

SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES' RESPONSES

Presented By:



MEET THE CANDIDATES

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Joseph Consolmagno, Ward 1

Joe Consolmagno is a 36-year resident of Bethel Park Ward 1. Joe is a graduate of Robert Morris University and has 45 years of management in the Food Services Industry. In 2016, Joe was appointed to Bethel Park Council and in 2017 he was elected to Bethel Park Council 2017. Prior to council, Mr. Consolmagno served on numerous Municipal and school district committees. Joe enjoys walking and biking on the Montour Trail. Joe has been married to Alexis for 36 wonderful years and has two children who are both graduates of Bethel Park School District.

As a council member, Joe Consolmagno has been instrumental in the following projects in Ward 1 and throughout the Municipality:

- Advocated for grant money to accomplish many of the improvements mentioned above – nearly \$4mm in the last 4 years.
- Attended numerous meetings with Bethel Park residents in the Coverdale area.
- Held Coffee/Milk with a Bethel Park Cop at the Schoolhouse Arts & History Center.
- Improved road program with the addition of Robotics (automated evaluation system).
- Initiated the Bee ordinance in 2019.
- New Miner's playground equipment for the young children and adults to enjoy.
- Promoted signs to be erected for lower and

upper Miner Fields.

- Promoted the demolition of properties on Elm and Willow Streets.
- Responsible to the residents to manage the budget within our means.
- Service the many needs and requests of the residents of Ward 1.
- Supported accomplished municipal manager- Laurence Christian.
- Supported construction of storm water management projects to avoid future flooding of residents.
- Supported the acquisition of the Bethel Green property to protect 41 acres for the purpose of greenspace in Bethel Park.
- Upgrade to Miner's Park, field & drainage renovations, renovation of concession stand, new fencing.

Mr. Consolmagno is looking excited to support the upcoming projects. He is involved in the design and building of the Splash Pad at the Community Center for all residents of Ward 1 and Bethel Park to enjoy opening spring 2022. He will continue to always be receptive to the needs of the residents of Ward 1 by following through with their needs and requests, encourage a cooperative business attitude and work to build strong communications between the new superintendent, school district administration and council.

Why I Am Running for Council

I want to continue to serve the residents of Ward 1 in the best possible capacity as an

honest trustworthy person addressing the needs and requests of the residents.

David Espinar, Ward 7

David Espinar graduated from Bethel Park High School. Upon graduating high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and

served on active duty. After the Marine Corps, he served as a medic for the Pennsylvania National Guard. He has been trained as an EMT

and trained hundreds of soldiers as “Combat Lifesavers” prior to being deployed overseas. He has earned multiple certifications in emergency medical care to include PHTLS, Trauma Aims, and is a Basic Life Support instructor. During his military service, he earned his Bachelor’s degree in education from Slippery Rock University. He earned his Master’s degree from Duquesne University in

educational administration and leadership. He has volunteered in local sports, programs, and various volunteer organizations. He currently is an educator for the Bethel Park School District. Currently, he volunteers as a member of the Bethel Park Shade Tree Commission. David is supported to run for office by his wife Jennifer and three children, Cristiano, Adriana, and Santino.

Why I Am Running for Council

Hello Bethel Park! My name is David Espinar and I am running for Bethel Park Council representing Ward 7. The reason I am running for council is to be able to continue to serve the community that has provided my family with many great memories and opportunities. As a Bethel Park Alumnus, I have fond memories of a wonderful childhood, great schools, and a sense of community. After serving on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps, I returned home to Bethel Park where I continue to give back as

an educator. As a father of three young children, I value the importance of having the youth involved in a variety of ways, whether that is through community programs, recreational activities, or volunteer opportunities. As a member of council, I plan on being responsive to citizen concerns, ensuring fiscal responsibility, and continuing to look for opportunities to raise the quality of life for all Bethel Park residents.

Lindsay Flinn, Ward 9

Lindsay Flinn has been your neighbor in Bethel Park for thirteen years. Her husband, Jason, is a lifelong Bethel Park resident and business owner. She has two young children, Vinny and Dom, and she runs her own small business, Power Color Beauty. Lindsay holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and

Master of Arts in Higher Education, both from Geneva College. She has spent her career working in higher education and in the service industry before starting her own business. Lindsay and Jason also proudly support SHIM by collecting and donating during needs-based drives.

Why I Am Running for Council

I am running for Council because it is important to get involved on a local level. I am committed to transparent access to municipal information, prioritizing the needs of young families, and fostering a welcoming community for all of our neighbors and visitors. I love supporting new and local

businesses and believe that Bethel Park is ready for more positive change. Representation in leadership matters, and as a woman, I am prepared to be a new and diverse voice on the Council. Public service is a privilege, and I would be honored to serve this community as your representative.

Danielle Gosnell, Ward 3

I am employed by a major international manufacturing company’s legal department. I have been on BP Lions Club board since 2015 (President in 2017-2019.) I have held various board positions with the Rotary Club of USC-BP (President in 2019-2020.) I was named “Rotarian of the Year” in 2015-2016. I chaired

the USC Rotary Farmers Market in 2018-2019. I sat on BP Historical Society board from 2018-2019. I am currently a PTO Homeroom Coordinator at Washington Elementary. I was a “Big Sister” from 2007-2017 with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh. I completed the Court Appointed Special Advocates

program in 2015. I was the Washington County March for Babies Chair in 2016 & 2017.

Why I Am Running for Council

My husband, two sons, & I are proud to call Bethel Park our home. Ever since I was a little girl, I had a dream of being a public servant in some shape or form. It is time for some fresh, diverse ideas, & people to represent our growing community. In 2015, I took the next

step & started my 2nd Master's program in Law & Public Policy to better prepare me to serve our community. I feel with my professional, philanthropic, & personal knowledge: I would be a perfect candidate to serve Bethel Park!

Jim Hannan, Ward 3

I am a 40+ year resident and homeowner in Bethel Park. I have spent almost half of my post college career working in senior management positions in local government. Over my career I have managed two municipal Authorities in Allegheny County. I have experience on how government works and how it does not. I earned both my Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh. I am a registered Professional Engineer in the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and have professional memberships with the American Society of Civil Engineers, Pennsylvania Water Environment Association and Water Environment Federation. I have a professional association with the Allegheny County Borough's Association where I served on the Board of Directors from 2005 to 2021, was Vice President in 2008-2009, and was President in 2010.

Why I Am Running for Council

Over the last few years there have been many challenges and opportunities for community life in Bethel Park.

Bethel Park has responded well to the pandemic from the safety protocols put in place to the vaccine distribution.

Being the incumbent I would like to see these things that have been developed under my term in office for example Blueprint Bethel Park, Live Well Bethel Park grow and prosper.

It is not going to be an easy road ahead but my experience will enable us to focus our limited assets to where they are needed.

This is my key focus:

- Keep our neighborhoods safe
- Protect our property values
- Keep Property Taxes low
- Expand our recreational facilities and programs for all residents
- Provide innovative and creative solutions
- Focus on the Future

Don Harrison, Ward 5

Hello, my name is Don Harrison. I have been Fifth Ward Bethel Park Councilman for 48 years, Boy Scout leader for 40+ years. I did many things for the Scout Troop: ran summer camp for 10+ years, ran fund raisers, planned and lead spring educational trips to historical places (Gettysburg, Williamsburg, Ford museum, etc.). Guided many Scouts in the process of becoming Eagle Scouts. I was

elected to Home Rule Charter (HRC) commission, authored a large part of the HRC, chaired Council committees, provided Fifth Ward constituents, as well as other BP residents, with necessary interaction with Municipality. I also organized a volunteer group to man the Community Center desk to guide visitors.

Why I Am Running for Council

I am a long-term apolitical member of Council. I have built a reputation of serving people based on facts and not on politics. I am the elected Councilman from the 5th Ward but get requests for help from the entire Municipality. I am frequently criticized by

Council members for casting a no vote on items that I do not consider are in the best interest of the public. At times Council takes actions contrary to the law. I inform the public of these actions much to the chagrin of the offending Council members.

Joe Janosik, Ward 5

Joe is 50 years old, was born and raised in Bethel Park and lives here with his wife, Sharon, and their sons, Jack & Max. He attended St. Germaine Catholic School and graduated from Bethel Park High School in 1988. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from West Virginia University. Joe currently works as Vice

President and Team Leader at BNY Mellon facilitating the transfer of assets in global markets and is serving his third year on Bethel Park's Zoning Hearing Board. He also has experience in new home construction sales and the computer networking industry.

Why I Am Running for Council

I want to run because I love Bethel Park and share its vision. I am excited about the opportunity to expand my contributions. Being an Officer on the Zoning Hearing Board has been extremely rewarding and I want to take that to the next level. Since I became involved locally, my life has more purpose.

Specifically, I would like to focus on connecting the community to the Library T line to make sure this distinct feature stays viable. Seeing the difference that I can make, even at the local level, has been inspiring. I am ready and I am able.

John Oakes, Ward 3

I am originally from East Pittsburgh and chose to move to Bethel Park 10 years ago and I have also relocated my Plumbing business into our community. I have been a registered Master Plumber for 14 Years and my company employs 7 local people. Amanda and I have three children Madeline, Benjamin, and the Late John Oakes Jr.

been a Volunteer with the SHIM Community Garden, Bethel Park Historical Society, Bethel Park Municipal Authority where I currently serve as VP along with several other community groups. I take pride and work very hard on these organizations to move our community forward. What drew me to Bethel Park was the friendliness of the people and seeing neighbor helping neighbor and I believe that is what makes Bethel Park a great place to call home.

My involvement in the community started shortly after moving to Bethel Park. I have

Why I Am Running for Council

My involvement in the community started more than 10 years ago when I moved to Bethel Park. I learned very quickly that Bethel Park is a community of people that are willing to help each other in times of need. I am currently a volunteer at SHIM Community Garden, Historical Society, and Municipal Authority and have worked on a number of community projects.

Based on my Community involvement, I have had a number of neighbors and friends encourage me to run for Municipal Council. I believe my experience on the Municipal Authority has helped me gain an understanding of local government and this is why I chose to run for Council.

Justin Tiano, Ward 9

My name is Justin Tiano and I have been a Bethel Park resident with my wife and two daughters for 13 years. I had grown up in the south hills, went to Penn State University currently own and operate a local business with my brother. I am very excited that my youngest daughter desires to keep the family business going! My wife and I are both active Rotarians and have volunteered in several

local organizations to keep our community amazing! I love to find activities and volunteer opportunities that we can do as a family. We have participated in SHIM food drives, clean up days and tree planting. I have also volunteered at Spartan Pharmacy's vaccination clinics. I look to continue helping people and bring us together in Bethel Park Ward 9.

Why I Am Running for Council

Bethel Park is an amazing place to live. I have lived here for over a decade with my wife and two children. During that time, we have participated in many Bethel Park events including the gingerbread house competition, Christmas and Halloween decorating contests and several volunteer opportunities. I would love to see more residents get involved in everything Bethel Park has to offer. I believe

that I would be an amazing conduit to my constituents and can spread the word. Additionally, I am here to represent the people of my ward; listen to their concerns and strive to create transparency between the residents and the council. I will work hard to keep taxes low, the municipality safe, and our parks clean for all to enjoy.

Jonathan Winfield, Ward 9

I have been married to my wife, Amy Allen Winfield, for nearly 18 years. We have five children: one son and four daughters. I am a District Sales Leader for a Fortune 500 company responsible for over 400 accounts and seven direct reports. I cultivate business relationships, negotiate contracts, resolve customer issues, and manage my portion of

the facility's budget. I have organized several successful fundraisers including: Make A Wish, One Warm and Hero Box. I am a Member of the South Hills Knights of Columbus, a Son of the American Legion and a Eucharistic Minister at St Thomas More Church in Bethel Park.

Why I Am Running for Council

I am running for Council in Ward 9 to give back to the community that my family and I continue to call home after 20 years. I want to do more to keep BP the greatest place to live, work and raise a family in Allegheny County. The safety of all residents, businesses and those visiting our community is my top priority.

No new taxes! We can accomplish more in our community without increasing municipal income or property taxes. I will be a councilman for all of BP to ensure our community continues to thrive well into the future.

MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

The following are the responses to the questions that the Municipal Council Candidates were asked at the Candidates Forum hosted by the Bethel Park Chamber of Commerce held on May 4, 2021 at the Bethel Park Municipal building. *PLEASE NOTE: The content below is provided as presented with the exception of grammatical and spelling edits.*

1. **What can be done to reduce the amount of policing, and thus the amount of the budget spent on police, in Bethel Park?**

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I do not know if the police budget needs reducing or not. I would need to research our entire municipal budget to pinpoint how the money is being spent in the police department as compared to other departments. I am open to discussing new ways to look at all budget issues. That being said, Bethel Park police officers deserve to be compensated fairly and appropriately.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Police presence belongs in all communities. I do not believe in defunding the police. I do believe in reforming the police. This includes providing annual robust training programs including regular mental health checks for all police officers. I would also find funding for the police officers to have body cameras. Overall, these measures protect the police and the citizens.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5,

I would have to look more closely at the budget before I could speak to this, but I do not see any reason to reduce the amount of policing at this time. The reason for this large expense in the budget is the salary and benefits that we provide to those who protect us. We cannot reduce public safety measures in any way that sacrifices the safety of our Community.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Reducing the amount of policing or cutting the Police Department budget would be detrimental to our residents and our businesses. The BPPD is not only responsible for the safety of our 30,000+ residents, but they must also respond to matters involving the thousands of people working, shopping, and transporting goods to our vibrant community.

The police exist to enforce the laws of the state, county, and the Municipality of Bethel Park. Seeking to reduce the police force/budget will result in a strapped department having to choose what laws to enforce and what calls for help are worthy of a response.

2. **The police budget is massive when compared with every other budgeted expenditure. If you were to reallocate funds from the police to another department which, would you choose and why?**

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Please refer to my answer from question #1.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

In 2019 the annual budget for Public Safety was \$8,451,528. This is 35% of Bethel Parks Annual budget. Again, without fully analyzing the budget of all departments with a professional financial advisor, I do not think I can say I would reallocate any funds at this time.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

See above regarding the size of the police budget. I would not reallocate funds from the police to another department, but I would consider reallocating within the police department to implement mental health and diversity training. Proper training would serve the community and officers well and help protect the community from costly litigation.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

A line-item review of the municipal budget would need to be conducted to determine the scope of the police department's budget in comparison to the community's expected return on investment. The men and women of our police department are highly trained individuals placed in extremely stressful circumstances day in and day out.

They put their lives on the line every time they pull over a car, knock on a door or answer a call of distress. In my opinion, the current budget is sufficient if the department is getting the training and equipment needed to continue keeping our community safe. I will not vote to reallocate funds from the police department; however, I would like to see where we could save money from other departments to move into Parks/Recreation and Public Works

3. Is the community oversight currently being done on police adequate and do you think it is leading to fair and equal outcomes?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

We should strive for fair and equal treatment of every single Bethel Park resident, visitor, official, and person that works in and for the municipal. There is always room to examine current municipal policies, the police department included, and determine if we are using the best practices possible.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I do not believe we have any community oversight on the police department that is publicly run. I do believe there is an opportunity to implement a Citizens Police Review Committee. This is a common practice in other communities.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I have not seen anything that would question the oversight of the police department nor whether that would lead to fair and equal outcomes. I would ask anyone who has concerns about this particular issue to reach out to me directly to discuss their experiences.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

We, as a community and a nation, must not lose faith in our men and women who swear to serve and protect ALL citizens. Unfortunately, there are individuals in almost all walks of life that have a dark heart and commit atrocious and cowardly crimes against those they swear to teach, manage, or protect. Second guessing an outcome of a police encounter days after or longer is dangerous to our community. Our justice system is designed to ensure ALL people are innocent until proven guilty. ALL people are treated equally under the law. If there is an issue involving an officer, it should first be directed to their supervisor, the Chief of police and then the courts if necessary, to ensure an individual's rights were not compromised.

4. **Why do you run for office as a Democrat when you only place signs in your yard for Republican candidates running at federal, state, and local levels? (for Joe Consolmagno)**
5. **What is your opinion on whether we should limit expansion of commercial property in Bethel Park?**

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Small businesses are at the heart and soul of Bethel Park. Not a day goes by that I do not hear praises of local restaurants, coffee shops, or services. Let's focus on supporting and growing the small businesses we already have. Then we can work on ways to make Bethel Park more inviting to new small businesses.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I'm not sure there is much more area to expand commercial development; however, a lot of current commercial property is long overdue for rehab.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I don't think that we should develop every parcel, but commercial expansion adds to the tax base and provides more revenues that are necessary to meet the growing needs of the community.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I am in favor of less government regulation and believe in the free market. With that said, the retail business segment is going through a metamorphosis that could have a significant impact on existing commercial property.

I applaud Simon properties efforts converting vacated store space at the mall into restaurants and medical facilities instead of leaving our once thriving mall desolate. Consideration should be given to unused and under-utilized properties within the municipality before removing more green space from the community.

6. What are your plans for making Bethel Park a marketable community to attract new businesses and residence?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

These are two separate but connected issues. Expanding Bethel Park's sidewalk network in areas close to schools, public transit stops, businesses, and community amenities will better connect residents and visitors to local businesses. Continuing to update our neighborhood and community parks, as well as explore more ways to better utilize our Community Center will enhance the hometown pride that is already so strong in Bethel Park and make our community an even more desirable place to live.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

If we rehab our current commercial property, new businesses would be willing to move their business to Bethel Park. Keeping the houses affordable and at a low tax rate will attract new residents. Also, providing a welcoming environment along with an excellent school district will help our community grow and flourish.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

Blueprint Bethel Park states that we will provide an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community that fosters business development and innovation, protects and enhances environmental resources and respects local heritage while addressing the challenges of the future. I would start with doing more to connect the community to the T, our schools, and the local business districts. Fixing our existing sidewalks and strategically placing new ones would be a good start. More walking/bike trails and bike racks, too. Other attractive features are the steadily rising home values and the proximity to shopping and downtown Pittsburgh.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Bethel Park continues to be a community where individuals want to do business and raise families. We have several new businesses opening their doors for the first time throughout 2021. Our Realtors are navigating a robust housing market where homes in Bethel Park are on the market for a few short hours before being sold.

We need to continue investing in our infrastructure, our police/volunteer fire departments and revamping/maintaining our many parks. I do business in many parts of Allegheny and surrounding counties and not one compares to the large borough with the small town feel we all call home. Additionally, we need to keep municipal taxes low and work closely with our school directors to make BP schools top in the state.

7. How do you feel about the transportation options currently available in Bethel Park?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Bethel Park has some fantastic public transportation options in the Trolley line, Port Authority Buses, and the Mon Valley Buses. We must make these public transportation stops safe and easily accessible for our current riders. This may help to bring more revenue into our community as well as help our residents with better employment opportunities.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I'm all for preserving the Library trolley line. We can increase sidewalks and bike lanes to allow safer eco-friendly modes of transportation. Some commercial properties have sidewalks, but in other places, the infrastructure is sporadic and leads nowhere. Develop and annually fund a program to build and improve sidewalks according to the Sidewalk priority map referenced in the Blueprint Bethel Park. The Snow Angels Program would assist the resident with their sidewalks if they were unable to take care of them themselves.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

See above regarding sidewalks, but there aren't many communities that have a Trolley line split at its entrance that leads to two different ends. This is special and needs to be preserved.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

There are no shortages of transportation for residents to traverse our community. Public transportation options include the T, Mon Valley and Port Authority busses. There are also several private options using ride sharing services or taxis.

8. If you could change one thing in our zoning code, what would it be and why?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

According to the 2020 Municipal Comprehensive Plan, updating the Zoning Ordinances is a high priority to start work towards a "downtown" area in Bethel Park. Currently, it would be illegal to create a downtown district because of setback distance from the Trolley, commercial vs residential spaces, public and private parking, etc. I would explore opening up our zoning code to make way for the downtown retrofit.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Overall, I'm impressed with our two zoning code employees. It seems like they are always willing to try to accommodate the citizens of Bethel Park. I have not had any personal issue with zoning; however, I'd like to reach out to the citizens of the 3rd ward to see if they feel differently. I do think there's always room for improvement for transparency in all departments.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

Getting blighted/abandoned properties cleaned up more easily. They are an eyesore and bring down the housing values around them.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Zoning codes are in place to protect the integrity of our community's design and function. I will work closely with the Municipal Planner and the Municipal Engineers when considering proposed changes or additions to our zoning codes.

9. How do you plan to involve Bethel Park residents in the decision-making process?**Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9**

The current Municipal Council did a fantastic job gathering input from residents when creating the Bethel Park Blueprint. Community events, public forums, and various surveys were used to get citizens involved. Since we are currently limited physically, I would like to make Bethel Park's online resources more user-friendly. Let's create continuity between the municipal website and social media outlets to make information more transparent and accessible so that residents can be better-informed citizens.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Our residents want to live in a community they feel is safe and close-knit, they want transparency and a responsive local government. The residents of Bethel Park deserve total transparency regarding all municipal matters. This also includes implementing an anti-nepotism policy within the municipal hiring and bidding process. Personal accountability means reaching out to the residents of Ward 3 for feedback and listening to their needs. I've gotten so much feedback the residents have felt "unheard" when they have concerns regarding municipal matters in Ward 3.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

By being available and transparent, and by encouraging them to speak up at Council meetings and even run for office if they really want to be involved in the decision-making process.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I will govern with absolute transparency. Social media and other internet platforms are a convenient way for two-way communication between the residents of Ward 9 and me. I also understand that there may be residents within our community that do not

use social media or those that could find navigating the internet to be cumbersome. I would encourage all residents to...

10. If you were given a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure (road, bridge, sidewalks, etc.) how would you evaluate whether or not the project is worth implementing?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

First, I would consult the 2020 Comprehensive plan that lays out all the high-priority projects as defined already by the community and municipal leadership. Second, I would compare community value vs financial burden. Will the proposed public infrastructure enhance the residents' quality of life, bring in more revenue to the community, and/or make our community safer? Making a decision like this is multifaceted and bigger than just one person.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I'd reach out to the citizens of Bethel Park. Their voice is of the utmost importance to our community, and they deserve to be heard.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

Cost, cost, cost. We can't build what we can't pay for and everything is more expensive so this will be a challenge. I believe that the Municipality has a bidding process that helps to keep the price of the bids down. These bids are reviewed carefully before any decision is made. I would rely on the experts who evaluate the bids to make a recommendation and respond to any questions, comments, or concerns that I have.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I would rely expert testimony from the Municipal Planner and Engineers to establish the need of the infrastructure project. Next, I would evaluate the case study with the associated costs, review of any negative impact to private property and outline the benefits the project would bring to our community. Finally, if the project is deemed worthy of implementation and is put to a vote, I would only vote yes if the project was fully funded without the need to raise taxes or take on municipal debt.

11. If elected, what three steps would you to put in place to get Bethel Park on a firmer financial footing?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

This would take some time to dive into the current and past budgets as well as what is being proposed for the future.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Municipalities are often recipients of county funding. The County receives funding from the Federal and State governments in which they disperse to various municipalities.

Having healthy communication with County Council often helps expedite those grants. I'd also evaluate the social and demographic changes within the community. This includes population, age distribution, and personal income – which have significant and lasting effects on local budgets. Finally, several factors can influence the economic environment of local government budgeting, including economic influences, inflation, interest rates. You can prepare for economic influences by (1) prohibiting departments from spending all their allocations, holding back on permission to hire new staff or make other contractual commitments, building reserves or rainy-day funds; and (2) obtaining a competitive advantage over other jurisdictions is to export the tax burden, lifting it from residents to nonresidents. Such action reduces taxes on residents while allowing service levels to be maintained.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I'm not sure that we're not on firm financial footing. I was concerned that there wasn't enough emergency money to pay for the damage from the 2018 flood, but the Municipality took care of that I believe. That's one, a bigger reserve fund that appears to have been addressed.

Secondly, it is my understanding that the Municipal pension funds are both more than 90% funded which is fantastic. I know this is good because I've worked for the largest custodial bank in the world since 2008, so I know the devastating effects that the Great Recession that year had on pensions and other retirement plans all over the country. We are in good shape here.

Lastly, I would work to make Bethel Park an inclusive, safe, and well-connected community as stated in the Blueprint Bethel Park plan. This should preserve and increase home values and the tax base which would also put us on firmer financial footing.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Step One – Is the budget balanced? Research and Analyze the existing budget in committee looking for savings or potential cost overtures in every department.

Step Two – Secure funding for long term financial obligations. Council has historically managed our pension obligations successfully and I would work with our new members and Municipal Manager to continue this trend.

Step Three – Refuse to take on debt. We can accomplish more for our residents with the tax revenue currently being collected.

12. What is your plan to ensure that Bethel Park a welcoming and safe community for everyone, regardless of their gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or gender designation?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

The school district has recently created a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee made up of students, teachers, School Directors, Administration, and community members. A committee like this is also needed on a municipal level and has already been proposed in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as an "Inclusion and Accessibility Committee to advise Council on establishing Bethel Park as a welcoming community that promotes and honors Diversity." In August 2020, elected officials and community leaders hosted a Roundtable Discussion on Race, Discrimination, and Inclusion. I would build upon and see through what has already been started.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I want to be an example to our community. It starts right here. Bethel Park is over 50% women, and our council needs to reflect that. We have not had a council member with a young family in over two decades. Unfortunately, bullying exists in our community. Take a look at some local Facebook pages. We could create an "anti-bullying program" within Bethel Park, just like our current "Live Well" series. I think this would be a wonderful way to educate the residents about real issues that are happening within the community.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

First, I would make sure that everyone knows that I am available to anyone in our Community, not just the 5th Ward where I'm running, to reach out to me directly if they are not having a healthy experience here. Having a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, or sub-committee to Health, Safety & Welfare would be a good start. There is a lot to be learned about unconscious bias and how it can affect people adversely.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

We are ALL one people under God. I will never vote in favor of a bill, law or ordinance that promotes the exclusion of others.

13. Bethel Park has a lot of older residence, what is your plan to attract younger people and families to the municipality?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I would continue to prioritize the upgrades of our neighborhood and community parks. Our residents no longer have to go to neighboring community parks. I want to explore making better use of our Community Center by expanding the breadth of activities and programming, as well as create a space for unstructured use for youth and families. Also, hearing from several residents, community youth sports is an area of concern that needs to be addressed at length.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Foster to continued growth without displacing our senior residence. The main goal is to foster a thriving local economy to cultivate a safe and friendly place for families to grow. Create a more robust recreation program for residents of all ages. Preserve green space and support organizations that encourage outdoor participation.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I think the plan is in motion and working. The new splash pad should be a boon for the Community Center. We should offer more youth programs at the Community Center too. Additionally, the upgrades to our neighborhood parks and trails that are in the Blueprint add to the marketability of Bethel Park to younger families.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I am thankful older generations continue to call Bethel Park home. We have elderly neighbors that my family and I enjoy sharing parts of our day with. Attracting younger individuals and families starts with a safe and secure community. We must always support our police department. I will continue to support the investment into public spaces including, but not limited to, the ongoing restoration of our neighborhood parks and playgrounds.

Families also are looking for local activities to do together. I want to utilize the Park/Recreations department to expand family friendly activities and programs. For example, family movies nights in the park (rotating basis to all neighborhood parks). Families will be able to enjoy a drive-in like setting supported by local food vendors, expanded community day activities, and other community events.

14. What is more important to our community right now: building new homes and commercial space or rehabbing/expanding/better utilizing our existing homes and storefronts?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

New spaces and land are hard to come by in Bethel Park. Protecting our green space is vital. Let's focus on working with what we currently have and create incentives for current business owners and residents.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Unfortunately, we are running out of land to build new construction. Most areas are already developed. We do have a lot of blighted properties that could use a major facelift.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

At this point there isn't much left to develop in Bethel Park so I would say we are entering a phase where the latter in your question is more important. I've started to hear about "tear downs" where smaller homes in need of rehab get torn down for a new bigger house. I foresee this increasing in the coming years.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

I believe that the municipality should work in partnership with the individual property owner when discussing the rehabilitation of commercial buildings. Mandating Improvements to any structure, commercial or private, is an act of government

overreach. The one exception is when a home or commercial structure is out of compliance with municipal building codes and improvements are needed for the safety of the occupants.

15. Where are your favorite places to spend time in Bethel Park?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, my family found a second community center of sorts at the Spencer Family YMCA. We frequent Family Deli, Spoonwood Brewery, and Reginald's Coffee Shop. A new favorite restaurant of ours is Pho Saigon Café. We miss Give Mia Cookie! My kids enjoy Simmons Park, the Bethel Park Library, and all the folks at Gymkhana. I also spend many days a week on the Montour Trail. We are looking forward to the start of the Farmer's Market season!

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Bethel Park Historical Society is very near and dear to my heart. I have watched this building threatened of being razed into a current community masterpiece. Lions Park is the home of the Bethel Park Lions Club. I have been a member of the Lions Club for over 6 years. I just adore the community coming out to support us at the park for our annual fish fries and BBQs. My son plays baseball for Bethel Church League. Our home field has been Ruthfred Baseball Field for the past 3 seasons. I've spent a lot of quality family time at that baseball field! Finally, Ruthfred Market: if you haven't tried their "homemade" Roast Beef go now to try it. After all, you don't make friends with salad!

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

The "secret park" we discovered after we moved here...Molly Hill. It's at the end of Santa Fe and you can see it to your right when leaving Washington Junction towards South Hills Village. It has a basketball court and playground that rarely get used. We love it!

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

There are several spots around Bethel Park that my family spend recreational time away from home. Simons Park has a beautiful new playground. My daughters love playing on the zip line or having me push them on the giant merry-go-round. We also spend a lot of time riding bikes in our neighborhood or on the Montour Trail. The new fields at Village Green Park are a great place for running around when our yard is wet from rain or playing a family game of dodgeball. Somehow, I am always the first one out of the game.

16. Do you believe it is important to work in collaboration with the School Board and Business Community? If so, why?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Absolutely. Bethel Park takes pride in an exceptional school district and a thriving small business community. These are the main components of who we are as a community. I would also like to add the Bethel Park Volunteer Community to this list. Our residents step up like no one else, both individuals and our many volunteer organizations.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Even though each entity is funded through different financial sources it's important to work in conjunction with all community stakeholders to create the most rewarding community outcome.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

Yes, we are all intertwined, and a strong School District would help any Municipality, and vice versa. We already have the Shade Tree Commission and a few other programs where we collaborate. I think it's important.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

A successful school district is one of the key building blocks of a strong and vibrant community. Yes, I support a coalition of school directors, council members and business leaders to discuss matters that impact all residents. Developing emergency readiness plans in case of a natural or man-made disaster, the effect of increased real estate taxes and zoning of commercial buildings near school properties are just some of the issues that would benefit from all groups working together to better serve the community.

17. Where is downtown Bethel Park?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

We don't exactly have a downtown in Bethel Park. We have many gathering places, but not one central downtown. I know residents would love to see the municipal move forward with the downtown retrofit in the West Library Avenue and Brightwood Road area. Although a long-term project, this is a priority of mine to start making steps toward.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Per the Blueprint Bethel Park, a downtown retrofit is being considered on Brightwood Road. This would be a gathering place in Bethel Park where residents and visitors can enjoy local retail, restaurants, and public amenities in a traditional downtown setting. Business owners, the redevelopment authority, the chamber of commerce, and additional community stakeholders would be great partners for this program. This is a great way to explore new opportunities and partnering up with our neighbors in other communities.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I don't know the exact boundaries, but I believe it encompasses the Police Station/Lytle T to the Community Center to South Park Road turning right all the way past Church Road. It's expanded since the beginning.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

This is an interesting question. Bethel Park does not currently have a designated “downtown” area like some surrounding communities. However, I like many, view the commercial area of Brightwood Road our downtown area. Here you can access the library and municipal buildings, the community center, St Vals Church, Bethel Bakery as well as other businesses. This area of Brightwood is also accessible from the T-line.

18. What beautification projects would you like to see implemented throughout Bethel Park?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

The Trolley Line Beautification project should be expanded. I would love to see a beautiful outdoor space at the Bethel Park Library. Whether it is updating the outdoor seating area or finding space out front, our community could benefit greatly from this type of project. Community input on beautification projects would be welcomed.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

The current beautification projects such as the Trolley Beautification Project & Annual Spring Clean-Up Day are very near and dear to my heart. Unfortunately, cleaning up trash one time per year just isn't enough. I would like to work with local non-profit organizations and citizens to pick up trash one time per quarter. There's also an opportunity to clean up some of our business districts such as Industrial Park and various shopping plazas to "adopt" planters and other ways to beautify the community.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

The retrofitting of the downtown area would help a lot. I like the idea of expanding the Trolley Beautification program if we have enough willing participants, as well as more trails and more public gardens.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Bethel Park is a beautiful borough in every season.

The trolley line along Brightwood and Library Roads. Enhancing both sides of the trolley tracks with plants, mulched flower beds and decorative stone walls would eliminate the need for Public Works to maintain the grassy areas during growing seasons.

Route 88 and Connor Road. Some work has been completed along the hillside near the railroad trestle. Planting trees and flower beds along the right side of the road after Guardian Storage make the entrance to our community more inviting for travelers passing through our community or coming in to shop and dine.

19. What are your views on diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism in Bethel Park?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Please refer to my answer from question #12.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

I would implement Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion program required by all elected officials and senior legal Municipal employees. The current population of Bethel Park is 97% Caucasian. We need to figure out why more persons of color are not moving to our community. We need to create a more welcoming environment for all, no matter of someone's race, sex, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

My views on DEI and anti-racism are that we should be lifting people up, not putting them down. Every individual is a human being and should be treated as such. I've heard stories of some extremely unkind treatment but haven't seen anything first-hand. I would try to stop it if I saw it because no one should live without psychological safety. Ultimately, we limit ourselves when we limit who we include in our community. And we should be teaching our children this.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

We are ALL one people under God. I will never vote in favor of a bill, law or ordinance that promotes the exclusion of others. The municipality does not discriminate in hiring of employees, participating in recreational activities or condone clubs/organizations that promote discriminatory ideologies. We are ONE community.

20. What 5 things would you like to see happen in Bethel over the next 5 years?

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

1. Expand the sidewalk network around schools, public transit stops, and businesses
2. Make municipal information more transparent and accessible to all residents
3. Move forward with beginning steps for the downtown retrofit
4. Implement a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee on a municipal level
5. Make the Irishtown, Logan, Patterson intersection safer for drivers

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Building a safer and more desirable community to live in and promote new businesses: this includes sidewalks, more robust recreation programs for residents of all ages, & promoting economic growth with a "downtown Bethel Park" and giving the Industrial Park a facelift. Transparency & Personal Accountability-This also includes implementing an anti-nepotism policy within the municipal hiring and bidding process. Personal accountability means reaching out to the residents of Ward 3 for feedback and listening to their needs. Finally, implementing a Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion-I want to ensure Bethel Park is a welcoming community regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status, etc. This will only strengthen our community.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

1. More new faces on Council 😊
2. A guarantee that the Library T line will be preserved.

3. That everyone stays safe and healthy, and gets vaccinated, so that we can get back to our lives.
4. A support network for families who have been affected by the opioid epidemic and the COVID pandemic. These have had devastating effects on many families in our community and I think it's the least we can do to make sure that they know that they are not alone.
5. That our neighborhoods are more connected, literally and figuratively. In addition to sidewalks and the Central Bethel Park Trail more interaction with and appreciation for each other, especially those who are different.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Five things in Five Years –

1. Maintain a long-term balanced budget without cutting programs or services to residents and zero increases to the municipal income and real estate taxes
 2. Expand the Park/Recreation Department's programs to create new and exciting outdoor activities for all individuals and families to enjoy in the summer months throughout the municipality.
 3. Continue investing in public green spaces including the revamping of our neighborhood parks and playgrounds
 4. Add a Leaf Collection truck to the Public Works department to better serve our residents during fall and spring cleanup.
 5. Ensure the Police department remains fully funded to keep Bethel Park the safe and secure community we are today.
21. **Diversity and safety have been brought up several times. One way to promote diversity AND safety is by asking the mental health community to work with the police and help train a crisis intervention team to go out on mental health crisis calls. Has anyone considered this as an option for Bethel Park?**

Lindsay Flinn, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

This is an excellent idea, and we should discuss this further. The police are an essential part of our community. We ask so much of our police officers. Let us support them in ways like this to lift such burdens. Ultimately, a Crisis Intervention Team would be mutually beneficial to both police officers and citizens.

Danielle Gosnell, Candidate for Council in Ward 3

Law enforcement officers are often the first point of contact for someone who is experiencing a mental health crisis. Because of this, one of the solutions our county has implemented is the introduction of Crisis Intervention Team training in our law enforcement departments. Some of the top de-escalation tips used during crisis response are:

- Being empathic and nonjudgmental
- Respecting personal space
- Use non-threatening nonverbal

- Ignore challenging questions
- Allow silence for reflection
- Allow time for decisions.

Joe Janosik, Candidate for Council in Ward 5

I am sure this has been considered but for whatever reason hasn't come to fruition. For the record, I am fully in support of this as an option for Bethel Park.

Jonathan Winfield, Candidate for Council in Ward 9

Every call for help is unique. The responding police officer does not know what they will encounter when they arrive at their given destination. The caller to the dispatch could under-state or over-state the gravity of the situation. For the safety of everyone involved, a civilian councilor should not accompany police officers on calls.

However, I would support additional crisis intervention training for a team of police officers. This specialized unit could assist on calls where domestic disturbance, abuse or a mental health crisis is anticipated. Chief O'Connor's experience and leadership would be paramount to the success of such a program.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

SCHOOL BOARD

Sean Browne

Sean earned a B.A. in Physics and a B.S. in Secondary Education from California University of Pennsylvania in 2013. He is in his seventh-year teaching physics, electronics, math, and computer science in the Elizabeth-Forward School District. Prior to working as an educator, Sean spent 15 years working as an electrician and programmer for companies

that supply industrial automation solutions to power plants and mining operations. He looks forward to listening to and gathering input from all stakeholders before making important decisions. Whether you are a student, parent, educator, administrator, or community member, he wants to hear from you.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for school board because I truly want to play a role in making sure that the next generation is properly equipped to not only compete, but to excel in an increasingly competitive global marketplace. I believe that it is the role of the school board to ensure that every student in our district graduates with the

tools necessary to be successful in whatever field they choose. I feel that my background in both education and STEM industries provides me with insight that will enable me to make decisions that will benefit all students in Bethel Park.

Buffie Faes

Buffie is a lifelong resident of Bethel Park. She graduated with honors from California University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Education. She then had a successful career in sales before returning to school to complete her master's degree in Special Education, which she earned magna cum laude in 2010. For the last 10 years,

Buffie has been working as a life skills teacher in the Chartiers Valley School District. She believes that her prior work experience, coupled with her current profession, has helped her form a well-rounded understanding of education. She looks forward to serving her community.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for School Board because I believe that the foundation of who we become as adults depends largely on the formative years we spend in school. Because of this, I feel that it is imperative that all children receive the best education possible and that it is provided in schools that embrace diversity,

equity, and inclusion. I want to do my part to ensure that all students in the Bethel Park School District feel comfortable and accepted so that they can have the best possible outcomes. Successful schools make successful communities.

Daniel Grzybek

Dan earned his bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering with a minor in Economics from Pitt in 2017. He is currently working toward his master's degree in Engineering at Purdue. He

began his career as an Operations Manager at US Steel and transitioned into an engineering role at the Naval Nuclear Laboratory (Bettis), where he ensures the safe operation and

maintenance of nuclear power plants aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carriers. He also works part-time as a substitute teacher, mentors immigrant and refugee students through

SHIM, volunteers at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, and judges at PA Junior Academy of Science competitions.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for BP School Board because I want to ensure we are providing an education suited for the 21st century. With the rise of automation, focusing on memorization and “teaching to the test” no longer adequately addresses student needs. We must utilize research, data, and training to provide students with the critical thinking skills

necessary to compete in the modern workforce. We also need to ensure students are comfortable and accepted at school so they may perform to their fullest potential. That involves providing increased mental health resources for students and expanding the district’s Diversity and Inclusion program.

Gail Hoppe

I am married, the mother of 5 kids (the 2 youngest attend BPHS) and have lived in Bethel Park for 12 years. I have been involved with Bethel Park Music Boosters (Executive Board), Campus Life (Middle School Director and Admin Assistant) and have worked in Bethel Park schools as a part time substitute

secretary. I also worked part time as a Special Services secretary for BPSD. I was the Business/Operations Manager at a local fitness facility for the last 3 years. I am passionate about education and our Bethel Park community and would be privileged to contribute to its success.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for School Director because I feel I have valuable insight and experience to contribute to our district. As a former employee and parent of 5 students, I saw the strengths and shortcomings of the district first-hand. My experience as a Campus Life Director gave me opportunities to build meaningful relationships with students,

parents, and community members. Running a business prepared me to make sound budgetary decisions, assess human resources, set priorities, and bring people together for a common goal. I desire to add a reasonable, common sense, and positive voice to the Bethel Park School Board.

Sharon Janosik

Sharon Janosik graduated summa cum laude from Duquesne University earning a B.S. in Professional Studies. She is also an alumna of Temple University’s Institute on Disabilities, Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking, and of the PEAL Center’s Family Leadership Institute. She helped found the Bethel Park affiliate of the Pennsylvania

Association for Gifted Education in 2015 and was appointed by the Governor to serve on Pennsylvania’s Special Education Advisory Panel in 2019. She also volunteers as a speaker, trainer, and advocate to shift hearts and minds to work towards true inclusion, acceptance, and equity for people with disabilities.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for School Director so that I can better serve the community by helping to shape the future of public education in the district. I believe that the main jobs of a School

Director are to advocate, lead, plan, and evaluate—all things I have experience doing. I would like to harness community spirit to increase family engagement, create more

cooperative opportunities to improve whole-child education, and build a culture of genuine acceptance, inclusion, and diversity. I am of

the firm belief that all this can be achieved while remaining mindful of the board's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers.

Jim Means

I am a 39-year resident of Bethel Park. I am married with 5 children and 3 grandchildren. I am invested in the School District. My oldest grandchild graduated from Bethel Park. My middle grandchild is enrolled in Bethel Park and my youngest soon will be.

I am an electrical engineer with a B.S.E.E. from WVU and a M.S.E.E. from Pitt. I spent 11

years in mine research and the last 30 years of my career teaching Electrical Engineering Technology at CalU.

I am a member of the Bethel Park Historical Society, teach Sunday school and hold a black belt in two different martial arts.

Why I Am Running for School Board

My experience as an engineer, educator, and my previous eight years on the School Board qualify me to serve well. We have an excellent school system, but we can do better. I believe it is imperative that we:

- return to face-to-face instruction five days a week.
- use time-tested teaching techniques.
- improve high school academics.

- save our neighborhood schools.
- spend taxpayer's money wisely.

As a board member, I promise to consider the interests of all affected parties when making decisions. My only agenda is to provide an excellent school system for our youth and our community.

Rory Smith

A 16-year resident of Bethel Park, I am a husband, father of seven, and grandfather. As an active member of my church, I have served as a trustee, teacher, and youth leader.

Professionally, I have been an IT analyst for over 20 years. My work requires challenging problem solving, complex decision making,

and a passion for helping people. I believe that my background provides me with an ideal preparation for the difficult work of being a Bethel Park School Director. My IT background will also be helpful in making judgments regarding School District technology upgrades.

Why I Am Running for School Board

I am running for School Board because our children are our greatest treasure, and their education is our most valuable investment. A properly functioning school district is essential for their future and for the lasting well-being of our community.

I will use my life's experiences, and the ability to make difficult decisions to benefit our students in order to continue to offer them the environment, resources, and support required for an excellent education.

If elected, I pledge to restore full-time in-person learning, promote excellence in education, keep property taxes affordable, and represent the taxpayers' best interests during contract negotiations.

Questions for Candidates Forum

May 4, 2021

SCHOOL BOARD

1. What are the pros/cons of having a full-time kindergarten and where do you stand?

Buffie Faes

I am not opposed to full day kindergarten. I am not certain whether we have the space to facilitate, but I see many benefits to full day. I am student-focused, so while the flexibility to working parents is a perk, it is not my driving reason. The part time day goes fast, and the importance of academics is stressed so much. However, we are forgetting the need for play and socialization, which is just as critical in the early years.

Daniel Grzybek

I am in favor of developmentally appropriate full-day kindergarten. While research is a bit mixed on effects on social and emotional development, full-day kindergarten has been shown to improve early childhood literacy and math skills. It also has been shown to lower the achievement gap for disadvantaged and low-income children.

Implementing full-day kindergarten would obviously require additional funding, and it is unclear to me exactly where that funding could come from at this point in time with the budget deficit, we face due to the 2019 tax cut. However, I think it is something we should keep in consideration.

Gail Hoppe

3 of my 5 children attended full-day kindergarten in our previous district. Our youngest attended BP half-day kindergarten. We saw no significant academic benefit to full day in comparison to half-day. However, as my top priority is excellence in education, I would need to research the educational effects of both to make a well-informed decision as opposed to going from our personal experience.

Sharon Janosik

Full day K provides more time for social and peer interactions, as well as learning through play and hands-on experiences, all of which are more developmentally appropriate for our youngest learners. However, it requires more space and staff than are currently available. I support full-time kindergarten and would advocate to include this initiative in both our short- and long-term advance planning.

Jim Means

Full-day kindergarten increases a student's academics more quickly than half-day kindergarten. But is this really a great benefit? There are studies

that show that educational gains from preschool largely disappear by the time students finish elementary school. I believe the additional half-day in kindergarten would follow suit.

Kindergarten should be used to ease students into a full-day curriculum and not to cram more and more instruction into the curriculum. Remember, it is the finish that is important, not how fast you start. Nobody ever won a marathon by running the first mile faster than everybody else.

Rory Smith

Full-day kindergarten shows some increase in student academic learning over half-day. This probably does not justify the increased staffing and infrastructure costs. Studies show that any advantage from early education are evened out by the time student's complete elementary school. Half-day kindergarten serves as an on-ramp to full day education while providing the balance of play and family time that young children need. For these reasons I favor half-day kindergarten.

2. What are your top 3 priorities for this office?

Buffie Faes

The education of ALL STUDENTS, the inclusion of ALL STUDENTS, and the safety health and wellness of ALL STUDENTS. In other words, the STUDENTS are my top priority.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

I am thankful that the current School Board voted unanimously to return to 5-day, in-person learning in the fall! That checks off my first campaign priority. Next is excellence in education. Hiring great teachers, staff, and administrators and approving robust curriculum are two responsibilities of the school board that I believe are crucial to student achievement. A third priority is striking a balance between great education and affordable taxes.

Sharon Janosik

My top priorities are ensuring that every single student finds our schools to be welcoming and safe spaces that practice inclusion for all; advocating for more Professional Development and adoption of effective Best Practices in curriculum, instruction, social-emotional learning, and mental health supports; and refocusing on the benefits and necessity of deepening our commitment to true and inclusive Family Engagement.

Jim Means

My first priority is to return students to five days a week face-to-face instruction. The CDC is now telling us that herd immunity may not be achievable in the near future. So, it is important to elect board members committed to face-to-face daily instruction.

My second priority would be to use time-tested teaching techniques. Intensive phonics, memorization of multiplication tables, and drills have proven themselves effective over hundreds of years.

Lastly, the academics in the high school need to be improved. IMS ranked in the 98th percentile in the last round of statewide testing. The high school ranked in the 86th percentile. The superintendent should be tasked with eliminating the large drop in proficiency.

Rory Smith

- I. Get our students back to school with full-time, in person, face to face learning.
- II. Provide a realistic perspective in the upcoming teacher contract negotiations, keeping school taxes affordable for our residents.
- III. Balance educational excellence and fiscal responsibility

3. Seeing all of the chaos that transpired with the effects of COVID-19 on our children's education (such as hybrid and remote learning), what changes would you suggest as a school board member?

Buffie Faes

I believe a choice should have been given as far as being in-person or online, although Hybrid could have still been implemented to keep numbers down. I also believe teachers should have been designated to teach either online or in-person but should not have been expected to do both. Lastly, the pandemic was a once-in-a-lifetime event and who could possibly know how to best handle something so catastrophic? I thought the district did they best they could. It is easy to say "shoulda, woulda, coulda" after the fact.

Daniel Grzybek

The biggest takeaways I have from the pandemic are that we need to be making decisions firmly based in data and research, we need to be more proactive, and we need better communication. I would have liked to see re-opening decisions tied directly to positivity rates and cases/100k. That way, parents would not have felt decisions were at times arbitrary. I also thought we waited too long to really start planning for what remote learning would look like. Finally, I would like to reinstitute the board meeting summaries that Vicki Flotta used to do so that the public stays informed.

Gail Hoppe

As a school board member, I would rely on our teachers, staff, and district parents to make recommendations for changes. They are the “boots on the ground” and are able to identify needed changes on a more practical level.

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

The most important task is to determine how the Covid-19 chaos has affected academics during the past year. Deficiencies in fundamental skills could prove to be disastrous if left uncorrected. Extensive testing should be conducted to determine where our students stand, and a plan developed to address and deficiencies.

Also, as I said before, it is critical to return to five day a week face-to-face instruction.

Rory Smith

An immediate return to the classroom for students and staff.

We also need to assess our students related to their basic skills for their grade levels. Where shortfalls are present, plans need to be developed to remedy the deficiencies.

4. Explain what you know about class size and what the teachers have agreed on in their contract.

Buffie Faes

The teachers have an MOU stating class size should be K through 4th: 26 students, 5th-6th: 26 students 7th-12th: 27 students in math, ELA, World Languages, and science classes to 30 and 7th-12th: up to 30 students in social studies.

Daniel Grzybek

I think keeping class sizes low is very important. We must also make sure there is parity among schools. In perhaps the most widely cited class size study, the Tennessee Student Teacher Achievement Ratio, a decrease in class size from 22 to 15 students was correlated with an increase of 3 months of learning over a four-year period.

As for teacher agreement, the Collective Bargaining Agreement states that teachers must receive a stipend once the maximum class sizes are exceeded. These class sizes vary between 25 (for K-4) and 30 (for 7-12).

Gail Hoppe

In neighborhood schools, it is inevitable that some classes will be bigger than others as people move into the district in different areas. Reasonable class sizes enable teachers to give more time to each student, and therefore benefit student achievement. In the current contract, the district and teachers have agreed on a class size of 25 students in grades K-4, 26 in core classes including world languages in grades 5-6, 27 students in core classes including world languages in grades 7-12, and 30 students in social studies classes in grades 7-12.

Sharon Janosik

The CBA indicates a stipend will be paid for class sizes exceeding 26 in K-4, 26 for core subjects in 5-6, and 27-30 based on the subject for 7-12. However, research indicates that smaller class sizes are most effective, particularly at the K-5 level, for ensuring teachers have enough time to provide support, remediation, enrichment, and hands-on-learning opportunities. We have disparity in class sizes throughout the district and we need to make them equitable; it is not acceptable that a class in one building.

Jim Means

Class size is a topic of debate in the elementary schools. So, in the fall of 2019 I did an analysis of average class sizes in Bethel, Mt. Lebanon, Peters, and Upper St. Clair. *(I did not update data for this year, because the pandemic has altered class sizes.)*

Our class sizes compared favorably with all of the districts I analyzed. The table may be viewed at: <http://electjimmeans.com/docs/staffing.htm>

Note! Class sizes in Mt. Lebanon varied from 18 to 25. The only true way to have equal class sizes throughout the district is to have one or two large elementary schools.

Rory Smith

Smaller class sizes provide an easier teaching experience for teachers and more individualized instruction for students. This should improve outcomes. My understanding is that teachers agreed to class sizes up to 25 students per class. may have 13-19 students and in another building the same grade class has 25-27.

- 5. With some of the current talk on the transgender movement in various communities, do you support the allowance of a biological male participation in a female sport like swimming, basketball, and softball?**

Buffie Faes

I do not believe this is a school board decision. The laws are set by the state and federal government and those are the protocols we would follow in school.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

I support the preservation of competitive female sports in K-12 public education. If we are following the science, a biological male athlete is physiologically and anatomically different from a female athlete, giving an unfair athletic advantage over biological females. It is simply not equitable (fair).

Sharon Janosik

I am in full support, both from a moral and a legal perspective, of following the current laws and regulations regarding sports participation and following the advice of our solicitor. I absolutely support a student's right to participate in sports teams that match their identity and look forward to continuing respectful conversations and education regarding this issue.

Jim Means

I am opposed to allowing biological males compete in female sports. The reason we have female sports in the first place is to allow females to compete without them having to compete against biological males. If we allow biological males to compete in female sports, we may as well eliminate female sports and have everybody compete for a position on a unisex team.

Biological males are typically bigger, stronger, and faster than biological females. Allowing biological males to compete against biological females is unfair to the biological females.

Rory Smith

I am opposed to this because the entire reason for having separate teams for boys and girls is due to the general biological advantage of males over females in sports. Were this not the case, we could just have single teams. I also object to having biological males participate in female sports, particularly because their participation may lead to a biological male winning a sports scholarship designated for a woman athlete. The ultimate result of this allowance would be the end of competitive sports for girls and is tantamount to discrimination against women by reducing their ability to compete on a level playing field.

6. Are you in favor of neighborhood schools or do you think it would behoove BP to consolidate the elementary schools into one centralized building?

Buffie Faes

I think there are pros and cons to both. I am a lifelong resident of Bethel Park and I loved the neighborhood schools for my children. However, class size has to be considered and I am not in favor of living in one neighborhood and having to be bussed to another to attend school. There are also more opportunities for teacher collaboration when they are in the same building.

Daniel Grzybek

The strategic planning presentation analyzing all the possible building combinations for the district was very enlightening. Consolidating elementary schools can lead to more equal class sizes and save money for the district. However, residents also really enjoy their neighborhood schools and the feeling of family they provide. Ultimately, the answer probably lies somewhere between keeping all five schools and consolidating down to one. I think that whatever option is chosen needs to come after extensive public input and consideration from all stakeholders.

Gail Hoppe

This deserves a lot of discussion and very careful consideration among board members and the community. The feasibility study that was completed this year presents a list of options for our district to address the issues of low enrollment, underused space, and necessary repairs and maintenance in our buildings. I cannot land on one side or the other (or another) until I have all the information for evaluation. Top priority: what is best for our students?

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

I believe the benefits of neighborhood schools outweigh any disadvantage. I think that young students benefit from having a smaller school setting that is closer to their home.

At present, there are members of the board that are looking to close an elementary school, move all fourth graders to Neil Armstrong Middle School because there are a few elementary classes with low enrollment in the district. I believe such an action would do a great disservice to a large number of families. I would oppose any such action.

Rory Smith

I am in favor of neighborhood schools as are most of my neighbors. It would be a great loss to our neighborhoods to consolidate all of the elementary schools into one centralized building. It would also be a loss to our younger students who currently enjoy the shorter bus ride and the intimate experience of their neighborhood schools.

7. What is the purpose of the School Board?

Buffie Faes

Strategic Planning, Setting Policy and Evaluating Results.

Daniel Grzybek

The school board's purpose is threefold: planning, setting policy, and evaluating results. The board must set a strategic plan in order to determine the path the school district should take. The board should then create policies in order to attempt to achieve their desired goals. Finally, the board must evaluate the decisions they make and the results of those decisions. If the current trajectory does not have the board set to meet their goals, they must reevaluate and change course, as necessary.

Gail Hoppe

The purpose of the School Board is to determine the direction of the district through planning, legislating, empowering, and evaluating. The Board's role is to govern, not manage, the operations of the district.

Sharon Janosik

Broadly, the role of the School Board is to set the district's mission and vision, create policies that reflect that direction, and guide the district towards continual improvement, growth, and sustainability through every decision. More specifically, we must advocate for all students, lead in a responsible way, govern effectively, plan thoughtfully for both short- and long-term goals, evaluate our progress, communicate with stakeholders, and act ethically in the best interests of the community. We must support our Superintendent and administrative team to handle the management of the district and remain engaged in the community to ensure problems are being appropriately addressed.

Jim Means

The purpose of a school board is to govern and not to manage. The school board adopts policies and procedures to govern the operation of the district. It is the duty of the superintendent and administrative staff implement those directives.

It is also the duty of the board to approve the budget, curriculum, staffing changes and in some instances to rule on disciplinary measures.

It is not the place of the school board to micro-manage classes, IEP's, coaching of teams, etc.

Rory Smith

The School Board sets the vision and goals for the school district, holding the district accountable for results. Effective board members provide their unique abilities and collaborate as a team with the other board members to steward our resources in order to best serve our children.

8. If elected, what process would employ to make decisions? It depends on the question.

Buffie Faes

I am in favor of data-driven decisions when it comes to many things, but I also think it is necessary for the school community to have input on other issues. Regardless, my decisions would be -centered, above everything else.

Daniel Grzybek

My decision-making process is firmly based in evaluating studies and data. While I may not always have knowledge of a subject, I will be sure that I have combed through all available information before forming my opinion. If I come across new data that contradicts my previously held opinion, I am always open to adjusting accordingly. I also will always incorporate community input in conjunction with the information I have at hand before making any votes or decisions.

Gail Hoppe

I make decisions based primarily on facts and data, as well as discussion with people around me. I value input from people who have different perspectives than I do. I gather information, discuss it, ask questions, and make the decision. As a school board director, I would value input from all stakeholders. Again, the driving question: what is best for our students?

Sharon Janosik

School Directors must avail themselves of the many resources for continuing to learn about topics that arise during their tenure. Researching, asking questions, and surveying stakeholder groups are part of the decision-making process. While it is true that the decisions made cannot possibly make every community member happy, I strive to provide the background information and other perspectives that are necessary to demonstrate that we are all working together in a spirit of compromise. Public schools are complicated, and we must remember that even a “slight” change creates ripples requiring that at least a dozen other things be reviewed and adjusted.

Jim Means

If elected, I would make decisions based upon how it affected all constituents:

- Students

- Parents
- Taxpayers
- Employees
- Any other affected groups

The needs of all of these constituents would need to be considered and weighed in order to arrive at an optimal decision.

It also goes without saying that all decisions need to be made with consideration to:

- School law
- Labor law
- Federal law
- Collective bargaining agreements

Rory Smith

I would solicit input from students, parents, teachers, taxpayers, any others involved and affected before making decisions. Our decisions also need to consider School law, Labor law, and Federal law.

9. The Allegheny Conference has reported that there is a shortage of employees for skilled trades positions and there will be a need to hire employees from outside of PA. What if anything will you do to ensure that our students are prepared to take advantage of local skilled jobs/trades opportunities?

Buffie Faes

I am a parent of very talented mechanic, so I am very much in favor of promoting the trades. We should be bringing in tradespeople to speak to students, provide opportunities to tour Steel Center, and talking more about trades. College is not for everyone, and it is irresponsible for us to not give equal attention to other opportunities for post-secondary education.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

I would like to see students encouraged to explore skilled trade electives (such as *Intro to Transportation, Intro to Electrical Systems, Wood Shop, etc.*) within the high school curriculum. In addition, working to address and eliminate the stigma associated with pursuing a skilled trade through Steel Center needs to be a priority.

Sharon Janosik

I will support the increased promotion and celebration of skilled trades as an equally valuable, laudable, and important alternative to college. Students should be able to be just as proud of their hard work and commitment to meeting industry standards as students who go on to college. In addition, it is important that the district communicate the costs and benefits of entering skilled trades with as much vigor as we communicate the costs and benefits of traditional college opportunities. I am in support of providing an Entering the Workforce Day with as much attention and pride as is devoted to College Acceptance Day.

Jim Means

Bethel Park partners with the Steel Center Vocational Technical School and I fully support that alliance. Our nation is facing a shortage of tradesmen and we need to educate those wishing to enter trades.

College is not for everyone and those who decide to enter a trade should not be stigmatized. Craftsmen are amazing and we all benefit from their skills.

High school ratings that rely heavily on “college readiness” and “AP tests” are not a fair way to rate high schools. It is not the sole purpose of high school to prepare students for college. Rather, it is to prepare them for life.

Rory Smith

Students should consider entering a trade as an option. If they have an interest in this, they should be encouraged to utilize the BPSD partnership with the Steel Center Vocational Technical School.

10. What is your comfort level as far as making educational and fiscal decisions for BPSD?

Buffie Faes

I am extremely comfortable making educational decisions. I have a master’s degree in special education and have been teaching for 11 years. I am a fiscally responsible person (I am actually a little on the cheap side, minus when it comes to tipping), but if elected, I will spend the most time studying the budget in order to become well-versed.

Daniel Grzybek

While I received my emergency teacher certification during the pandemic and subbed at NAMS, IMS, and BPHS, I am not an educator. As previously stated, I will look at data and studies to form my opinion, but I will ultimately rely on the expertise of our teachers and administration for making educational decisions, only offering my input in areas where I have sufficient knowledge. I am very comfortable with our budget, fund balance, and

making fiscal decisions for the district. I have attended all budgetary meetings and am intimately familiar with our current financial outlook.

Gail Hoppe

I am quite comfortable making educational and fiscal decisions and I am thankful I would not have to make those decisions alone. After managing the operations and finances of a business, I have gained confidence and competency in making those types of decisions.

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

I have 30 years of teaching at the college level. Additionally, I have done home school evaluations for children K through 12 and taught children K through 12. I am very comfortable making most educational decisions but rely on input from experts in situations where I am not comfortable.

After eight years on the board, I have an excellent grasp of the budget. That includes: the overall structure of the annual budget, income projections, expenditure projections, staffing costs, busing needs, etc. As a result, I feel comfortable making most fiscal decisions, but would rely on input from the budget director in most instances.

Rory Smith

I am comfortable making most educational and fiscal decisions with the best interests of Bethel Park front and center in that process. Professionally, I have been an IT analyst for over 20 years. My work requires challenging problem solving, and complex decision making. I believe that my background provides me with an ideal preparation for the difficult work of being a Bethel Park School Director. My IT background will also be helpful in making judgments regarding School District technology upgrades. For areas where I am not as comfortable, I will depend on the advice of those proficient in a particular area.

11. A large grant was awarded to BPSD to use however the Board deemed necessary. Where should the Board start?

Buffie Faes

While this would require much thought and collaboration with the teachers and administration, I would be most concerned that it was used for something that would directly benefit students.

Daniel Grzybek

I believe the BPSD should use this grant to hire social workers and counselors to meet the mental health needs of our students, following the incredibly stressful events they have had to endure for the past year. I also believe that additional tutors should be obtained for any students who have fallen behind and are struggling academically. Even if these hires are only on a temporary basis, they could pay dividends in terms of getting students on level footing from both an academic and mental health perspective.

Gail Hoppe

First, I think the board should use grant money for one-time expenditures, as this type of revenue is not ongoing. I believe the Board should start by examining the most recent budget audit and be guided by the auditor's recommendations. The zero-based budget approach used in this audit makes it more clear which line items are priority.

I believe the more important issue is that the curriculum drives student achievement. As culture changes, curriculum will inevitably change to include diversity. It is already happening.

Sharon Janosik

A board that is planning effectively and holding open conversations regularly, should already have a "wish list" of items and initiatives that are in the wings waiting for funding. At that point, the board can start by discussing the current needs with the Superintendent and stakeholders and developing community and family engagement around those items to seek to make the most the impact with the funds available while being mindful about starting something that will not have continued financial support.

Jim Means

Without an intensive dive into the needs of the district, it would be impossible to say where this money should be spent. However, since it is evidently a onetime grant, it should be spent on a onetime need. Using onetime money to incur an ongoing cost is a recipe for disaster.

The best way to determine how the money should be spent is to task the superintendent with this task. His recommendation would then be brought to the board for approval. A school board should govern and not manage.

Rory Smith

The superintendent should determine how to best spend this grant. His recommendations would be reviewed for approval by the board.

12. How important is it to you for the district's curriculum to be all inclusive? - for everyone to be well represented.

Buffie Faes

This is one of the most important things, in my opinion. Bottom line, all children should see themselves represented in what they study in school. ALL CHILDREN.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

As important as diversity is, I believe it is more important that our staff be well qualified. I want the best people in the right positions to offer the best education possible. In my former position of management, I had a diverse staff who were phenomenal in their roles. Qualified AND diverse is a win.

Sharon Janosik

It is extremely important to me that every student has opportunities to see themselves, their lives, and their concerns reflected in our curriculum and resources. As Marian Wright Edelman said, "You can't be what you can't see." It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that every student "can see" a diverse group of successful role models in every aspect of what we teach. Our Mission Statement is about challenging all students to reach their potential and we must challenge ourselves to provide a true reflection of the breadth of humanity doing just that.

Jim Means

It is certainly important that all students, and staff feel welcome withing the district. District policies reflect that desire, and it is essential that all faculty, staff, and students work toward that goal. Martin Luther King Jr. said it best.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." Martin Luther King Jr.

Rory Smith

Our goal should be to provide an excellent academic education for all students that focuses on the needed skills and knowledge for our students to be productive and mature participants in American society. The focus should be on these things and not on ideology or indoctrination. It is the education that should be all inclusive; the curriculum, on the other hand, should be excellent, expansive, and engaging.

13. How important is it to you for the staff to be culturally diverse? This is also very important.**Buffie Faes**

Not only is it critical in collaboration and planning, but much like students being able to see themselves represented, they should also have staff they can relate to! We need to celebrate each other's differences and learn from each other. We need unity more than anything.

Daniel Grzybek

I believe that the district's staff should ultimately reflect the diversity of the student population. While the Bethel Park student population is not as diverse as many other schools, based on what I have seen in the buildings I have subbed in, the teaching staff is even less diverse. We should always be hiring the best, most qualified teachers. However, if our teaching staff is completely devoid of diversity, I believe some introspection is necessary to ensure that is actually what is taking place.

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

I believe true diversity results from judging everyone by their ability rather than by some cultural formula. I believe making hiring decisions based on culture - whether for or against - is immoral, repugnant, and illegal.

Rory Smith

Hiring staff should be based on their skills and ability to perform well. There should be no other criteria. No one should be discriminated against, or hired because of, other factors that are not related to their qualifications for the position.

14. What can you do to assist in creating and maintaining an inclusive culture and climate?

Buffie Faes

The whole idea of a public school is to provide a free and appropriate education for all students. Appropriate means that all students--ALL STUDENTS-- need to feel like they belong. This needs to be evident when selecting curriculum, developing courses, and in all clubs and groups. I am in favor of various clubs designed for students to collaborate with others who share their views.

Daniel Grzybek

I believe that this starts with representation in the curriculum. Students of all groups should be able to see someone who looks and feels like they do reflected back at them in the literature they consume. For example, at the elementary grade that may be reading a book that shows a diverse array of people in prominent roles like doctor, engineer, and lawyer. We as a school

district should also accept and celebrate our differences and how they make us who we are, rather than just focusing on the similarities we have.

Gail Hoppe

I believe every person was created by God for a purpose. Treating every person as a valued, deeply cared for, and respected human being, as well as encouraging others to do the same, is how I would assist in creating and maintaining an inclusive culture.

Sharon Janosik

School Directors have what I consider to be a solemn responsibility to model being respectful of all people—no matter how different from ourselves they may be--and to consider how we can believe other's lived experiences while taking the time to appreciate their perspectives. Inclusion is about intentionally creating a culture that does not accept the othering of human beings, but celebrates each member's unique strengths, weaknesses, joys, personalities, and gifts. Important parts of this process are working to improve our responses to bullying and examining how we can better demonstrate the high value we place in each and every student's uniqueness.

Jim Means

I believe we are all children of God and everybody deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. The districts' policies reflect that all should be treated with dignity and respect, but it is the faculty and staff that must bring this goal into fruition.

There is no substitute for having a teacher, coach or just a friend that treats one well.

Rory Smith

BPSD policies require that all students, staff, and faculty should be treated with respect and dignity.
Faculty and staff are the ones to make this happen.

15. How does a school director's roles and responsibilities differ from the superintendents and administration?

Buffie Faes

**Answered in the forum.

Daniel Grzybek

I think the best comparison is the superintendent as the CEO and the school directors as the board of directors. The school board sets the strategic plan for the district, and the superintendent's job is to carry out said plan. The school board is in charge of the high-level positions like creating school

policies, approving budgets, and deciding the millage rate, while the superintendent is in charge of more of the day-to-day operation. The board and superintendent should constantly be collaborating to ensure they are on the same page and that the district is advancing as intended.

Gail Hoppe

These roles are cooperative. The superintendent's responsibilities are to implement board decisions and goals, communicate to the board via meetings and reports, and make recommendations based on district needs. The board consults with, delegates to, and supports the superintendent as he/she translates board-determined goals into action. All need to work together to accomplish the mission of the district.

Sharon Janosik

While school directors work to establish policy, pass budgets, and set visions, the Superintendent and administrative team work to put those priorities into the daily decisions and procedures of our schools. The management of exactly how we make our goals and visions come to life belongs to the Superintendent and their team. However, the board maintains its general oversight and guidance of the district and must remain involved in continually appraising whether or not the district is effective in making progress and resolving problems and concerns appropriately.

Jim Means

The purpose of a school board is to govern and not to manage. The school board adopts policies and procedures to govern the operation of the district. It is the duty superintendent and administrative staff implement those directives.

Rory Smith

The School Board sets the vision and goals for the school district, holding the district accountable for results. The superintendent and administration are responsible to follow the vision and meet the goals.

16. If you would have to make budget cuts, where would you make them and how would you supplement the changes?

Buffie Faes

I cannot answer how, as I am not sure what the post-covid budget will look like.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

My answer requires more context. Along with other members of the board, I would examine the budget, looking at all line items, discuss, and decide. Again, the zero-based budget approach will help with clarity on which items need attention.

Sharon Janosik

We are already on the path to improving our entire budgeting process with the change to “zero-based budgets,” researching and documenting what we have saved in reserves and whether those are reasonable estimates, and carefully examining all of our expenses, including replacing staff who leave. That being said, our main job is to educate. While we do take pride in and enjoy all of the extra benefits provided in BP, I do not support limiting any necessary cuts to the costs of required education. If such cuts are necessary, I would advocate that they be applied across expense categories.

Jim Means

At present, the district has a fund balance well in excess of \$20 million dollars and a capital reserve fund of approximately \$10 million dollars. Additionally, the director of finance is projecting a \$1.5 million dollar budget surplus for the current year. Therefore, I do not believe it is necessary to make decisions about budget cuts at this time.

If budget cuts should become necessary in the future, the highest priority must be to maintain the safety of students and the second priority should be to maintain academic standards.

Rory Smith

If budget cuts are needed, similar to your personal budget, you trim non-essentials and keep funding the priority items – (e.g., securing student safety, maintaining academic standards).

17. How would you work to improve mental health among students and staff in the district?

Buffie Faes

This is incredibly important, as well, especially after COVID. I am in favor of sub-contracting social workers from outside facilities. Our students should have trained professionals in all buildings daily who can assist specifically with mental health. I do not believe it should fall upon our academic guidance counselors, as they are not trained therapists.

Daniel Grzybek

I would start with getting us in a budget position that allows us to hire additional social workers or counselors that are able to focus on mental health. Without having sufficient staff, it is very difficult to identify and help

the students who made need more assistance. Additionally, I think that integrating mental health into the curriculum from a young age will help to destigmatize the subject. Students can learn valuable coping skills that can assist them with anxiety and depression.

Gail Hoppe

Appropriate training for teachers and staff to help identify those who may need mental health services is one thing I think would be helpful. Referrals to mental health professionals would also be a way to get those individuals the help they need. I support providing social workers to be available in the district for kids/staff who may need mental health support throughout the school day.

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

The purpose of a school is to educate and not treat mental illness. However, everyone should be aware of people who are experiencing difficulties in coping and see to it they are referred to those best equipped to aid them in their situation.

I also believe it is critical to get the masks off our students as soon as legally possible. Masks contribute to isolation and loneliness. It pains me that our little ones go through the day without anyone to smile at them.

Rory Smith

I believe that we should get our students back to school full-time, in person, with face-to-face learning. Removing masks as soon as legally possible will greatly increase mental health among students and staff. Students and staff can better engage, support, and understand one another when they are together in person and without masks.

18. Why do you want to serve as a school director in Bethel Park?

Buffie Faes

I have lived in Bethel Park for my whole life. My children, like me, graduated from Bethel Park. While I have no personal skin in the game, I would like the opportunity to give back to a community that has given so much to me. Good schools drive the best communities.

Daniel Grzybek

I want to ensure we are providing an education suited for the 21st century. With the rise of automation, focusing on memorization and “teaching to the test” no longer adequately addresses student needs. We must utilize

research, data, and training to provide students with the critical thinking skills necessary to compete in the modern workforce.

We also have the duty to make sure students feel comfortable and accepted at school so they may perform to their fullest potential. That involves providing increased mental health resources for students and continuing the district's diversity and inclusion program.

Gail Hoppe

I would like to serve as a school director in Bethel Park because of my love for our community and our schools. I believe I have what it takes to make sound decisions while building bridges between all involved in our district. I have a passion for education and enjoy navigating challenges. My goal is to leave Bethel Park a better place than when I arrived; to add value to our schools and community.

Sharon Janosik

I am running for School Director so that I can better serve the community by helping to shape the future of public education in the district. I believe that the main jobs of a School Director are to advocate, lead, plan, and evaluate—all things I have experience doing. I would like to harness community spirit to increase family engagement, create more cooperative opportunities to improve whole-child education, and build a culture of genuine acceptance, inclusion, and diversity. I am of the firm belief that all this can be achieved while remaining mindful of the board's fiscal responsibility to taxpayers.

Jim Means

My experience as an engineer, educator and my eight years on the board qualify me to serve well. We have an excellent school system, but we can do better. I believe it is imperative we:

- return to face-to-face instruction five days a week
- use time-tested teaching techniques
- improve high school academics
- save our neighborhood schools
- spend taxpayer's money wisely

As a board member, I promise to consider the interests of all affected parties when making decisions. My only agenda is to provide an excellent school system for our youth and our community.

Rory Smith

Our children are our greatest treasure, and their education is our most valuable investment. A properly functioning school district is essential for their future and for the lasting well-being of our community.

I will use my life experiences and ability to make decisions to benefit our students. I want to continue to offer them the environment, resources, and support required for an excellent education.

If elected, I pledge to restore full-time in-person learning, promote excellence in education, keep property taxes affordable, and represent the taxpayers' best interests during contract negotiations.

19. School board members set policy for the district, what is one policy that you would like to change?

Buffie Faes

**Please see my forum response to this question.

Daniel Grzybek

See answer from forum.

Gail Hoppe

I would love to see our youngest students be allowed to remove masks during their learning times. Learning a foundational skill like reading requires teachers to be able to see proper tongue placement in the formation of sounds (i.e., "s", "ch", "th") which they cannot when a student is wearing a mask. I realize this is beyond the control of the district, and hopefully in the fall when we return to full-time, in-person learning, the mandates will be completely lifted.

Sharon Janosik

Off the top of my head, I would say the policy against families recording Special Ed, Gifted Ed, and 504 Plan meetings unless the parent discloses a disability in advance. As a district, we should be confident in the professionalism of our staff and know that we are all working together in the best interests of our students. If everyone has sufficient training and firm expectations, agreeing to a recording so that the family can participate and make educated, informed contributions should not be a source of concern or fear.

Jim Means

Most of our policies simply reflect federal and state law as well as Pennsylvania Department of Education mandates. In essence, they cannot be changed.

The one policy I would change is to allow 9th graders to twirl.

Though not a policy, I believe the board needs to be more transparent. The adoption of a consent agenda enables the board to pass the majority of their agenda without any mention of items in public. It is also time to hold meetings in person. The high school auditorium can easily fit the public with adequate spacing.

Rory Smith

Most board policies are received from the Pennsylvania School Board Association and largely reflect legal requirements. Most of our policies are nearly word for word identical with those of surrounding districts. Since they reflect law, there is very little ability to modify them. Procedures are more local and are more discretionary. I would be open to reviewing our policies and changing them if appropriate.

20. Do you believe that all students should go to college?**Buffie Faes**

Absolutely not. Trades are an excellent option, as well. Either way, I do not believe college is for everyone. I do believe everyone should have the option, should they choose to go, though.

Daniel Grzybek

I do not. However, I do believe that every student should have the ability to go to college. In other words, I think we need to do our best to ensure that students have the grades and academic ability to graduate high school and get accepted to college, if that is the path they choose. I also think we need to do more to support the trades. There is a negative stigma around them that needs to be removed. The trades include some very challenging, rewarding careers that have great pay, benefits, and do not lead to crippling student loan debt.

Gail Hoppe

I do not believe all students should go to college. I think every student should be able to chart his/her own course after high school. Serving in the military, attending a trade school, or entering the workforce via apprenticeships are all great options among many!

Sharon Janosik

Answered in forum.

Jim Means

College is not for everyone and those who decide to pursue another path should not be stigmatized. We need craftsmen, realtors, barbers, etc. One should not be forced to follow a certain path.

High school ratings that rely heavily on “college readiness” and “AP tests” are not a fair way to rate high schools. It is not the sole purpose of high school to prepare students for college. Rather, it is to prepare them for the life they choose to live.

Rory Smith

College is not for everyone. There are many diverse opportunities for a student's future. Included in non-collegiate options would be paths to the military, entrepreneurship, and the trades. All of these can be encouraged within the curriculum and counseling for students. Students who are considering entering a trade should be encouraged to utilize the BPSD partnership with the Steel Center Vocational Technical School.

21. According to the CDC over 15% of high school students self-identify as LGBTQ+, how do you think Bethel Park schools can best support our LGBTQ+ students?

Buffie Faes

As a teacher, I have many LGBTQ+ students. I believe we need to implement professional development for teachers centered around creating a safe, affirming environment. We could provide training for students and peer support. Inclusive clubs, such as the Gay Straight Alliance would also be a good place to start.

Daniel Grzybek

As previously stated, I think that we need to promote a culture of inclusion. Students in the LGBTQ+ community deserve to be able to bring their entire selves to school and be accepted and supported as who they are. With 15% of high school students being in the LGBTQ+ community, I also think that representation in our curriculum is very important.

Gail Hoppe

I believe that Bethel Park schools can best support our LGBTQ+ students in the same manner as all other students. Discrimination of any kind should not be tolerated. I would expect everyone in our schools to treat others as they want others to treat them. We need to get past the labels and see every person as a miraculous creation no matter how they identify. Celebrating successes, encouraging achievement, and applauding selfless service to others go a long way in creating a positive school culture for everyone.

Sharon Janosik

We should offer support, resources, and an appropriate, well-trained, and supported sponsor to establish a club, alliance, or council, as the students may desire. In addition, we must make eliminating bullying and exclusionary behavior of students based on any type of difference an extremely high priority, including a system of mandatory follow up with the survivor and or their family by staff at the district administration level. By incorporating diverse role models into our curriculum and resources, and by ensuring our health curriculum incorporates information pertinent to their needs, we can educate all community members about accepting our fellow human beings as they are.

Jim Means

I think the needs of students, LGBTQ+ included, are best served by teaching them how to read, write, and do arithmetic. Mastering these skills along with the rest of the academic curriculum will give all students a sense of pride, self-worth, and accomplishment.

Rory Smith

The purpose of our schools is education for everyone, not to single out a particular demographic for special treatment. All students should be served and respected and need to be taught a comprehensive curriculum. Mastering skills and gaining knowledge will give each student a sense of accomplishment and self-worth and prepare them for their futures.