



**2025 Voters Guide for the
Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education
and Chappaqua Library Board of Trustees Election**

**Tuesday, May 20 from 7 am to 9 pm,
Horace Greeley High School Gymnasium**

For information on voter eligibility, early mail and absentee ballots, visit the [LWVNC website page](#) dedicated to this election

Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education Candidates

Two seats up for election; 3-year term; volunteer position
Top two vote getters will take the seats upon the expiration of the current terms on June 30, 2025

Note: Candidates are presented below in the order in which they will appear on the ballot. The candidates themselves supply their personal information; the League is not responsible for the content or accuracy of the responses.

Responsibilities of Office

School Board

The Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District is legally responsible for the education of children residing in the District and the operation of the District's public schools and facilities. The Board shall establish policies and practices that ensure a high-quality education for every student and proper governance of all aspects of District operations. The Board shall exercise oversight of and responsibility for the effective financial management, control and reporting. The Board shall seek to interpret community need and formulate short- and long-range plans to meet such need. The Board shall be responsible for presenting to the community a proposed annual operating budget, bond proposals and other matters that require public vote.

The Board shall evaluate the performance and progress of the District versus identified goals and objectives. The Board shall prepare an annual written performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools. It shall also evaluate its own performance and progress as a Board.

The Board shall observe all federal, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to education and public agencies.

From: [Policy 2000: Board of Education – Principles and Organization - Chappaqua Central School District](#)

Candidate: Timothy McNamara

Background

Residence: (town only and for how long)

Chappaqua, 18 years (1985-2000; 2022-present)

Occupation:

Battalion Chief, Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY)

Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:

AYSO soccer coach, public safety representative for New York City Building Code revisions, principal on inaugural New York City Waterfront Construction Code Managing Committee, principal on National Fire Protection Association Energy Storage Systems Technical Committee

Question 1: Why do you want to serve on the school board?

I want to maintain the quality of the core education experience in our district and ensure we continue to attract and retain amazing teachers who will help our children lead authentic and fulfilling lives. I want to preserve our community culture of compassionate stewardship that values and promotes agency, cooperation, and advocacy. I want our school district to remain open to receiving and exploring ideas and contributions from faculty, students, parents, and the wider community.

I want a Board of Education that holds our school district accountable to embody our community values and to continually progress towards achieving our strategic goals. I want a Board of Education that conducts genuine and thorough evaluation of our district's performance and outcomes to identify areas where we excel and areas where we should improve. I want transparent inquiry so all community members can trust that our district's processes are fair and neutral.

Question 2: What do you think are the main issues facing the Chappaqua Schools

I think that the lack of transparent and detailed evaluation of our school district's progress towards achieving specific goals related to our strategic objectives makes it difficult for our Board of Education to hold our administration accountable for accomplishing these objectives. This lack of transparency produces uncertainty about our strengths, obfuscates issues, and erodes community trust in our district's processes.

Another issue facing our district is the challenge of continuing to attract and retain the high quality of teachers that our community is accustomed to having educate our children. A decline in the teacher workforce increases competition amongst schools for top talent, budgetary constraints lead our administrators to cut faculty and maximize "teacher utilization" to the detriment of the student and

Timothy McNamara, con't

faculty experience, and a perception that constructive feedback from faculty is not welcome in our district all threaten our ability to continue attracting top educators in the future.

Question 3: What about your experiences and skills listed above will make you an effective member of the school or library board?

My experience as a Chief in the Fire Department of the City of New York (FDNY), my graduate education from the Naval Postgraduate School in organizational leadership and management, and my participation on strategic planning committees at the city and national levels have taught me skills that would benefit our school board. Regarding management, I have learned to lead with curiosity and to ask very specific questions when assessing system or individual performance. I've learned to be very precise when setting goals and timeframes for interventions or initiatives. I have developed the capacity to ask these questions and to perform genuine evaluation even when it is uncomfortable, because conducting real assessment helps everyone improve. Empathy and vulnerability are the qualities that have helped me foster collaboration and teamwork. Adaptive leadership requires we remain receptive to new ideas.

*Views expressed are my own and may not reflect those of FDNY

Candidate: Ryan Kelsey

Background

Residence: (town only and for how long)

Chappaqua, 10 years

Occupation:

higher education research

Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:

Current CCSD board member. President for 2024-25 school year • Former member of CCSD Community Advisory Committee on Antiracism, Equity and Social Justice • Former member of the CCSD Education for the Future Committee • Current board member of multiple national college and university consortia focused on innovation and STEM teaching and learning • Former board member of Black Rock Forest Consortium (Cornwall, NY)

Question 1: Why do you want to serve on the school board?

I'm running for a second term because I want to continue to support our district team and community in our collective effort to continuously improve our schools. Over the last three years, I have learned firsthand that experience and continuity are important because of the strategic multi-year nature of the board's work. Examples:

- the partnership with Northwell Health to improve mental health services at low cost;
- capital improvements bringing improved safety, upgraded HVAC, fiber optic, tennis court lighting, middle school baseball field, new roofs, and a fully functioning (and weekend accessible!) outdoor bathroom at Greeley;
- world language instruction for K-4 and the exploration of adding the International Baccalaureate.

To accomplish long-term initiatives, it takes several years of consistent committed leadership aligned to the district's strategic plan and the needs of our community, and I would like to continue providing stable sensible oversight as a board member for another term.

Question 2: What do you think are the main issues facing the Chappaqua Schools

Chappaqua schools are among the highest performing in the state. Our students, staff, faculty, and facilities are top notch, and our community is very engaged, so anything we consider changing needs to be well thought out and executed with care. What I have learned in three years of board service is that it is important to keep our eyes on the big picture, guided by our strategic plan and what is best for kids. Resisting the tendency to let external events or nonessential issues distract us from our mission to serve every student who lives here can be challenging. However, it is essential that we remain focused and stay the course. We also need to be mindful of the cost of living in Chappaqua and keep our annual budgets reasonable.

For more on my priorities, please visit <https://VoteRyanKelsey.com>.

Question 3: What about your experiences and skills listed above will make you an effective member of the school or library board?

My professional expertise, current board service, and experience as a district parent have me well prepared to continue to effectively navigate the opportunities and challenges we face together.

Ryan Kelsey, con't

I'm a former university administrator who led a teaching innovation center and taught educational design courses to pre-service teachers and science to undergraduates. Now I lead a team at a national nonprofit conducting educational research to help colleges make strategic improvements to better serve students. My work requires active listening, consensus building, budget and strategy analysis, and advocacy for those who have been historically marginalized. All these skills come into play in board service.

In my first term, I gained knowledge of education policies and our role as fiduciaries that I will use going forward. And my ten years as a parent in Chappaqua gives me valuable insight into what our district families need from elementary school through high school and beyond.

Candidate: Hilary Steuer Grasso

Background

Residence: (town only and for how long)

Chappaqua - 18 years

Occupation:

I am an Educational Attorney. I have also worked as an educational consultant and served as an adjunct professor of both education law and special education law for roughly a decade.

Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:

In addition to having served two terms on the school board, with two turns as President, I have been an active PTA and community volunteer. I was a co-chair of ASE at Grafflin for two years and a co-chair of Grafflin theater as well. I co-chaired costumes for Bell Theater this year, and co-chaired the 7th grade social. I also volunteer at the Cottage School as part of a "lunch bunch" and have served on both the Religious School and Inclusion committees at Temple Beth El. I have volunteered at the Chappaqua Children's Book Festival every year since its inception.

Question 1: Why do you want to serve on the school board?

For a board to function at its best, there needs to be a combination of new ideas and institutional knowledge. We have a very new board right now, especially for Chappaqua, and I believe it is

Hilary Grasso, con't

important to the health of the district for there to be stability moving forward, especially in these uncertain times.

On a personal level, I hope to be able to see some of the initiatives we've started through to fruition. It has been very rewarding to see some of the changes that have come about in special education since pushing for an audit during my first term, including adding resource rooms to the middle schools. I'm thrilled that we're introducing world languages to the elementary schools in the fall - I've felt very passionately about this initiative and would love to be on the board during this roll-out.

Question 2: What do you think are the main issues facing the Chappaqua Schools

The biggest issue is the uncertainty around both funding and the potential changing of laws and regulations. We have insulated ourselves financially as well as possible, which is a testament to our administration, but it is important to have a board well-versed in budgeting and school finance, and, at this moment, I believe it is crucial to have someone with a legal background on the board. We must also ensure that all of our students feel they belong. This is one of the pillars of our strategic plan, and an area where we continually work to improve. The world is replete with conflict; we need to protect the neutrality of our schools while also teaching our students the skills to navigate difficult conversations and respect their peers and teachers. Our schools must be places where all of our students and teachers know they will be safe.

Question 3: What about your experiences and skills listed above will make you an effective member of the school or library board?

Coupled with my six years on the school board, including two terms as president, I have extensive experience in school law, with particular expertise in special education law. I have also worked on school governance issues, including helping staff and train school boards. I am a trained mediator. Serving on the BOE through challenges such as Covid prepared me for continued service during these turbulent times. The laws and the intersection between state and federal regulations may be changing and I have a unique ability among the candidates to understand and help the district navigate that. I have been serving as the board's advocacy liaison and, based on my professional experience, have been asked by the New York State School Boards Association to serve on the Commissioner's Advisory Panel on Special Education in the new position of BOE representative, if I am reelected.

Candidate: Allison Steinbauer

Background

Residence: (town only and for how long)

Chappaqua, 11 years

Occupation:

Former Special Education Teacher

Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:

Chair of various Roaring Brook PTA Committees, RBS Building Level PTA Vice Chair and Chair, Board of Education Communication Committee Member

Question 1: Why do you want to serve on the school board?

Being involved in our schools and community has been incredibly rewarding, but it's also made it clear how much more we can accomplish. I'm running because I want to help drive real, meaningful progress. Serving on the Board of Education will allow me to put my knowledge, expertise, and experience to work to help strengthen our schools. I want to ensure that every student feels safe and supported in an environment where they can learn, grow, and thrive.

Strong schools are built on thoughtful program growth, responsible budgeting, and a deep commitment to our students' social and emotional development. I believe that by working together, we can make our schools even stronger — giving every child the tools, the support, and the confidence they need to succeed.

Question 2: What do you think are the main issues facing the Chappaqua Schools

Prioritize the mental, physical, and emotional health and safety of all students.

Provide inclusive and accessible education policies that meet the needs of every learner.

Attract and retain outstanding teachers — and ensure their voices are valued and heard.

Maintain Chappaqua's high academic standards while making smart, responsible decisions to stay within budget.

Question 3: What about your experiences and skills listed above will make you an effective member of the school or library board?

Combining my years of experience as a Special Education teacher in inclusion classrooms with my more recent work as a community volunteer has given me a unique perspective on the challenges our district faces. I understand the issues our community cares deeply about — and I know how to collaborate effectively to create real, lasting solutions.

Chappaqua Library Board of Trustees

One seat up for election; three-year term; volunteer position

Note: Candidates are presented below in the order in which they will appear on the ballot. The candidates themselves supply their personal information; the League is not responsible for the content or accuracy of the responses.

Responsibilities of Office

Library Board

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of a New York State Public Library. According to the NYS Education Department, library trustees play a keenly important role in shepherding the dedicated and prudent use of library resources. Always striving to provide the best service which benefits and supports the entire community, trustees must make policy, personnel and fiscal decisions crucial to a positive direction for the library. While delegating the day-to-day activities to competent staff, the library trustees must always be mindful of how their decisions impact the lives of people and the future of their community. As public officers, library trustees carry an essential and vital set of fiduciary and legal responsibilities. (<https://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/trustees/>)

The responsibilities of trustees are few in number but broad in scope. They are:

- Create and develop the mission of the library;
- Regularly plan and evaluate the library's service program based on community needs;
- Select, hire and regularly evaluate a qualified library director;
- Secure adequate funding for the library's service program;
- Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the use of public and private funds;
- Adopt policies and rules regarding library governance and use;
- Maintain a facility that meets the library's and community's needs;
- Promote the library in the local community and in society in general;
- Conduct the business of the library in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and with respect for the institution, staff and public.

From: HANDBOOK FOR LIBRARY TRUSTEES OF NEW YORK STATE, 2018 Edition,
<https://nyslibrary.libguides.com/Handbook-Library-Trustees/duties-responsibilities>

Candidate: Pam Moscowitz

Background

Residence: (town only and for how long)

Chappaqua for 31 years

Occupation:

Social Worker

Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:

UJA - Northern Westchester Board, Community Center of Northern Westchester Board, Bet Torah Board of Directors, Mt. Kisco Child Care Center Board of Directors, Member of the Chappaqua Garden Club,

Question 1: Why do you want to serve on the library board?

I am eager to bring my passion for community service and collaborative spirit to the Library Board.

Question 2: What do you think are the main issues facing the Chappaqua Library

The Chappaqua Library Board continues to work hard to insure that we are using our resources efficiently and effectively towards meeting the needs of our community.

Question 3: What about your experiences and skills listed above will make you an effective member of the school or library board?

I am a friendly, outgoing and personable citizen. Working well with others and understanding my roles is a strong suit of mine.