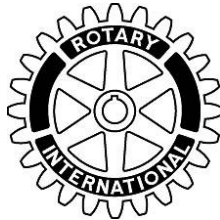


## 2024 Candidate Forum- School Board

9/30/2024

Sponsored by:



OWATONNA  
People's Press

### **Schedule of Events**

11:30 – 11:50 Lunch

11:50 – Tom Partridge, Noon Rotary President

Introductions – Brad Meier, President/CEO Owatonna Chamber of Commerce and Tourism

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM Forum Moderator: Julie Rethemeier, Federated Insurance-Retired

### **Format of Forum**

#### Questions

- No questions provided to the candidates in advance
- Questions from the audience will be reviewed and passed on to the moderator if appropriate and if time allows
- Candidates will alternate responses to each questions and will be allowed one minute for each question-should the candidates go past their allotted time, the moderator will cut them off
- Opening statement (two minutes)
- Answer question (one minute): yellow card (30 sec.), red card (stop)
- Closing statement (two minutes)

**\*Candidate bios were submitted by the candidates and were not modified or edited by the hosting organizations.**

**\*Bios of candidates are on back side of agenda**

**DISTRICT 761 SCHOOL BOARD (3 Open Seats)**



**Nikki Gieseke:**

- My name is Nikki Gieseke and I am running for school board. I am married to Jeff, and we have 4 amazing kids (Colin & Holly Piper, Drake Gieseke and my youngest, Trevor Gieseke, a Senior at OHS – you may know him as Photos By Trev).
- I am the Project Manager/IT Officer at Community Bank Owatonna where I have worked for almost 3 years additionally, I have lived and worked in Owatonna for over 25 years where I have served 6 years on Owatonna School Board, 3 years on Minnesota State School Board Association (MSBA) and Owatonna Youth Hockey Association (OYHA) for 6 years.
- You may know me from when I was a music director for various churches in the community or you may have taken a class through Community Education from me in Excel.
- I think it is important that everyone feels heard so I feel I am a leader who listens and asks questions.



**Mike Herman:**

- Mike Herman, Pres/GM for Culligan Ultrapure, grew up and attended school in Mt. Lake, MN and began his career in water treatment in 2006 when he and his wife Diana returned to Minnesota. Prior to Culligan Ultrapure he served 21 years in the Military followed by working for Sears as a District Manager.
- Diana and Mike live on a farm east of Owatonna where they have horses, chickens, ducks and several other critters that visit the farm on a regular basis.
- Mike is active in the water treatment industry as well as local state and city organizations, currently serving as a Director on National WQA BOD, Past President MWQA BOD, Past Vice Chair MN Plumbing Board, Past President of the Owatonna, MN Chamber of Commerce as well being active in other community and Church activities.
- When not at work Mike is watching his granddaughter run as a Huskie on the cross-country team, taking the RV out, and “working” at home on Whispering Pines.



**Christina Ingvaldson:**

- Christina is a seasoned professional with over 20 years of experience across education, library science, customer support, and retail management. Currently a Library Specialist at the Owatonna Public Library, she manages library services, trains staff and enhances patron experiences. Christina oversees circulation, coordinates book club materials, and manages the homebound delivery and interlibrary loan programs, demonstrating her commitment to accessibility and customer service.
- Previously, Christina worked at Pearson from 2008 to 2015, handling financial analysis, customer support, and knowledge management. She supported educational institutions with online standardized testing and managed financial reporting and staff training. Her career began in retail, including a notable role as Salon Manager at JCPenney’s, where she excelled in sales and operational efficiency.
- Christina holds a Master of Library and Information Science from Texas Women’s University, a Master of Public Administration from Strayer University, and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Strayer University. She also has a Cosmetology Licensure from Riverland Community College. Active in professional organizations like the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and the American Library Association, Christina is dedicated to lifelong learning and community service.



**Timothy Jensen: (Incumbent)**

- I was born and raised in Owatonna where my parents were both teachers (now retired). I graduated from OHS and from the University of Minnesota. I have worked at Federated Insurance for the past 29 years in the Information Services department. My current position is as a Systems Architect, where I contribute to technology acquisition and development projects.
- My wife is Vanessa (also an OHS alum) and we have three adult sons – Jake, Andy, and Lucas, who are all graduates of the Owatonna Public Schools.
- I’ve been a part of the ISD 761 school board for two terms, and I believe I bring a positive perspective and a history of success to the position.



**Ron Kubicek:**

- Lived in Owatonna for 26 years
- Married to Kim for 32 years
- Seven Children (Four OHS Graduates, Two at OHS, One at St Mary's) and Two Grandchildren
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Finance from the University of St. Thomas
- Active Member of Sacred Heart Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus
- Finance and Human Resources Manager for Advantage Cabinets, Inc.
- Vice President of the Owatonna Soccer Association
- Treasurer of the Catholic Education Memorial Fund



**Eric Schuster: (Incumbent)**

- Bio not available at time of printing



**April St. Martin:**

- My name is April St. Martin, and I have been a member of the Owatonna community for over 30 years. I am a mother, grandma and a 1996 graduate of OHS. My husband and I have raised our family here.
- I am currently on the Owatonna Lacrosse board, and I volunteer in many ways in the community.



**Andrea Van Gelder:**

- Andrea has lived in Owatonna with her husband, Tim, for 14 years. Their three kids are in 5th, 8th, and 10th grades.
- Andrea works as the Worship, Music, and Arts Coordinator at Trinity Lutheran Church.
- She volunteers weekly with the Kindergarten classes at Wilson Elementary School and has also been an accompanist for their choir for a number of years. Andrea teaches private flute lessons, has been involved in Little Theater of Owatonna, and her family is involved in Steele County 4H.
- She is passionate about public education and excited about Owatonna's future.

