

# PTO Council Voters' Guide for the April 7, 2020 Board of Education Election

## Meet the Candidates Forum

Tuesday, March 31 • 7 p.m. • Clayton High School Auditorium

Livestream available: [claytonschools.net/youtube](https://claytonschools.net/youtube)

The School District of Clayton's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) Council has prepared this Voters' Guide for the April 7 Board of Education election. We believe that a concise, nonpartisan publication of the candidates' views on pressing issues will help you evaluate the candidates, seek additional information and head to the polls better informed.

The District's six PTOs have developed questions based on the top issues facing Clayton schools over the next three-to-five years.

Five (5) candidates have filed for the three (3) available seats on the Board of Education.

This guide presents the candidates' responses, limited to 175 words, to nine key questions. The responses are listed in the order the candidates will appear on the ballot.

You will have an additional opportunity to explore these and other issues at the Meet the Candidates Forum on March 31.

The election will be held on April 7, 2020. The polls will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., and you will be able to vote for up to three candidates.



### Christine Win

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**Website:** [christinewin4claytonschools.org](http://christinewin4claytonschools.org)

**Education:** Liberal Arts Degree in Psychology from Washington University, 1998; Master's Degree in Public Health, 2002; Master's Degree in Social Work, 2002

**Employment:** Mental Health Provider (intern) - Washington University Health Services, 2002-2003; Health Educator - Washington University Health Services, 2003-2005.

**Civic Memberships:** Glenridge Elementary PTO - Art Room Coordinator; Glenridge Elementary PTO - Grade Liaison (2012-2019); Community Coalition for Student Safety - Co-Leader; Wydown Community and Character Committee (2019-2020); Moms Demand Action; Parents of Gifted Learners - Co-Leader; Claverach Park Neighborhood Organization - Halloween Festival Co-chair (2017-2019); Washington University Eliot Society; Parent Coalition for Excellence in Literacy; Gifted Support Network - Support Group Leader; Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri - Troop Co-Leader.

**Family:** I have been married to my husband, Patrick Win, for 17 years. We moved to Clayton for community and educational opportunities in 2013. We are the parents of four children, our twin boys, Epley and Beckham, are in eighth grade at Wydown Middle School. Our daughters Sigrid, third grade, and Ames, second grade, are both at Glenridge Elementary. All of our children attended pre-school at the Family Center and have remained in the District since that time.



### David Gulick

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**Website:** [www.David4ClaytonSchools.com](http://www.David4ClaytonSchools.com); [facebook.com/David4ClaytonSchools](https://facebook.com/David4ClaytonSchools)

**Education:** B.S. Accounting, UMSL; B.S. Business Administration, UMSL

**Employment:** National Sales Manager, Red Hat, Inc. I am the U.S. head of sales for the telecommunications vertical of Red Hat which is a large opensource software company based in Raleigh, NC. I am responsible for the revenue targets and manage the sales teams for the land-line and cellular carriers across the United States.

**Family:** Our household is made up of four of us. My wife, Karen, is a Principal Architect of a locally-based commercial architectural firm and vice-president of the Meramec PTO. She and I have two boys who attend Meramec Elementary. Alex is an 8-year-old second grader and Ben is a 6-year-old kindergartner.



### Gary A. Pierson

6301 Southwood Avenue 314.276.3872 [gary@piersonwells.com](mailto:gary@piersonwells.com)

**Website:** [www.piersonforclayton.com](http://www.piersonforclayton.com); [facebook.com/PiersonForClaytonSchoolBoard](https://facebook.com/PiersonForClaytonSchoolBoard); @gpierson

**Education:** J.D., University of Illinois College of Law; B.A. Psychology, Greenville College

**Employment:** Pierson//Wells, Partner

**Civic Memberships:** Vice President, Volunteer Lawyers and Accountants for the Arts; Vice President, KDHX Community Media; Director, St. Louis Art Place Initiative, St. Louis Business Journal's 40 Under 40.

**Family:** My wife Laura and I have three children: Gregory a 2019 CHS graduate, Ruthie a Junior at CHS and Mary a sixth grader at Wydown.



### Kimberly Hurst

44 Aberdeen Place 314.479.8115 kimhurst4claytonschools@gmail.com

**Website:** Kimhurst4claytonschools.nationbuilder.com; www.linkedin.com/in/kimberly-rameker-hurst-1916b4b0/

**Education:** MBA, Kansas State University; B.S. Finance and Political Science, University of Wisconsin - Madison

**Employment:** Co-Founder, Finally! Foods; SVP Long Term Planning, VP Supply Chain, Sr. Director FP&A & Business Development, Post Holdings (2011-2019); Director of Commodity Procurement and Risk Management, Ralcorp (2008-2011); Regional Director Southeast Asia, U.S. Grains Council (past); Commodity Trader, Cargill (past).

**Civic Memberships:** Co-Chair Committee for Propositions E&C, Captain PTO Treasurer, Captain Cares Committee; Adopt-A-Family Co-Chair for Clayton Ferguson and Florissant Families; Captain Welcome Committee; Wydown Families in Need Committee.

**Family:** My husband, Jeff and I have been married for 15 years and have three children. Katie is in eighth grade at Wydown, Matthew is in sixth grade at Wydown and Will is completing his final year at Captain Elementary. Both Katie and Matthew attended Captain Elementary.



### Nathaniel Millett

703 Westwood Drive 314.399.4572 ncmillett@yahoo.com

**Website:** fb.me/NatMillett4ClaytonBOE or search "Nathaniel Millett for Clayton School Board" on Facebook

**Education:** Ph.D. History, Cambridge University - England; B.A. History, University of Edinburgh - Scotland; Certificate in University Teaching Skills, Reinert Center for Teaching Excellence - St. Louis University.

**Employment:** Associate Professor of History Saint Louis University, (2013-Present), Assistant Professor of History Saint Louis University, (2006-13), Lecturer in History California State University-Fresno (2005-6), Lecturer in History College of Mount Saint Vincent (2004-5), and Lecturer in History Bergen Community College, (2003-4). Major fellowships: Weatherhead Fellow, School for Advanced Research (2016-17) and Fulbright-All Discipline Scholar Award, University College London, UK, (2014-15). Author: The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World (2013) winner of four book prizes; numerous articles, chapters and reviews.

**Civic Memberships:** Assistant soccer coach of the Angry Ponies (2018-present); Show Me Missouri Speakers Bureau; Saint Louis University and Slavery Working Group.

**Family:** My wife Lina and I have been married for 10 years and have two daughters. Lina, who is originally from Lithuania, received her Ph.D. in Social Work from Washington University's Brown School and is a senior administrator with Illinois's Department of Children and Family Services. Previously she was a school accountability officer for the New Mexico Public Education Department. Simone is a second grader at Glenridge and Isolde is two years old. Our daughters are bilingual and bicultural. Prior to moving to Clayton in 2017, we lived in the city of St. Louis along with a year in London and a year and a half in Santa Fe, NM.

## 1. What skill set or level of expertise would you bring to the Board of Education and the District? Please specify any experience at the school level.

### Christine Win

I have twelve years of practical and hands-on experience volunteering in our classrooms, attending and making public comments at school board meetings and collaborating with district administrators and local resources in an effort to support students' academic and social emotional needs. I have also advocated for our students on a variety of issues, including school safety (co-leader of Community Coalition for School Safety), gifted services (co-leader for Parents of Gifted Learners) and literacy (Parent Coalition for Excellence in Literacy member).

As a health educator at Washington University, I organized public health campaigns and gave direct education to students in the areas of stress, sleep, alcohol and other drugs and mental health. The education and support I provided helped students navigate their daily lives, make healthy, informed choices, achieve their academic goals and get the most out of their college experiences. Now, I am passionate about helping Clayton students do the same.

### David Gulick

As a father of two boys at Meramec, I am committed to the continued success of the District. Last year I helped with Prop E and subsequently with our Strategic Plan. When I began attending Board meetings regularly, I saw how my unique background could benefit our Board. I have human resources and accounting degrees and nearly two decades of experience within large, board managed companies. I've overseen strategic planning, managed large departments and been responsible for sizable operating budgets.

During high school and college, I was in the Army National Guard graduating from Officer Candidate School in 1999. So, whether it's nurturing a small team of three or four people or developing strategic plans in a Fortune 100 company, my military background, education and experience have all come together to round out a successful career. A public school doesn't operate like a public company but many of the same principles around fiscal responsibility, strategic planning and accountability to voters directly apply. I'm ready to bring that experience and perspective to our Board of Education.

### Gary A. Pierson

As a member of the Board of Education, I've worked with district-wide committees, other school districts, legislators, administrators and members of our community to advocate on behalf of our District. It takes time to develop the skills and relationships necessary to accomplish our goals and I've worked hard to do that. I have learned a great deal and I'm excited to continue to apply what I've learned in another term.

In addition to my BOE experience, I've been a parent at every school level, so I have seen how our District works from the Family Center through CHS graduation. I am privileged to know the people involved in our schools every day. I've invested time to understand how best to support our kids, teachers and administrators.

I'm also an attorney and I manage a boutique law firm. I represent everyone from large public companies to individual artists. I employ passion, creativity and tireless attention to detail to find solutions and get results.

*(answers to question 1 continued on page 5)*

## 1. What skill set or level of expertise would you bring to the Board of Education and the District? Please specify any experience at the school level. (cont'd)

### Kimberly Hurst

I have coached youth sports, served two years as Treasurer for Captain's PTO, Chaired Adopt a Family initiatives for Clayton, Ferguson and Florissant students and have participated in organizing or supporting almost every PTO sponsored initiative at Captain and Wydown.

Parental and PTO involvement naturally dips in middle school. After our daughter began attending Wydown, I became a regular attendee at Clayton School Board meetings and last year, I was asked to Co-Chair the committee tasked with getting Propositions E and C successfully passed.

I recently started my own business but prior to that was SVP of Long-Term Planning at Post Holdings, reporting to the CEO as part of a team that completed 15 major acquisitions, increasing revenue from \$900 million to \$6 billion. My business background will complement the very different skill sets of existing Board Members and enhance the Board's financial literacy, administrative efficiency and planning capabilities. I believe that by working together, we can ensure the continued excellence of Clayton schools and, over time, make this exceptional District even better.

### Nathaniel Millett

I'm a professional educator who has spent the last 20 years teaching, writing about African American and Native American History and performing administrative work. As a relative newcomer to town, I bring a fresh perspective.

With extensive, firsthand experience in education, I will bring to the BOE numerous, relevant skills that have been refined to the highest level of expertise. These include: academic leadership, education-specific strategic planning, attentiveness to student well-being, the creation of learning environments in which students of varying backgrounds and talents can thrive, the ability to stay abreast of ever-evolving educational philosophy, interpreting assessments, team work and the capacity to analyze and synthesize vast amounts of data and literature.

I have honed these skills at Saint Louis University, Fresno State, a teaching college in the Bronx, a suburban community college in New Jersey, the University of London, Cambridge University and in a maximum security prison. I've also worked with high school students, taught workshops for high school teachers and graded many AP exams.

## 2. What issue motivated you to run for the Board of Education? How are you going to facilitate its resolution?

### Christine Win

The first issue is our moral imperative to meet students' individual academic needs. This means meeting each student where he or she is. How is this determined? Teachers must have the training and tools to perform appropriate student assessments and to plan targeted instruction that honors learning differences and utilizes multiple learning modalities.

The second issue that inspired me to run is fostering our students' social emotional wellness. To do this, we must listen to students' voices. I support the District's use of an anonymous survey tool, called Panorama, adopted last year. This tool can help us determine areas of need and measure the effectiveness of programming or changes to curriculum used to address these needs. I would hold administrators accountable for using this tool to its greatest potential because I think it can make a difference in students' lives.

### David Gulick

Interestingly, what started out as a focus on a singular issue - fiscal planning - really kicked off a journey in learning and discovery. Proposition E is what brought me to the table. Leading up to that vote, I spent a lot of time with our residents helping them to understand some pretty complicated questions around school finance and property taxes. Through this process I realized I could help our schools in two key ways. The first is through community interface and having discussions with our residents to understand where we are, where we are going and what it will take to get there. The second is through my accounting background and experience with managing large corporations. Much like everyone reading this, I have a personally vested interest in ensuring we operate efficiently, ensure fiscal accountability and have an appropriate planning horizon to ensure smooth and reliable operation of our great schools.

### Gary A. Pierson

In 2016, I was motivated to run by the desire to support the schools that had provided wonderful opportunities for my family. I believed that working to improve the functioning of the Board was how I could help.

During my tenure, I am proud to have advocated for and supported key changes in how the Board operates. We have evaluated and streamlined our processes and meetings and better aligned our efforts with the vision of the administration. We now make it a priority to model principles of efficiency and effective governance and to disregard personal agendas and subjective opinion.

But the work is not complete and the future requires strong leadership. We are undertaking a strategic planning process to help establish the long-term goals and priorities of the District. I'm excited to use my voice and leadership at this moment to help keep the Board's focus on the big picture and to provide the strategic oversight that the District needs.

### Kimberly Hurst

Propositions E and C exposed me to the complexities of school finances. As Co-Chair of the Committee tasked with getting both Propositions passed, I knocked on countless doors and attended many community meetings throughout the campaign. Many people were surprised and skeptical of the need for additional school funding and after making the case for their support, I made a personal guarantee to hold the District accountable for the money entrusted to them.

Election to the School Board will fulfill that promise. If elected, I will work hard to create successful relationships with the other Board Members, the Superintendent, administrators, educators, parents and community members to help ensure the District makes sound, responsible financial decisions and investments based on the best interests of all students.

### Nathaniel Millett

Our district is currently at a critical juncture as it begins to craft a new strategic plan for the first time in years. The plan's content, design and implementation will shape our schools more than any single other factor for years to come. The BOE will play a significant role in each of these steps. This reality requires BOE members who are visionaries, excellent planners, detail-oriented and able to work collaboratively -- all skills that can be acquired through various backgrounds and professions. However, to be impactful BOE members must have a deep knowledge of educational policy, practices and philosophy, mastery of issues relating to student emotional health and experience in fostering diverse and inclusive learning environments -- essential skills that I have acquired through 20 years of firsthand experience as an educator. Thus, the importance of strong governance and the belief in my unique and invaluable ability to create synergy between each of the BOE's roles in the creation and implementation of the strategic plan has motivated me to run.

### 3. What are the primary strengths and most pressing challenges within our District?

#### Christine Win

Strengths:

- The quality of our faculty and staff.
- The utilization of a Growth Mindset as a core teaching and learning tool.
- Our excellent administrators and their efforts to maintain high academic standards and continually improve educational outcomes.
- The opportunities our students have beyond academics -- areas such as music, theater, journalism, art, athletics and other after-school activities.
- The Catalyst program which gives high school students the opportunity for hands-on, real-world experience in entrepreneurship.

Challenges:

- Meeting the wide range of academic and social emotional needs of our diverse student body.
- Maintaining class sizes that allow teachers to be highly effective.
- Recruiting and retaining teachers and staff with diverse backgrounds.
- Establishing more effective communication and partnerships between educators and district families.

#### David Gulick

There are so many great things about Clayton schools, but without hesitation the two that jump to the top for me are our students and our staff. Through this campaign process, I have been afforded the opportunity to connect in ways I never imagined. I have met with our administrators, leaders of our schools, some teachers and even some of the students outside of my own children's grades. The drive, passion and overwhelming focus on the wellbeing of all our children is clearly top of mind for our educators. In addition, the students are all articulate, thoughtful and eager to conquer the world in their own ways.

Our schools are amazing but all districts have opportunities. Near term, I hope to help shape a new definition of success so our young people graduate balanced, educated, inspired and empowered. Not just with great academic preparation, but socially equipped for the world and emotionally ready to engage purposefully in it.

#### Gary A. Pierson

Our greatest strength is our teachers and as a Board member, I've had the privilege to get to know them better. We have highly educated and experienced teachers - 95 percent hold advanced degrees and they average 17 years of experience. Our community has consistently provided adequate funding to keep our class sizes low so that these teachers can have maximum impact.

Among our most pressing challenges is whether we are meeting the social and emotional learning needs of our students and not just their academic needs. It is one thing to identify this as an important topic and another to evaluate everything we do with an eye towards how it impacts students in this area.

The Board can provide the oversight and accountability to make sure every programmatic decision takes this into account. The Board can't wave a wand and lower the stress level of every student, but it can insist that we are consistently asking how the other decisions we make impact the social and emotional health of our students.

#### Kimberly Hurst

Excellence in our district is not accidental. The primary strengths of our district are:

- It is well-funded and resourced.
- It is supported by involved parents and the larger Clayton School District community.
- It is staffed with talented administrators and gifted teachers whose dedication to their students extends well beyond curriculum requirements

Excellence in our district should not be taken for granted. The most pressing challenges within our district are:

- Retaining and attracting talented administrators and educators.
- Ensuring our curriculum is designed for life and work in the 21st century.
- Identifying and meeting the needs of students on trajectories of high and low achievement without shortchanging kids in the middle.
- Planning for the unexpected (ex: potential Charter School legislation, assessing and addressing school safety/security).

#### Nathaniel Millett

Our district has numerous strengths which include: a track record of academic excellence, superb facilities, a diverse and prosperous community that values education, excellent teachers and staff, low crime and a wealth of cultural resources on our doorstep. There are challenges, however. First, Clayton, like other high achieving schools, has seen an alarming uptick in student wellness issues. Second, the District has become less diverse in recent years, a trend that is detrimental to students of all backgrounds. Third, special needs students and their families are sometimes left feeling underserved. Fourth, gifted education can be treated as (pre) college prep rather than as a special need for which all types of students are fairly considered. Fifth, more high school students want to participate in team sports than is currently possible. Sixth, even after Proposition E, financial vigilance is required. Seventh, not all families feel as if they have a seat at the table. I believe that strong leadership that best utilizes our resources and a carefully crafted and implemented strategic plan can overcome these challenges.

### 4. In the development of the District's budget, what are your top three spending priorities?

#### Christine Win

I support the District's zero-based budget philosophy which requires that every function in the District should be analyzed for its needs and wants and all expenses should be justified. With this as my framework, my top three spending priorities are:

**Teacher Salaries:** In order to recruit and retain diverse, high quality, experienced educators, teacher salaries must be competitive with area school districts. Educators should be compensated for years of experience, special certifications and any secondary degrees they offer our students.

**Class Size:** The District must continually evaluate if staffing changes are needed to ensure academic progress for all students; this could mean additional hires or a redistribution of current staffing.

**Teaching and Learning Tools:** When we provide educators and students with the tools they need to do their best work, the learning experience is elevated and both faculty and students are more successful. These tools include access to innovative teaching methods and evidence-based curriculum, ongoing professional development and the confidence that the District makes school safety a top priority.

*(answers to question 4 continued on page 7)*

#### 4. In the development of the District's budget, what are your top three spending priorities? (cont'd)

##### David Gulick

Our budget is heavily weighted toward staff costs. Roughly 70 percent of the budget goes toward salaries and benefits. More than 20 percent of that is for health insurance and retirement. So, from a spending perspective, we must always keep that top of mind because it's our single largest budget item and a direct feed to one of our biggest strengths.

Next is proper planning around Prop E funds. We asked our community to step up in a big way last year and now the responsibility is on us to ensure we are being good stewards and managing those funds appropriately to fulfill the commitments made during the campaign.

Last, and definitely not least, is classroom technology. A core pillar of my platform is to ensure we are looking at all methods of curriculum delivery including what tools our students and teachers have at their disposal. I want to be sure that we are not only managing our budget appropriately, but that we are always exploring any available outside funding sources to supplement the budget.

##### Gary A. Pierson

The most important thing we spend our money on is teachers. We have small class sizes and low student/teacher ratios. Salaries constitute the largest portion of our budget, so realistically all our spending priorities are tied to our teachers.

In 2019 our community supported Proposition E to allow us to avoid staffing cuts and maintain our class sizes. But in that process, we learned that the murky and confusing restrictions around school financing under Missouri law were not well understood. The community was understandably confused that although property values and taxes had risen significantly, the funds coming to the District were not keeping pace.

One of my priorities is to increase the public's understanding of how the District gets its funding and what controls and processes we have in place to make sure we are spending our money wisely. I believe that if the community understands our finances better, they will not only help us to keep our priorities in the right place but also always provide the financial stability our schools need.

##### Kimberly Hurst

The District's mission is to "inspire each student to love learning and embrace challenge within a rich and rigorous academic culture." To achieve this mission, Clayton maintains low student to teaching-staff-member ratios and employs highly qualified teachers. Most classroom teachers have more than 17 years of experience and over 94 percent hold a master's degree or higher. Investment in hiring and retaining qualified teachers should remain our top priority and the majority of the District's budget should continue to be directed toward teacher salary and benefits.

The District's vision is to "develop leaders who shape the world through independence, creativity and critical thinking." In order for the District to achieve this vision, it needs to ensure it gives students and teachers the tools to succeed. From a budget standpoint, this means investing in facilities and technologies, curriculum programs, extracurricular activities and student support services.

##### Nathaniel Millett

The most important factor in determining the quality of education that is provided by a school is the ability of its teachers. Accordingly, our first spending priority must be the recruitment and retention of the very best teachers through generous salaries and benefit packages. Second, we must use the same tools to attract and retain outstanding staff and administrators. While teaching lies at the heart of a school, staff and administrators play an essential role in determining how well a school and district functions. They also contribute significantly to student wellness and development. In the case of teachers, staff and administrators, a portion of the budget needs to be reserved for professional development to ensure that they remain at the cutting edge of their fields. Third, the District must allocate enough resources to meet every essential need of a given student.

#### 5. One Core Value of the District is to model and promote inclusiveness by valuing individual differences and the contributions of a diverse student body and staff. How do you intend to support this Core Value?

##### Christine Win

Classroom teachers and counselors need the District's support to have the understanding and tools necessary to promote inclusiveness and value individual differences. One way to provide this support is by providing professional development on topics such as: autism spectrum, neurological differences such as dyslexia and ADD/ADHD, LGBTQ related issues and English language learners.

All students benefit from having a faculty with a diverse background -- African American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American, LGBTQ, etc., because teachers are important role models for our students. The District must ensure that all of our educators feel that they are valued members of the community.

It is important that the District encourages and supports our schools in providing community outreach programs that promote inclusivity and diversity. These events bring students, parents and faculty together in a fun, educational way. Examples of events at Glenridge include Black History Month celebration, Hispanic Heritage Sunday Market, Lunar New Year celebration and Indian Holi Color Run.

##### David Gulick

I have been fortunate to be able to help with the development of our District's Strategic Plan and as a Board Director I will be able to continue to support the development of this plan. In my mind, key for our approach will be taking the lessons we learn when looking at the "Portrait of a Graduate" and ensuring that we have programs to support all of our students' unique abilities. We must be mindful and purposeful in understanding the uniqueness that every student and educator brings with them every day into the classroom. This diversity enriches everyone's academic, social and emotional experience. Because our students and staff have different beliefs and come from different nationalities and races, the Board must continue to look at policies equitably, support our educators through professional development and be accountable to inclusivity for everyone. This should shape not only our District culture but also our approach to teaching and learning.

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(answers to question 5 continued on page 8)

## 5. One Core Value of the District is to model and promote inclusiveness by valuing individual differences and the contributions of a diverse student body and staff. How do you intend to support this Core Value? (cont'd)

### Gary A. Pierson

During my tenure the Board has supported this core value by focusing on equity and diversity. (It's also a focus of our work on the new Strategic Plan - see next answer). For several years, the Board has made it one of the superintendent's annual goals to address inequities across racial groups. The Board also approved funding for professional learning at every level of the District on this subject. I participated in sessions with the consultants the District hired as part of that process and will continue to be involved in this work.

We've made improvements, but we have more to do. Some things we have done will bear fruit in the future. For example, one goal to support this core value is to diversify the faculty, so the Board supported hosting a job fair for potential candidates before we knew what our hiring needs would be. This has deepened our pool of candidates so that we will have a better opportunity to hire the experienced candidates we need and also diversify our faculty.

### Kimberly Hurst

To fully realize the potential of every student and member of the faculty and staff, as well as to increase faculty diversity, we need to make sure that our school district is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone.

Our district has a rigorous hiring process in place to ensure it hires the best possible candidates, which I unequivocally support. I also recognize how important it is for students to be able to look to the front of the classroom and see someone who looks like them. Hiring faculty from all walks of life is an ongoing challenge that takes diligence, patience and a willingness to wait for the right candidates to present themselves.

The District has begun to make a conscious effort to increase staff and teacher diversity and if elected to the Board, I will do everything I can to support and enhance current outreach efforts to ensure the talent pool includes highly qualified minority candidates.

### Nathaniel Millett

For the past 20 years, my scholarship, teaching and service have been defined by a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Scholarship: I am a historian of the African American and Native American past on which I have published extensively, including a multi-prizing winning book about slavery. My published research on SLU and slavery began a challenging, but essential process of reconciliation. Teaching: My teaching centers on the history of marginalized people across the globe. I have reflected deeply upon how best to teach these histories to a diverse student body at SLU and at three previous schools in which the majority of the students were people of color and/or non-U.S. born. I also teach regularly in SLU's maximum security prison program. Service: I helped to create SLU's Latin American Studies program. Personal life: I was educated in Europe while today my Lithuanian wife and I are raising our daughters in a bilingual and bicultural environment. Ultimately, for me supporting this core value will be a seamless extension of my professional and personal life.

## 6. What are two of the most important attributes we need to develop in our graduates for them to be successful?

### Christine Win

I believe the two most important attributes we need to develop in our graduates are critical thinking and cultural competency. Critical thinking is an essential skill for our 21st century graduates, who will have to adapt quickly to rapidly changing technology and make informed decisions about the ways the internet, artificial intelligence and genetic engineering and the climate are changing our communities.

We must also teach students how to thrive in a global society, where travel and the internet allow us to collaborate with people from around the world. By teaching cultural competency and an appreciation for those who are not familiar to us, we give our graduates opportunities for success in all aspects of their lives -- academic, social and professional -- and they, in turn, will be capable of building stronger communities.

### David Gulick

Whether college-bound, excelling at a trade, joining the military or pursuing another path, things come to mind that span all paths. First, our graduates need to be equipped to handle the social and emotional pressures of our world. Learning tools to manage the inevitable ups and downs as they venture into the next phase of life will help them for years to come. Second, everyone would benefit having financial knowledge and tips, especially if they're moving on toward financial independence. Education debt is speculated to hit \$2 trillion by 2022. When moving into a phase of life where you manage your own finances, having a basic understanding of budgeting, managing debt and setting spending priorities can lay a successful financial foundation early on no matter what their plans are for the future.

### Gary A. Pierson

This school year the Board and Dr. Doherty have begun the process of developing the next Strategic Plan by utilizing a construct he calls the "Profile of a Graduate." One reason I want to serve another term is to see this process out. The work has progressed to a point where we now have some basic goal statements. The School District of Clayton will ensure:

- each student feels safe and valued.
- each student demonstrates educational growth through an equitable, personalized and individualized learning experience.
- each student achieves personal growth in social, emotional and physical well-being.

The next step is what I'm really looking forward to tackling: developing action steps with measurable outcomes in each of these areas. Defining how we will know whether we are meeting these goals is the type of work that will take experience, focus and patience. It won't happen overnight and we can't let ourselves get distracted. I'm up for this and ready to help lead the effort!

(answers to question 6 continued on page 9)

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## 6. What are two of the most important attributes we need to develop in our graduates for them to be successful? (cont'd)

### Kimberly Hurst

A graduate who is intellectually curious makes learning a constant, an attribute that's invaluable for 21st century success. In the workplace, this trait is demonstrated by employees who seek to understand the perspective of others, are willing to take risks and view mistakes as opportunities to fail forward. The desire to explore, to take apart and to experience new things is the driving force behind new discoveries across all fields. All students, regardless of standardized test scores and GPAs, can develop intellectual curiosity and it should be embraced and nurtured in our schools. We can't all be Galileo or Elon Musk, but we can all agree that life is more interesting for the interested.

The second important attribute is empathy. People who are able to demonstrate compassion, kindness and an understanding of others develop social savviness, a powerful currency. Empathetic people are aware of not only their own world view, but that of others and that makes them powerful collaborators and communicators. It also makes them good human beings.

### Nathaniel Millett

Having taught thousands of students, many of whom recently graduated from Clayton or similar schools, I have spent the last 20 years grappling with this exact question. Likewise, my extensive firsthand experience allows me to see long term trends and make observations that might not appear in quantified studies. First, our graduates need to master the art of thinking critically, analytically and independently.

Too many high school students are conditioned by a culture of excessive testing and overreliance on technology to think narrowly and only in black and white. These skills are not only invaluable to future academic and career success, but also in quality decision making and engaged citizenship. Second, we need to develop graduates who have the confidence and self-awareness to appreciate that there are many different ways to acquire the relevant skills that lead a successful and rewarding life. Such a perspective will help students to become the best and truest versions of themselves regardless of the path they tread in life or the obstacles they encounter.

## 7. State the most important goal you will accomplish during your term and specify how the community can measure your success.

### Christine Win

The most important goal I hope to accomplish during my term is to continue to improve and refine the Districts efforts to address learning differences. These could include the need for content acceleration for students who are talented in certain subject areas or ensuring that children with dyslexia are taught to read using an evidence-based structured literacy program. The community can measure my success by gathering feedback from students and teachers about their educational experience in response to these changes as well as reviewing achievement data before and after acceleration, interventions, or accommodations are made.

### David Gulick

An interesting aspect of a Board of Directors is they operate as a collective body. While each Director has their own vote, the Board works as a team. My ultimate goal is to bring my background in business and leadership to support the Board and School District as a whole, informing discussion to support sound decision-making. Individually, one area where I can and will be focusing is community engagement. As we approached Prop E last year, I realized I didn't really know our Board members. As a Board member I will make a concerted effort to connect with our community on a regular basis. Year over year, I want the community to be able to say, "Yes, I know David on our School Board and I am comfortable reaching out to him and talking about our schools."

### Gary A. Pierson

During my tenure as a Board of Education member, my passion has been to constantly improve the focus, perspective and efficiency of the Board of Education. That will not change over the next three years.

I've supported reforms to make our meetings and processes more efficient and productive, including new Board communication protocols and a better process to educate and train new members. I'm proud of this work, but we must continue to make progress and constantly remind ourselves of the proper role for the Board of Education.

The community can measure our success by asking three questions:

- Does the Board cast the big picture vision or micromanage day-to-day tasks?
- Does the Board provide new ideas and fresh perspectives or is it stuck in old habits and past practices?
- Does the Board model good governance, transparency and efficiency or does it waste time and slow down the process?

### Kimberly Hurst

As only one of seven Board members, my success is tied to the Board's success. The Board's primary goal should be to ensure the completion and successful execution of the strategic plan. The community can measure the Board's success in meeting or falling short of this goal by monitoring its ability to:

- Hold the District accountable for existing high academic standards.
- Challenge the status quo to improve the learning experience for every student.
- Effectively allocate the District's financial and educational resources.

As a Board member, I will strive to be an adept and active problem solver. I will do this by seeking information and asking clarifying questions to help the Board make sound decisions such as:

- What is the goal of this initiative and does it align with the District's vision, mission and strategic plan?
- What will it cost and what data tells us that it merits the cost of implementation?
- How does it fit with existing activities and does it conflict with anything we're already doing?
- How will we evaluate results?

(answers to question 7 continued on page 10)

## 7. State the most important goal you will accomplish during your term and specify how the community can measure your success. (cont'd)

### Nathaniel Millett

Our schools need to ensure that academic success and student mental, emotional and physical well-being are never at odds. The climate of care should support student well-being and engagement with learning by equipping students with skills to become motivated and ethical learners. Several steps will be required.

First, we must have a profound conversation about how we define educational excellence and what value we place on healthy child development. Second, we need to think with an open mind about how we assess student achievement and progress with particular attention on the role of excessive testing. Third, we need to remind our students that there are multiple paths to success and that they must never judge their self-worth by numbers. Fourth, this needs to begin in kindergarten. Dialogue, strategic planning, student and parental feedback and professional development for staff will all help in facilitating these changes. The results can be assessed through questionnaires and interviews with all involved stakeholders and, most importantly, by watching our kids thrive as they grow into happy, healthy, balanced people.

## 8. Describe how you would build consensus and support in our community around the work of the District?

### Christine Win

Communication is the key factor to building consensus and community support. Effective communication requires two steps: sharing information about the issues and listening to all voices -- parents, district residents, teachers and students. Round tables, community forums, surveys and focus groups are some of the tools the District can use to disseminate accurate, thorough information. These engagements give constituents the opportunity to convey what is important to them, enabling the District to partner with and benefit from the expertise of our highly talented, engaged community.

### David Gulick

In the lead up to the Prop E vote last year I spent a lot of time helping people understand the complexities around our taxes and school financial operations. These are not easy topics to understand if you aren't familiar with it. During the process what I often told people was that I'm more concerned that they vote with an understanding of the facts and the real data than whether they vote yes or no. That belief carries through in a lot of what I do. I believe that if we do our job well and create an informed community, consensus and support will follow.

### Gary A. Pierson

As a Board member, I've built relationships across many groups. I already knew the Family Center, Captain, Wydown and CHS communities (where my kids have attended) but I've enjoyed getting to know the other schools as well. I also knocked on hundreds of doors rallying support for Prop E and got to know citizens not directly connected to our schools.

I've also worked with other district boards through the Legislative Advocacy committee (a group of several St. Louis County school districts) and Special School District. I've developed ties with our state legislators, County Council members and leadership in both the City of Clayton and City of St. Louis. These relationships provide key sources of support.

Another way to build support is to involve the community in our BOE meetings. I regularly invite people to our meetings and was proud to support videotaping/streaming them and holding more meetings in our schools. When people can see the work of the District and the Board they can better understand how we need their support.

### Kimberly Hurst

The Board welcomes community attendance at meetings which are live streamed and recorded. The reality is that people are busy and a former Board Member probably stated it best when he said that he doubted the meetings "would ever be made into a prime-time movie."

Despite sparse attendance, the Board needs to ensure the District continues to make information accessible, timely and transparent. This is especially true when it comes to any consequential decisions, financial or otherwise. The strategy of going door to door and its importance in terms of listening and information sharing is particularly important when the District is advocating for something.

While canvassing the community to garner support for Propositions E and C, I encountered many community members without school-aged children that reside within the boundaries of the District. I think the Board should increase its outreach for this particular demographic as they are valued taxpayers with a vested interest in the success of our schools which is made possible with their support.

### Nathaniel Millett

First, I am running for this seat so that I can represent every single person in our community which is: multi-racial, multi-cultural, international, of varying economic means, hardworking, deeply rooted, new to town and politically progressive through to conservative. Second, I will enter every discussion or correspondence with a community member with only one assumption: we may have different backgrounds, but we are unified by how much we love our children and a shared belief in the importance of education. Third, I have spent the past 20 years communicating and explaining ideas to a wide variety of audiences. Sometimes, the conversations are difficult, for example when I'm speaking about the history of race to an audience that contains multiple, strong points of view. However, I've learned that speaking honestly, clearly and with respect is the foundation of strong communication. I also believe that informed debate with open, honest, respectful dialogue is healthy and have learned that the ability to listen is essential for reaching consensus and support.

**Livestream the Forum on March 31:**  
[claytonschools.net/youtube](https://claytonschools.net/youtube)



## 9. What steps do you believe the District should take to recruit, retain and support staff and teacher talent apart from salary and benefits?

### Christine Win

If we are to recruit and retain high quality staff and teachers, we must promote a culture where educators feel valued and respected as professionals. One way to value our educators is to give them support for new projects in areas they're passionate about -- computer science, community service, renewable energy etc. For example, faculty who are passionate about science could prepare students for the Science Olympiad competition. If we compensate faculty for their extra time and publicly acknowledge their work within the District, teacher satisfaction will improve.

Another key issue in Clayton is recruiting teachers who reflect the diversity of our student population. One way to recruit and retain a diverse staff might be to partner with colleges that are training large populations of African American and other minority teachers to develop a mentorship program that starts early in college, continues through student teaching and includes a paid internship after graduation, nurturing these young teachers with the expectation that if they excel, they'll be hired full time in the District.

### David Gulick

I've been fortunate to manage high performing teams and one thing I've learned is that it is both rewarding and challenging. Usually, the environment in which people work is more of a draw than salary and benefits. I believe there are parallels from my experience which we can draw on within the District. If we continue to build an environment that embraces innovation, encourages passion and has a leader with strong vision, I am confident we will be able to recruit top talent. Retention, however, is more difficult. We must foster growth and development within our staff. For some, this means we will ultimately lose them as they move on to take higher positions elsewhere. For others, this means growing talent within and creating future leaders that are committed to our mission and vision. By fostering an environment where our staff are challenged by their peers, vulnerability is embraced and looking at other leading institutions for new ideas is encouraged, we will continue to see empowered leaders as well as engaged educators in our schools.

### Gary A. Pierson

As the Board's liaison to the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources I helped strategize the District's efforts to recruit new teachers and provided advice about negotiating contracts with our unions and current staff. In this role I learned quickly how competitive the market is for the experienced and highly qualified teachers that our community expects. The best teachers have many choices for employment, and it takes more than competitive salary and benefits to keep them.

One thing we offer our staff that sets us apart is our focus on innovation. We offer teachers not just the opportunity but also the expectation that they constantly reinvent what it means to provide the best possible education for our students. We have supported new programs such as the Catalyst program at CHS and discovery time at the elementary schools. These opportunities give our educators the chance to expand and apply their own learning and help them stay challenged and engaged as professionals. Continuing to focus on innovation will help us keep the best faculty and staff anywhere!

### Kimberly Hurst

Continue Investing in Professional Development

- Access to continuous learning opportunities improves the outcomes for all students and communicates to teachers that the school community values the work they do and encourages their growth.

Maintain the Board Grant Program

- This allows staff employed by the District who live outside of school boundaries to enroll their children in the District and is instrumental in attracting and retaining talented staff.

Create a Positive Work Environment

- Principals play a critical leadership role in schools and need to foster supportive school environments that recognize the professional and personal growth and success of their staff.
- One of the Board's responsibilities is to ask tough, thought-provoking questions to District staff but it should always be done respectfully.

Communicate Gratitude

- This District has exceptional educators and talented administrators who work far beyond curriculum requirements and school hours to support students and we should never miss an opportunity to thank them for their efforts.

### Nathaniel Millett

First, and too often overlooked, our teachers need to be reminded that they are the most valuable resource that a school possesses. Accordingly, our teachers need to be treated as colleagues and friends; not simply employees.

Second, teachers and their children need to feel that they are members of our community.

Third, our teachers need to be provided with the very best professional development resources so that they are challenged and remain at the cutting edge of their field.

Fourth, we must develop and utilize the most advanced and fairest assessment tools when analyzing teacher performance. Likewise, the express purpose of teacher assessment needs to be growth and improvement.

Fifth, if it becomes apparent that a teacher might be a better fit in a different grade or subject we should seek to reposition them.

Sixth, the District must provide mental and emotional health resources for our teachers as we do for the students. Seventh, our schools must be workplaces that are free from any form of intimidation, harassment or bias.

The PTO Council is responsible for the content of this publication. The School District of Clayton paid for the printing and distribution of this nonpartisan, informational publication.