bond approved by residents and prioritize spending in a post-Covid world - While working in the corporate world, I've worked with boards to manage interests of multiple stakeholders.</p> <p>3) I pledge to effectively implement the BHS strategic plan with a focus on mental well being and post high school readiness - I have over 30 years of experience in Strategy and Finance and I've successfully managed large projects</p>

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<p>MICHELLE SOUTHWARD 2778 Plum Brook Dr., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>My family and I have lived in the district for almost ten years, and have enjoyed every moment of it. I presently have an elementary school child as well as a high school student in the district. My husband and I are committed to Bloomfield Hills school system. I am a leader in my professional community and ever ready to work collaboratively with our students, staff members, parents, and community members to advance our district toward new depths in addressing achievement gaps and a broader educational lens across all levels of learning for our diverse learners. My nearly 20 years of experience working in higher education and serving in many leadership roles including the areas of diversity, retention, and academic advising are value added experiences that place me at the forefront of evaluative progress and systematic change together.</p>	<p>As a candidate for the Bloomfield Hills school board, my top three priorities would be to support a robust mental health education program for our students and staff expanding social and emotional wellness, increase our equity and inclusion district practices throughout individual schools and curricula to directly address the achievement gaps with established tiered interventions and targeted services for all learners, as well as improve our community relations and communication across the district through intentional connections.</p>

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<p>JONATHAN VANGEMERT 1081 Rock Spring Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>I am married to a teacher, who has taught in the district for 15 years. Coincidentally, we have been married for 15 years, also. I have two children, who attend Bloomfield Hills Public Schools and a third, who will join her siblings in the fall of 2021. I grew up in a home that valued education and educators. I graduated from City High School in Grand Rapids, received a BA in Economics and Management at Albion College. I worked for several years as an accounts payable and supply chain management consultant. I went back and received my juris doctorate from the University of Detroit Mercy, and have practiced law for the last 13 years. I have also worked as a case evaluator for the Wayne County Mediation Tribunal. I am excellent with numbers, excellent at communicating ideas, and I pride myself on being reasonable and making arguments with facts and logic.</p>	<p>I will skip a COVID response here.</p> <p>(1) Bloomfield just passed a \$200 million bond, and it requires ethical, responsible and timely stewardship. I helped on the legal team with Bloomfield Forward to help get the Bond passed, and want to help complete the project.</p> <p>(2) Candidates, El-Gamal, Southward and I are committed to working together to introduce mental wellness across the curriculum as well as specific coursework. We believe that it is human to be anxious, stressed, to fear failure and to fear success, etc., and that in addition to normalizing communication about and discussion of mental health, the curriculum will improve self-worth, and theoretically student achievement.</p> <p>(3) Finally, I hope to continue the strides the district is making regarding inclusion and diversity from its Global Champions programs to diversity infused curriculum.</p>

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<p>SAMUEL WALKER 146 Barrington Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302</p>	<p>Hello, my name is Samuel Walker; I am a father of five and a grandfather of three. I have lived within the Bloomfield Hills Community since 2009, have had two children graduate from The Bloomfield Hills school system with my two youngest currently enrolled. I have always enjoyed being a part of the community, my family and I have embraced the culture and cherish the ever-changing diversity of the area. I feel that it is important to be a part of the communities in which we live and feel that it is vital to becoming active and involved. I long for ongoing communications as well as continued improvements within our community. Currently, I carry a Bachelor's in Psychology degree from Oakland University and am active in the process of obtaining a Masters in Community Mental Health from Oakland University as well. Coming from the inner- city of Detroit, from a school system that has had many challenges for many years, I understand what it takes to overcome obstacles ...</p>	<p>My motivation for running to become a school board member is to get involved in the community process. I feel that the school board is an important tool used to further the educational journey of our community. To carry a well informed and diverse school board will translate to a school system that is well equipped to handle the unique issues that may occur during these unprecedented times. My goal for running is to better understand the barriers to quality education for all of our students. I would like the school board to review where we may be lacking educationally, examine the demographics of our schools, and explore at what grade level may we boost proficiency so that we can avoid the pitfalls of lack of preparedness going into high school while setting our children up for success after furthering their education beyond high school.</p>

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