



## 2009 Voter Guide

### for Pittsburgh Public School Director in Districts\* 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9

District	Current Board Member	Schools	Neighborhoods
1	Randall Taylor	Westinghouse, Lincoln, Faison, Student Achievement Center, Sterrett, Linden	Homewood, Lincoln-Lemington, Point Breeze, East Hills and parts of Larimer and Shadyside
3	Thomas Sumpter	Ft. Pitt, Rogers CAPA, Peabody, Pgh Montessori, Schenley at Reizenstein	Larimer, East Liberty, Garfield, Friendship, Bloomfield, Upper Hill, Terrace Village, West Oakland
5	Theresa Colaizzi	Mifflin, Minadeo, Greenfield and Phillips	Greenfield, Hazelwood, Lincoln Place, New Homestead, Hays, Arlington Heights, South Side Flats, St. Clair and parts of Oakland and Squirrel Hill
7	Jean Fink	Grandview, Arlington, Murray, Roosevelt, Carrick, Concord, Carmalt	Overbrook, Carrick, Bon Air, Knoxville, Allentown, South Side Slopes, Arlington, Mt. Oliver and parts of Brookline and Beltzhoover
9	Floyd "Skip" McCrea	Schaeffer, Langley, Pittsburgh Classical Academy, Pittsburgh Gifted Center, Stevens, Oliver, Morrow, Rooney, Perry	Elliott, Crafton Heights, Sheraden, Chartiers City, Esplen, Windgap, Fairywood, Marshall-Shadeland, Brighton Heights, Perry North, Summer Hill

**\*Directors for Districts 2,4, 6 and 8 will be up for re-election in 2011**

Read the candidates' answers to the following questions from A+ Schools and high school participants in Students Engaged in Leadership:

Why are you running for this office?

Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?

Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.

If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?

What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?

In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?

If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?

If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?

In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?

What are your goals for helping students succeed?

How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?

What are your main concerns with this school district?



**Cast an informed vote on May 19th!**

## Sherry Brooks District 1

### Questions for the Candidate:

- Why are you running for this office?* I am committed to seeing our schools do a better job educating our children and preparing them for the future.
- Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?* The most important role of a school board member is to establish policy and not get caught up in the day to day running of the system.
- Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.* Accountable is used to describe my most important personal characteristics or trait. Accountability is important as a school director because as board members, they are part of a system that is responsible for student achievement.
- If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?* My responsibility to my district would not limit my ability to fight for the academic achievement for all students. More than half of my time will be spent addressing the needs of my constituents and the remainder time will be spent addressing the needs of all students.
- What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?* There are some things we can improve upon such as broadcasting PPS board meetings on You Tube or some of the social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, or Twitter.
- In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?* The school board's role is to set policy. The role of the superintendent is to administer the policies set by the school board. The superintendent does the day to day management of the system. There should be a working relationship between the school board and the superintendent to ensure that the appropriate policies are set and administered.
- If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?* I will listen to my colleagues' opinion. I will be fair, equitable, open, and respectful. If the school board governance is to work, school board members must come to a consensus without personally insulting each other.
- If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?* I will rely on the use of sound data. I will also, when appropriate incorporate the thoughts of stakeholders, that are invested in the education of the children, in my decision making process.
- In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?* Public schools don't operate by themselves. They are surrounded by communities of families, businesses, services, and individuals who all have a common interest in preparing of our children for the future. Schools that have the support of their community stakeholders have a powerful advantage in carrying out their mission.

### From Students Engaged in Leadership:

- How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?* I believe that having highly trained teachers and students eager to learn make all the difference in the world. Every teacher and principle should improve upon their skills every year. I would require them to devise and achieve yearly professional development goals to so that teachers become successful and structured. The teachers themselves in return become great motivators of our students.
- What are your main concerns with this school district?* The cost of educating our children in the PPS is too high. The district's per pupil cost is approximately \$20, 000, which is well above the state average of \$11, 000.
- What are your goals for helping students succeed?* My goals for helping the students to succeed are: To increase student achievement, the district should implement a bonus pay system for teachers whereby teachers receive bonuses based on for example performance in the class room. Additional goals are the: adoption of a district wide Managed Instruction Program; and increase investment in Early Care and Education Programs and the establishment of yearly professional development goals for all teachers and principles per school.

Questions for the Candidate:

Sharene Shealey  
District 1

*Why are you running for this office?*

As a product of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, I know first hand the high quality education that our district is capable of delivering. I attribute a large portion of my undergraduate, graduate school, and career success to the preparation I received in Pittsburgh Public Schools. As a parent of Pittsburgh Public School students, though, I am very aware that we are not delivering high quality education in all of our schools and to all of our students - including some students at our high performing schools. I believe that public education is crucial to developing a high-performing society. I think that through strong leadership and sound vision, we can give each and every one of the children of Pittsburgh the foundation necessary to become productive adult citizens.

*Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?*

The first and most important duty of a board director is to ensure the educational soundness of the schools of this district. It is critical that we provide our citizens with healthy schools so that our city progresses. The board must set clear and appropriate goals for the superintendent so that he or she is able to direct educational programs to meet the district's needs. The superintendent then must be held accountable if this is not done. Another duty of a board director is to protect the investment of taxpayers. Money must be spent wisely and on target with the goals of the district. A third duty of a board member is to ensure that the district meets the standards, regulations, and laws of the state. The citizens of Pittsburgh would be at risk of losing control of the district to the state if this were not done.

*Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.*

One trait that will help me with the job of a board director is critical thinking. As an engineer, it's my nature to analyze various inputs to develop solutions. The complexity of the district requires the ability to discern facts and to think ahead to the consequences of decisions. A second important skill I possess is leadership. A leader is not always the person at the podium; it's often the person who can share their perspective to gain trust of both friend and foe. Leadership sometimes demands speaking, other times listening. A true leader knows when to do what. A third characteristic of mine is determination. I believe that anything is possible when the right people are together. Whether it's working with parents, constituents, or school staff, I'm willing to put the time in to get the job done. I think our children are worth every bit of my energy.

*If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?*

Board members must be aware that their constituency and the schools they represent are not a uniform group. I live in District 1, but the feeder pattern is such that my children will attend District 4 schools, K-12. Additionally, magnet schools draw students from all across the city. The issues that are of most importance to me, achievement of all students and parental involvement, are not specific to District 1. We need visionary, innovative leadership to attack these problems. We need teamwork across neighborhood boundaries to implement solutions that will drive success. I believe that a board member should have regular and frequent contact with each of the schools represented and also have regular contact with community groups that are not necessarily associated with schools. In this way, a board member can be aware of issues involving children and families, and bring best practices to the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

*What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?*

The board has taken a great step toward opening their decision making process to the citizens of Pittsburgh by televising board meetings. We need to continue the use of technology to help make citizens aware of the issues before the board. It would be inexpensive and easy for the board to use the internet to post their meeting agendas and supporting materials, so that the public can review the information that guides the board's decisions. I also believe it would be relatively easy to promote issues being considered by the board through school parent organizations to get feedback from a valued stakeholder in the board's decisions - parents. Although school directors have the final responsibility for decision-making, I believe it is imperative to allow the public to participate in the decision making process. Informed and involved citizens are in a better position to hold the board accountable.

*In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?*

The board should be the governing, policy setting body of the district. They should set the vision and goals for the district and allow the superintendent to develop programs that are properly aligned with that vision and those goals. While the board should be the guardian of the investment of taxpayers, the superintendent should have the charge of developing a spending plan that meets the district's budgetary needs. The board is a cadre of committed volunteers; the superintendent is an executive manager and organizational leader. The superintendent should be responsible for the hiring and firing of administrative staff so that he or she has the ability to meet the goals set by the board.

Questions for the Candidate:

Sharene Shealey (continued)  
District 1

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

It is important that all board members remain mindful of the purpose of Pittsburgh Public Schools – educating our city's children. I am well aware that equally reasonable people can disagree on issues. On issues where there is no compromise, I am committed to relying on experts and facts instead of conjecture. I would encourage my colleagues to put their biases aside and to focus on our purpose.

I do not believe that every situation dictates a winner and a loser; I believe that the win-win situation should be our first goal. I am committed to searching for the win-win in everything I do.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

I will make all decisions based on the available facts. The district itself and specifically the decisions facing board members are complex, and I intend to use every resource available to ensure I am aware of the implications and consequences of each and every vote.

I have been fortunate in that I have been able to develop relationships with committed public school parents and community activists. As a board member, I would work hard to expand my circle of contacts to include thought leaders and experienced educators. For qualitative information, I would rely heavily on parents, teachers, and community leaders who are willing to share their thoughts and experiences with me. For quantitative information, I would rely first on my own analytical skills to examine all available data.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

The effect of decisions on the community being served should be the first consideration for the district. What is the purpose of schools if not to meet community needs? Currently, it seems that district-wide decisions are being made without adequate input of stakeholders – the citizens of Pittsburgh. While we must allow the board and superintendent some degree of autonomy in decision making as they are our chosen leaders, they are ultimately accountable to city taxpayers. Citizens are entitled to an open and honest view of the decision making process.

Ideally, the district should involve stakeholders up front, before decisions are made and money is spent. Also, we must ensure that social and financial needs and implications are fully considered before irreversible decisions are made.

From Students Engaged in Leadership:

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

External motivation should be driven by setting high standards with consequences for missing the mark. Students and teachers must be expected to come to class on time and prepared for learning. The best teachers learn from their students and adapt their teaching to reach them. The best students learn from their teachers and adapt their learning to maximize their experiences.

Internal motivation can be driven by exposing students to a variety of experiences and opportunities. In the school setting, we must find what motivates each student and use that to broaden and enrich the school experience. We must educate the entire child, which means we must provide quality exposure to the arts, sports, literature, and crafts in addition to providing a foundation in basic literacy and mathematics.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

My first concern is the education experience that we are providing. State standards that are measured by PSSA's are basic knowledge that all children should have. We are not successfully and repeatedly meeting state standards, which means we are not successfully and repeatedly providing our children the tools necessary to contribute as adults.

While meeting state standards is both necessary and important, we must also concern ourselves with providing well-rounded education to our children. This means we must encourage critical thinking and promote non-academic experiences so that our children develop into healthy and productive adults.

I am also concerned about the equitable distribution of resources among schools within the district. We must ensure that school administrators and teachers are given the tools necessary to fully educate their student population without consideration of social or economic status. It's absurd to me that we are not providing similar school experiences district-wide.

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

My ultimate goal for every child in the district is the goal I have for my own children: to provide well-rounded, safe experiences in an atmosphere that values learning, independent thinking, and personal responsibility.

At a minimum, every school should expose our children to the arts, sciences, vocational skills, and sports. We must educate the whole child. Test scores should only be one way of measuring student and school success.

We must use our schools as a tool to build communities. Our families must be involved in our schools – every successful school has a strong school community that goes beyond the walls of the building. We must engage community organizations, businesses, and citizens to leverage our resources so that students are able to develop a world view that goes beyond their neighborhood

Questions for the  
Candidate:

Christine Stone  
District 1

*Why are you running  
for this office?*

I want to use my financial and public policy experience to strengthen the Pittsburgh Public Schools. I am the product of public schools and I graduated from Chatham University with a degree in Accounting. I have been a community volunteer and advocate for women and children for nearly a decade. Being a voice for women and their families when it comes to the areas of economic justice, reproductive choice & access as well as civil rights & liberties has been a passion of mine.

After volunteering for the Obama campaign in the Fall, I knew it was time that I gave back to the community. I am excited and confident in my campaign and I want my two girls to see a woman – their mother - run for public office. I live in Squirrel Hill with my husband Andy, and our two girls – Sophia, 9 and Lily, 7.

*Please describe the  
duties of the office you  
seek. Which are the  
most important duties  
and why?*

According to Article V of the PA School Code of 1949, the specific duties of the school board are: Adopt an annual budget, levy and collect taxes; borrow money; determine depositories for school funds; entering into contracts; determining salaries of all personnel; authorize staff participation in professional development; purchasing and selling land; determine location of school buildings; adopt policies to manage the district; adopt policies to govern student organizations; establish schools and programs; determine school calendar; adopt curriculum and textbooks; appoint and dismiss superintendent and professional staff; operate school cafeterias; organize school safety controls; and authorize student field trips.

The most important duties are those that impact student achievement, strengthen the district and create a culture of accountability and fiscal responsibility.

*Describe your most  
important personal  
characteristics or traits  
as they relate to the  
office you seek.*

Ask anyone and most would describe me as very outgoing, bright and hard working.

My outgoing personality has served me well. Whether chairing a board committee or volunteering for the Obama campaign, I've often served as the person who was able to reach across the table, to be a conciliator to make sure we met our goals. We can have differences of opinion but we conduct ourselves on the school board that is solution oriented. We've had enough sarcastic and accusatory behavior.

And, I'm not afraid to roll up my sleeves. I will use my financial background, my public policy experience along with my deep value of hard work that I learned from my parents to be the best representative for District 1. I have a vision of making Pittsburgh the leader in public education. We must look at our problems afresh and commit to improving our schools. This will require real reform and hard work and I am the best qualified for the challenge.

*If elected, how will you  
balance your  
responsibilities to your  
constituency with your  
responsibilities to all  
students in the  
Pittsburgh Public  
Schools?*

I will be prepared to effectively and simultaneously fulfill the role as a community representative, being the voice for my constituency while also fulfilling the roles of state agent, trustee and intermediary for all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

I will serve as advocates for the children in my community while also understanding my collective authority and responsibility as a member of a 9 member board, the work collaboratively with each other and the superintendent to achieve school district goals.

*What specific ideas do  
you have for making  
school board  
processes more  
transparent and  
accessible to the  
public?*

The first time I attended a school board meeting, I experienced first hand how hard it was to access the meetings. It was dark, and once I found a parking spot near the building, I wasn't sure of the correct entrance. Once I found the door, I was lucky enough to find a janitor who pointed me in the correct direction. Without that janitor, I would have wondered around looking for the meeting that was far down the hall.

I would station a staff person at the building's main entrance during the meetings to ensure public access. I would also place signs from the entrance to the meeting room to make meetings easier to find. Further, meetings should be held in rooms large enough to accommodate the public as well as an area for students who accompany their parents to have a place to sit to work on homework or to read a book. Further, board agendas should be posted on the district site in advance of the meetings.

*In your opinion, what is  
the most appropriate  
role for the school  
board vis-à-vis the  
superintendent?*

The most appropriate role for the school board is to develop, with the superintendent, a collaborative and mutually supportive approach to team leadership. I agree with the suggestion as set forth by The Education Policy and Leadership Center. I feel it is extremely important for the superintendent to respect the governance function of the board and for the board to respect the educational leadership and executive authority of its superintendent.

Questions for the Candidate:

Christine Stone (continued)  
District 1

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

To build consensus, you have to understand disagreement. Disagreement can be in various forms: someone hasn't clearly heard or understood your idea; different experiences or values that result in a different preference and disagreement stems from personality or past history with one another. When it comes to building consensus, I have used the following steps: I've made sure that everyone speaks. Everyone feels that their concerns have been heard. I've make sure that there is respect of the speaker. This is crucial - side-bar conversations are a no-no. Finally, I take the approach that when it comes to opposing views, there usually comes a point when I can say "Ok, I can live with this. I can support this." Everyone feels they've been empowered and is happy with the end vote.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

I will rely on input from other board members, students, parents, constituents, the community and professionals. Further, I will also base my opinions on information in research, data, policies and effective practices.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

The community plays a strong role in the decision making process but the only role in the process.

From Students Engaged in Leadership:

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

I will be a leader who is fully accountable, fiscally responsible and strategically focused on moving the district forward. I believe very strongly that a high performing board will motivate students and teachers to be successful. Further, we need more student leaders partnering with the school board as we work for change. Leadership is key.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

I believe the district has lost the confidence of the community. With declining enrollment, low test scores and the high cost of educating our students, real reform needs to happen. I think we are turning a corner but it will take dedicated, hard working school board members to help. I want to be a part of this change to make Pittsburgh a leader in public education.

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

And as a community volunteer, I have seen firsthand the challenges facing women, children and families. I will be a tireless advocate for our students making priority academic achievement across all racial and economic boundaries. I believe strongly in programs such as peer mentoring, summer learning programs, anti-bullying projects as well as engaging students in leadership. I know that successful students means a vibrant Pittsburgh.

Questions for the Candidate:

Thomas Sumpter  
District 3

*Why are you running for this office?*

Improvements have been made to the Pittsburgh Public Schools since I was elected. Achievement has gone up. A new aligned and more rigorous curriculum was implemented. Much professional development has been provided. Curriculum coaches have been placed in all the schools. Accelerated Learning Academies have been created. New choices in high schools have been created. Formative assessments are utilized to evaluate students. An administrator rating system and development program have been created. Labor strikes have been averted. Expenditures have leveled off. The Board has adopted goals, beliefs and commitments and a code of conduct to improve its governance. I want to continue these efforts and add to the above.

I have the ability, desire and time to be School Director. I am deeply concerned with providing quality education to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools in an efficient and cost effective manner.

*Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?*

School Directors must plan, set policy, and evaluate results. All three functions are equal in importance. Planning is essential to insure long term viability of the District. Policies are intended to guide activities carried in the District. District accountability is determined through the evaluation of results.

School Directors must: 1) work with the other directors to insure there are adequate facilities and staff to educate all students, 2) make decisions to assure the education system is carried out in an efficient and cost effective manner and 3) make decisions that are in the best interest of the students and residents.

Some other duties are to: approve long range plans, annual budgets, enter into contracts, hire and fire employees, adopt textbooks, approve courses, levy taxes, provide for special education and adopt rules and regulations to govern all school activities. All of the above duties are important.

*Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.*

I have the ability to make informed reasonable decisions based on information provided, my own knowledge and expertise and input from the community and others. I have patience and understanding and can determine short term and long term effects of decisions. I listen to other points of view and incorporate that into my decision making.

*If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?*

It is my responsibility to help constituents receive the service the District is supposed to provide them. It is also my responsibility to focus on the management systems in place and see how well they assist constituents address their own concerns. I also have the responsibility to intervene in areas where constituent concerns are not addressed.

My responsibility to all students is to ensure that they are provided all the necessary support in teaching, materials and facilities to maximize their achievement and decisions are made in an equitable manner.

*What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?*

The Board of Education is transparent. The preparation and posting of minutes from Board meetings can be improved to better inform and engage the public. The Education Committee meetings could be televised. A District radio and television show should be developed to keep the public informed of District activities.

*In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?*

The appropriate role for the school board and the superintendent should be a partnership, based on trust, with the understanding that the board is responsible for district governance and the superintendent is responsible for district management.

Questions for the Candidate:

Thomas Sumpter (continued)  
District 3

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

I must listen to the concern of colleagues. Different alternatives to address the concerns and their impacts must be discussed. Attempts must be made to develop compromises if one side or the other does not completely prevail.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

I use all the information that is provided to me and that I can possibly obtain on my own, from the community, and others to make decisions.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

The community is vital in the decision making process by helping to hold the school district accountable. The community provides valuable insight into how district activities are actually being carried out. This assists making decisions

From Students Engaged in Leadership:

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

Provide recognition for positive activities by students and teachers. Celebrate success in the District. Make sure the administration is doing what it's supposed to do to provide for and support student and teacher needs.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

My concerns are raising achievement, eliminating educational disparities, reducing costs, and creating a world class school district.

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

I am committed to the following: educating all students to their highest level of academic achievement, providing a safe learning and working environment, providing necessary support for students, employees and parents, distributing resources in an efficient and equitable manner to meet educational needs, and improving family and community engagement

**Theresa Colaizzi  
District 5**

**Questions for the Candidate:**

*Why are you running for this office?*

I am running for this office in order to continue the work I began 8 years ago.

*Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?*

School board directors set policy and allocate resources. Both are equally important to the success of the district and its survival and ability to thrive in the future.

*Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.*

My most important personal characteristics are compassion, courage and tenacity. I care deeply about the school district and this city, and have the ability and desire to get things done.

*If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?*

As an elected official, I must represent my district, but I am only one of nine board members. I must join with my colleagues to ensure that the needs of the entire district are met, and be willing to compromise to make that happen.

*What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?*

School board processes are already open to the public through cable TV and internet broadcasts. In addition, anyone may attend meetings in person at the Board offices in Oakland. All board members can be reached by phone or letter through the Board office.

*In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?*

The Superintendent is charged with carrying out the administration of the district by the Board of Education. They must work hand in hand towards a common goal of excellence for all.

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

Everyone brings some degree of expertise to the table. Listening to all concerns, discussing the issues, then arriving at decisions that serve the entire district for the long term is important. Board members must agree to disagree when necessary.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

Information comes from many sources. I would continue to rely on my superintendent, the administration, principals, teachers, parents and students, as well as my constituents to inform my decisions.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

Community input is very important. Public hearings are held each month to allow for comments. These concerns are factored in to every decision.

**From Students Engaged in Leadership:**

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

If by "you" you mean me personally, I would say I can only do my best to do my part as a board member to provide all of the tools needed for academic success. The Board supports the Pittsburgh Promise and hopes that students take advantage of the opportunity, but the ultimate drive to succeed MUST come from within each student. Parents, teachers and community members must also contribute to this goal.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

My main concerns with this district are :  
Attracting and holding our student population  
Continuing to make the best use of tax dollars

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

Goals must be achievable and measurable. The main goals are increasing the student test scores, increasing the graduation rate, and increasing the percentage of graduates attending college.

**Questions for the Candidate:**

**Jean Fink  
District 7**

*Why are you running for this office?*

I care about the education of our kids. I feel that my knowledge can contribute to making the district a stronger and more effective school district.

*Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?*

The most important duties of a school board are 1) hiring the superintendent because he provides the academic leadership for the district; and 2) taxing power because the board has to be fiscally responsible.

*Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.*

I see things through; I look at the positives and negatives of a new idea and make a decision about the long term implications.

*If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?*

The same way I always have; Whatever is good for my district is also good for the entire district.

*What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?*

Updating the website more often would increase transparency and accessibility. As an individual board member, answering your constituency questions and addressing their concerns provides transparency and accessibility as well.

*In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?*

The school board's role with respect to the superintendent is to be vigilant, evaluating, and supportive. The board serves as both advisors and evaluators of the superintendent's work. The board discusses the superintendents' ideas with him/her and gives input on whether or not they have a chance to be successful. The board also evaluates the superintendent on the progress on her/his goals. The board serves as advisors based on what we know about our districts.

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

The best way to build consensus is to have good communication. I do this by explaining my point of view, listening to the point of view of others and working to find common ground.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

I rely on the information from presentations, from staff, the opinions of constituents, and opinions of school principals and staff. If something is controversial I will seek out a lot of different opinions before making a decision.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

Community members need to let their representatives know how they feel about things; they should look at everything and figure out how it will effect their children and their learning and their community. They need to be able to let their board member know how they feel; if they have a different point of view they should talk to their representative and try to resolve it.

**From Students Engaged in Leadership:**

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

Teachers – offer professional development, recognize successes. If you recognize accomplishments in their peer group in goes along way; everyone likes to be appreciated.

For Students – to be able to show them where their hard work is going to lead and help them understand how to pursue their dreams. It is important to explain why they need to work hard.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

That we will be able to remain financially solvent; that we will be able to continue to recruit a top notch teaching force; that we don't continue to lose enrollment.

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

To continue to make sure we are providing a challenging curriculum; to get through to kids how important daily attendance is; to make sure that we're on the right track that we are in touch with universities and employers so that the skills we're teaching are the skills kids are going to need for the future.

Questions for the Candidate:

Floyd "Skip" McCrae  
District 9

*Why are you running for this office?*

The School Board is a team and we've set some good things in motion and I want to continue that work.

*Please describe the duties of the office you seek. Which are the most important duties and why?*

The School board sets the policy for the school district. The most important role is to guarantee top quality education for all our children.

*Describe your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek.*

I am a good listener and researcher. As a firefighter I work as part of team; I am an adept team player and I know when to support and when to lead.

*If elected, how will you balance your responsibilities to your constituency with your responsibilities to all students in the Pittsburgh Public Schools?*

I respond as best I can to constituents' concerns. I spend the most time with students and that help informs my decisions as a school board member. I participate in a lot district sponsored committees that work for work the benefit of the whole district.

*What specific ideas do you have for making school board processes more transparent and accessible to the public?*

Through technology we can continue to improve public access to information and school board decision making.

*In your opinion, what is the most appropriate role for the school board vis-à-vis the superintendent?*

The School Board's role is to work with the superintendent and collaborate for the improvement of the district.

*If elected, how will you work to build consensus among your colleagues with whom you may hold opposing views?*

I am willing and able to work with anybody anytime as long they are willing and able to work with me.

*If elected, what information will you rely on to inform your decisions as a school director?*

I will rely on as much factual data as I can get my hands on. This information comes through the district and it's available through publicly accessible means. I also physically tour school buildings on a regular basis.

*In your opinion, what is the role of the community in the school district decision making process?*

The community's role is to access and use the same factual information that the school board uses and to bring ideas and feedback forward to the school board.

From Students Engaged in Leadership:

*How can you motivate students and teachers to be successful?*

I can take my life experiences and my knowledge and show students how they can improve their lives.

*What are your main concerns with this school district?*

Number one is financial. The City and District are losing population. I am concerned about how to rectify territorial disputes among student in a way that everyone gets a great education.

*What are your goals for helping students succeed?*

To try to motivate them through my knowledge and experiences.  
To try to understand students and why they have territorial disputes.  
To help students understand how life works.