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1) In recent years, the school district has annually proposed budget increases greater than inflation, and has actually proposed bond issues to finance regular spending (not new capital spending). What do you think of this approach to financial management?

A bond should never be used to fund operating costs. I would not classify this as financial management but rather catch-up. We need to be proactive and fiscally responsible with our budgets. I believe the budget should be a year round discussion not just 3 months before a vote. The budget is not static but actually dynamic and we need to look at it as such. As a small business owner, I deal with a budget and must keep objective goals to go with the numbers.

2) For many years, the Nyack school district has been operating with annual expense increases about doubling the rate of inflation.

Do you consider this a problem? If so, what would you do about it?

Yes it is a problem.

I would:

- a) Evaluate the leases we have on properties in the district to make sure we are charging the fair market value and all appropriate costs are paid by the tenant. We currently charge less than fair market value and on one property the district is responsible for utilities. We should generate more rental revenue from Hilltop and the old high school and thereby reduce the tax levy.
- b) Make the budget a year round discussion.
- c) I will insist that the district receive more than ONE bid when soliciting vendors for any expenditure.
- d) We need an effective grant writer in our district. The district has been given funds over the past few years for a grant writer with no results. This is unacceptable.
- e) Aggressively utilize shared services with other school districts to manage costs.
- f) Exploit previously purchased technology upgrades (hardware and software) to the maximum. Investments in technology (past and future) MUST yield greater productivity and reduce overall operating costs. The financial benefits of technology are often touted as one of the main reasons for investment. The board must ensure that these promised financial benefits come to fruition after investments are made.

3) With the known ongoing gang involvement in the middle and high schools of the Nyack school district, what do you envision the part of the school board, administration, teachers and parents in the addressing of this issue.....other than budgetary concerns, as a resident of Nyack, I view this a major problem that needs be addressed and in an intelligent way.....a way that will show results and keep the community involved and have the school accept its responsibility as the "educator".....this a question to be addressed by all and hopefully is presented for reply and not just determined of no interest....the candidates must be asked and respond intelligently as the children in your care are our future....

The ongoing problem of gang involvement needs to be acknowledged. We can not go on saying that it does not occur. We have a code of conduct that sets forth rules and policy. These rules and policies need to be enforced. The community, teachers, school board and parents need to find common ground to resolve these issues. The school board can act to bring these groups together to start a dialogue.

4) What do you consider to be more important- lower taxes or a better educational system? Choose only one, please.

I do not believe these are mutually exclusive. I want a better educational system without budgetary waste.

5) Why do you want to be on the school board?

As the father of two children in the school district and a life-long county resident, I am running for school board because I take pride in our community and our schools. I will work to help create positive changes in our school district that will be reflected in our children's academic success and personal development.

As children are our greatest resource and responsibility, it is essential that they have the opportunity to grow and learn in a healthy and safe environment.

As a dentist, I manage a busy practice with many employees and I know how important it is to have a strategic plan to overcome obstacles along the way.

I bring real world experience as a small business owner and a taxpayer and it is my goal to actively help our schools to continue to progress and improve.

6) What new or changed initiatives would you support at the middle and high school level to combat gang activity, especially given recent events at Nyack High School and in the community.

I believe we need to start with awareness and admission that these issues exist. Once we have this we can develop a way to communicate about the issue. At the forefront, I believe we need to create an initiative of education for the students, teachers, community and the administration. We need to enforce rules that already exist so that our children have a safe environment in which to learn.

7) What if any specific improvements would you advocate for on the elementary school level to better challenge and meet the needs of academically advanced students?

We need to try to meet the needs of all of our students in the district. We should look at programs that will allow us to help students who have problems, those who have problems but do not qualify for help and whose parents need to get outside tutors at their own cost and students who desire more challenges.

8) *Would you support another bond proposal to fund capital improvements in the school district? If so, what changes would you propose from the last bond proposal and how would you make the bond more palatable to voters?*

I would support a bond after exhausting all of the possibilities of our own budget. I believe there are ways to make some improvements to our schools and certainly to our athletic fields, which are dangerous and sometimes unusable, with funding from other sources that do not create taxpayer burden. If I were to propose a new bond I would look at trying to get the community involved earlier in the process and communicating with the taxpayers as to what and why we were proposing such a bond.

9) *Head Start is a great success. It helps even the playing field for all children. Do you see evening the playing field for all children as a priority in our schools? If so, how do you think we can help the schools better achieve this?*

I believe **every** student deserves the right to an excellent education held to the highest standards. Our schools must have the tools necessary to achieve these standards. This may involve the implementation and use of different technologies, advanced education courses for our teachers and administration and a vision and value to follow through on the goal.

10) *How do you see the School Board interacting with the Schools' Superintendent?*

The ultimate focus of the school board is the children of the district through creation of a vision, setting goals and adopting and maintaining policies. It is thus the school boards job to hire and evaluate the superintendent. The superintendent answers to the school board and not the other way around. There obviously must be teamwork, communication and consensus building but the board must evaluate the superintendent.

11) *What is your position on the effectiveness of school uniforms in promoting a more disciplined student body, and in leveling the playing field in a district with such broad range of incomes.*

I have read many peer reviewed articles in the literature both pro (see Meeks Gardner, JM. Et al. [West Indian Med J](#). 2007 Jan; 56(1):34-41., and see Kim, JL. et al [Indoor Air](#). 2005 Jun; 15(3):170-82) and con (see The Journal of Education Research (Volume 92, Number 1, Sept. /Oct. 1998, pp. 53-62) by David L. Brunsmas from the University of Alabama and Kerry A. Rockquemore of Notre Dame:) on the subject of school uniforms as well as U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools manual on school uniforms (see <http://www.ed.gov/updates/uniforms.html>). There are many issues that must be reviewed, including but not limited to, cost to families and acceptance. I think that much more discussion from everyone involved, as well as intensive analyses of the objective points versus the risk/benefit needs should be addressed.

12) *I've heard that over 75% of the annual budget is devoted to staff and administrative costs. That doesn't leave a lot of room for new programs without significant tax increases.*

a) Do you have any ideas about decreasing costs without hurting educational programs?

b) Would you support formation of a committee, composed of business leaders with an accounting background, to examine best practices in other districts for making recommendations on how Nyack can maintain high educational standards while reducing overhead costs?

a) Businesses in the private sector constantly evaluate and re-organize their operations. This is necessary and proper due to the dynamic changing global economy. Additionally, oversight and compliance are required by the federal government on publicly traded companies by such laws as Sarbanes-Oxley to ensure fiscal responsibility and many other sound financial practices are followed. This same principle must be applied to public sector institutions and public sector employees cannot be charged with overseeing their own jobs. The administration has already indicated that a committee to oversee the business functions of the district be created and co-chaired by the Assistant Superintendent for Business. The committee (as proposed by the administration) would be nothing less than a slap in the face to every taxpayer. An operations and business overhaul of the district is long overdue and it must be done by business leaders.

b) I think that a committee of this kind would be an excellent idea. I think having experts in education and business working on this can only help to improve the district as well as bring the community closer and more involved in helping our children.