

Ryan Ravenhorst for Stewartville School Board 2018

1. All of you have been interviewed by the Stewartville Star recently. Just to catch everyone up on your background, please tell us a little bit about yourself.

I am 39 years old. I'm a 1997 Stewartville graduate and have lived in the district for the past 34 years. I have a Business Administration degree and have worked for my family-owned manufacturing business since 1995, wearing many hats of Production Manager to R&D (Research and Design) to Salesperson. I am married to my wife of 18 years and have two children, a 10-year-old daughter and a 15-year-old son, who attend Stewartville Schools. I'm an Assistant Scoutmaster with Stewartville Boy Scout Troop 56. I love to be outdoors and not many people know this, but I am bilingual, speaking fluent Spanish.

2. Why are you interested in running for school board? Why are you passionate about this position?

I had considered running in the last election, but I was very involved with the Boy Scouts. At that time, we didn't have a lot of help in our leadership positions. Today, we have a strong group of assistant scoutmasters and committee members which allows me to pursue this opportunity. During my time with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts (my daughter's troop), I realized how much I enjoy helping kids to reach their goals. I feel like it is something I do well. Being on School Board would give me the chance to help on a larger scale. Also, being on School Board will give me the chance to give back to the District what it gave me 20 years ago.

3. How important do you feel it is to be at school board meetings? Do you have the time and availability to give to this position for the entire term of office?

I feel it is of the utmost importance to be at School Board meetings. It is part of the reason that I'm running. I wanted to be more informed, so I figured that if I attend every meeting why not try to be on the Board where I can help? I do have the time and ability to go. I have a very good attendance record at our Boy Scout meetings and events. When I was offered the position with the Boy Scouts I would only accept if I knew that I would be able to commit 100 percent. Anything less would be cheating the kids. My approach to being on School Board is no different.

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5. What should the relationship between superintendent and staff look like? What should the relationship between staff/admin and school board look like?

I can answer both questions with one answer. Professionalism and respect. I think the biggest hurdle in a smaller community like ours is the fact that we know each other. I feel like we have a good group here that understands the difference between friendships and working relationships so that makes things a lot easier. Personally, working for a family business, I have to make that separation daily and I feel like we do a good job of it. Our business is still going strong after 70 plus years. I don't think we would have made it this far without that distinction.

6. Various school districts have begun responding to some research that indicates that homework does not improve student performance. What is your view on school districts that have chosen to eliminate homework? Should Stewartville test this out?

First off, from personal experience I don't feel that our teachers give out too much homework. I've read studies that say too much homework is detrimental and too little homework is the same. As with most things in life, there seems to be a balance. I don't think I'd support a no homework policy unless there was supporting data that we couldn't ignore. A little bit of homework creates responsibility and accountability which I think are major building blocks for one's character.

7. Some recent studies show that children need time to move about in order to focus on core subjects. How important do you feel it is for students to have outdoor play, art and music, and time to move around several times per day?

I feel like it is very important for students to have outdoor play. This year, some of the 5th grade neighborhoods go outside once a week and learn about outdoor and nature related things. I had the opportunity to volunteer one of the outings and the excitement and hands on activities captured all of the kids attention. I think this is a wonderful thing for the kids and I am really excited to

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see how this plays out. The classrooms and neighborhoods are designed in a way that kids can move from station to station and not be hemmed in at a desk for the duration of the day. I feel that with this design we are moving in the right direction.

8. There seems to be different levels of support for school activities and extra-curricular activities related to the school. For instance, the arts and academics versus sports. Even within the types of sports, there seems to be more support for some versus the other. What is your view on these activities and how should the school staff, admin and school board be involved in the support of these programs?

Well, this one is quite difficult to answer in a minute so I'll do my best. First, if it appears that there are different levels of support among extracurricular activities it could be something as simple as how many people are involved. Maybe football has more students involved than Business Professionals of America, or Jazz Band. So, in terms of support, it would be odd to say that one deserves the same amount of money as the other because some things just cost more money due to the numbers involved. I would just expect that the effort and support or initiative be equitable among all extracurricular activities.

9. When there is a difference in opinion among staff, administration, students, parents, residents and school board how will this affect you personally and will you be able to make decisions unbiased?

This would not affect me personally, whatsoever. I really feel that my talents lie in making unbiased decisions. I try to view every situation from every possible angle when making decisions.

10. What is your main goal for this term if you were to be elected?

If I were to be elected my main goal would be to learn as much as possible, as soon as possible, so I could serve the kids and community as best I can.