

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF EDUCATION

VOTE FOR ANY FOUR

LWV Question: How would you balance budgetary restraints with curriculum requirements?



KRISTIN TESTA LAFLEUR,
Republican

Answer: The key to meeting and surpassing curriculum requirements is to attract and retain an exceptional faculty. A highly educated and motivated faculty reduces the disruption and financial burden of teacher turnover, creates a more dynamic system that responds to evolving educational needs, and delivers the exceptional education experience our town has come to expect.

The Board should support investment in our faculty through curriculum-centered training and staff development that ensures educational objectives are met and minimizes future expenditures to replace and re-align staff. Well-established educational objectives for new and existing programs ensure efficient use of faculty and financial resources and maintain an emphasis on learning.

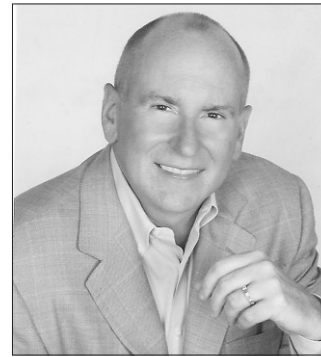
Background: 9 years financial services experience; Westport Young Woman's League, 7 years, 5 years as a board member; Fairfield University, M.A. American Studies, N.Y.U., M.B.A., Ithaca College, B.S., married with one daughter attending King's Highway School.



ROBERT M. CHASIN,
Republican

Answer: The Board needs to encourage and support the Administration in taking a critical view of the District's programs. What should be provided by schools, other community organizations and parents? Efficient spending and distribution of resources sometimes means cutting or modifying programs for more effective or better utilized offerings.

The District must look at courses with low enrollment or that do not support present and future needs and requirements. A school's budget should reflect the values and beliefs of the community and complement the students' curricular wants. The Board must ensure that the budget is well conceived and that all spending is earmarked for areas that will have a positive impact on student achievement, regardless of ability and background.



JIM MARPE,
Republican

Answer: I want to make our schools the right place for every Westport child, retaining our premier status at a cost all Westport can afford. Begin with regularly updated educational goals, reflecting the evolving learning needs of all students. Match these goals to a thoughtful openly constructed budget. Throughout my career, I helped clients build organization-wide consensus on "must have" capabilities versus "nice to have." This same discipline of goal-based prioritization must be applied to the tradeoff of curriculum and costs. New program suggestions must align with BOE goals. Continuous curriculum improvement coupled with goal-based prioritization will keep our schools ones we can be proud of, and can afford.

Background: Board of Education Member (Secretary), Westport Y Trustee, Y's Men, Interfaith Housing Board, Westport Rotary, Stamford Symphony President; Accenture (management consultants) Partner - 32 years; MBA (Wharton) 16-year resident; wife (Mary Ellen) Director Westport's Academy of Dance, Daughter (Samantha) - Staples graduate 2002.



DONALD G. O'DAY,
Democrat

Answer: Curriculum requirements and electives can be balanced against budgetary restraints when the proper financial discipline is applied during the budget development process. Westport's school budget process must begin with a well publicized and inclusive debate of the curriculum objectives - both required and elective. The board must facilitate

the discussion with detailed and accurate cost estimates associated with the overall curriculum. When the curriculum objectives and costs are established, the budget can be presented for town approval. However, our school's budget process does not end when the budget is approved. Financial discipline is a year-round process and goes a long way towards covering unexpected costs. Educational excellence and financial discipline are not mutually exclusive goals. I will bring a commitment to both goals to the Board of Education. I ask for your vote.

Background: Chief Financial Officer, business manager, father of 3 Westport educated children, candidate for Board of Education.



MARJORIE CION,
Democrat

Answer: I am committed to continually assessing and improving our curriculum. At the same time, we need to explore ways to save money that do not impact program. The Board of Education and the Town government should investigate the possibility of combining resources and experience in areas such as maintenance, computer technology,

and human resources to achieve greater budget efficiency and prevent overlap. Through collaboration with the Board of Finance, the Board of Education has saved significant amounts by reducing the health insurance reserve. We need to aggressively pursue this type of dialogue with the Board of Finance and the RTM so that we can look for ways to save money while preserving the excellent reputation of our schools.

Background: A former attorney, I have lived in Westport for 14 years with my husband and five children. I have been Co-President of the Coleytown Elementary and Middle School PTA's and PTA Council.

**The League of Women Voters
Education Fund**

This Voter's Guide has been published in part by contributions to the LWV Education Fund. The monies from this fund are used for citizen education projects. The Guide and other publications and activities of the League are intended to help voters utilize government services knowledgeably and to participate actively in the democratic process. You can show your support for this goal by making a tax-deductible contribution to the Education Fund.

Checks may be made to
The LWVUS Education Fund
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**League of Women Voters of Westport,
P.O.Box 285, Westport, CT 06881**

CANDIDATES FOR BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS

VOTE FOR ANY TWO

LWV Question: What should taxpayers know about their rights and responsibilities under the assessment appeals process?



JOHN A. FITZGERALD,
Republican

Answer: Every Westport property owner has the right to appeal the Town's assessment and taxation of his property. That includes residential and commercial property owners, and car owners. With the new property evaluation now being conducted, there are apt to be homeowners who seek an explanation for their new assessment, and possibly to

contest it. Their first option is to meet with the Town's Tax Assessor, and if that's unsatisfactory, to appeal to the Board of Assessment Appeals. For taxpayers who appeal, it is their responsibility to have as much hard evidence as possible to support their claim of unfairness. The three-person Board will then consider their case and make a judgment on any appropriate correction to the Town's assessment.

Background: Westport homeowner and taxpayer for 30 years - Career as an investment advisor, licensed and experienced in asset valuation - Experience in buying and selling residential property, developing new homes



DAVID B. KRAUSS,
Democrat

Answer: The Board of Assessment Appeals provides a forum that allows citizens to challenge their property tax assessments if they believe the assessor erred in the valuation of their property. If a taxpayer wants to initiate an appeal, they must submit a written application to request a hearing. The town government website offers the relevant

information and forms. At the hearing, the taxpayer should provide the appropriate and relevant evidence to support their case. The Board has the power to lower property taxes if it finds the claim is valid. If taxpayers disagree with the Board's decision, they have a right to appeal it in court. As a practicing attorney who currently sits on the Board, I understand the importance of giving citizens due process and protection under the law through fair hearings. I am running as a Democrat and support affordable and equitable property taxes.



ELAINE S. ARNOW,
Democrat

Answer: Taxpayers should know that they are entitled to meet with the Board of Assessment Appeals if they are dissatisfied with their assessments and believe that the town assessor has erred in the valuation of their property. Taxpayers must take two initial steps: 1) Submit a written application on or before February 20, 2006 2) attend a meeting,

consent to be sworn in and give facts required by the board in March. Taxpayers may or may not be represented by attorneys. If they are not satisfied with the board's decisions, they may turn to the superior court of the judicial district for the town in which their property is located. The Board of Assessment Appeals will hear all cases and evaluate all appeals for tax relief with fairness and integrity.

Background: Connecticut native, resident of Westport 49 years, Realtor in Westport 24 years
Former music teacher in Westport schools, BS, MA-Teachers College, Columbia (candidate exceeded word allotment)

and "write-in" the name of your candidate. Be sure you are lifting the cover above the office for which your candidate is running. Once you lift the sliding cover for a "write-in" space, a vote is registered even if you do not write anything in the space. Therefore, you cannot change your vote from a "write-

in" back to a lever selection once you have raised the sliding "write-in" cover.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR NEED HELP, PLEASE ASK THE BOOTH ATTENDANT TO BRING THE MODERATOR TO YOU. THIS IS YOUR RIGHT AND YOU ARE NOT

INCONVENIENCING ANYONE..

When you have finished selecting your candidates, leave the levers in the down (selected position). When you pull the handle to open the booth curtains, your vote is registered by the machine and the levers automatically reset for the next voter.