

JENNIFER GRANT – Q&A from NMS PTO, Shady Valley PTO, and Ben Franklin-Riverside PIE

1. Why do you want to serve on the school board?

I am completing my first 3-year term on the school board and am now running for re-election. Board service of any kind requires a significant amount of time, commitment, knowledge, conviction, and effort. There can be no doubt of my love and commitment to this community and to student success. I grew up in Menomonee Falls and attended our schools from the elementary level through high school. I am a proud graduate of MFHS. My husband and I specifically chose to raise our family in Menomonee Falls. I want all our students to achieve their highest potential, become proud graduates, and find success wherever life takes them. I believe in this community; I believe in our families; I believe in our staff; and I believe in our students!

Additionally, I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA), a former Human Resources/Benefits professional (CEBS) and a healthcare compliance professional (CHPC, CHC). I bring important perspective and expertise to the Board that no other Board member or candidate offers.

2. How do you describe the role of the school board?

The role of a school board is to establish the district's vision and goals consistent with community values, to formulate policy so that teachers/staff/administrators have guideposts within which to operate, to approve appropriate curriculum, and to approve the district's annual budget. One of the most important duties of a school board is to hire an effective superintendent to lead district. Our board just completed the significant task of hiring a permanent superintendent. Mr. David Munoz, in just a short period of time, has proven to be an excellent leader for the Menomonee Falls School District. He will provide stability and leadership for years to come.

3. What is your personal involvement with the School District of Menomonee Falls, the school board, community activities, and public education?

I have a longstanding record of commitment and service to this community. I love Menomonee Falls.

- Nearly-lifelong resident of Menomonee Falls, MFHS graduate – class of 1993
- Currently serve this community as a Waukesha County Board Supervisor for over 10 years
- Currently serve as Board of Education Treasurer and Chairperson for both Finance & Auxiliary Services Committee and Personnel Committee
- Past service on the Menomonee Falls Plan Commission

- I am a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and I bring financial expertise to the Board
- My 4 children have attended our schools and participated in many club and school sports and district extracurricular activities, and I have actively supported their involvement helping with support, fundraisers, etc. (Milwaukee Sport Club, Falls Angels, Menomonee Falls Little League, FBLA, band/orchestra, soccer, track, cross country, etc.)

4. How are you promoting your candidacy? How can people find out more about your campaign? (e.g. newspaper, social media, website, events, email)

- Website – www.votejennifergrant.com
- Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064240290312>
(Jennifer Grant – Menomonee Falls School Board)
- Email – votejennifergrant@gmail.com

5. In your opinion, what are the three best things about our district?

Upon announcing the hiring of our permanent Superintendent, David Munoz, I made a lengthy public statement. I'd like to repost some of what I said during that statement to answer this question:

“Throughout this Superintendent search I’ve learned that I am not alone in my love for this wonderful community. Nearly everyone in Menomonee Falls is also as passionate about this Village and our schools. I’ve spoken with or received correspondence from residents, taxpayers, parents, grandparents, teachers and staff, and business owners. And I can say with certainty that there is not a single person who doesn’t want what is best for our students. This community, no matter their personal or political beliefs, is committed to ensuring that the young people of Menomonee Falls receive a solid educational foundation so that they can reach their full potential and success in the future.”

The passionate, invested people of this community and the high-quality teachers and staff educating our young people are what makes this school district great! The kids are fabulous too!

6. What are the three things the district could improve on?

The primary goal of education is to provide students with foundational knowledge while promoting a love for lifelong learning. One way to measure foundational knowledge is student test scores. Proficiency scores for students in our district require attention and the district has already implemented a robust plan for improvement.

The safety of our students and staff is of utmost priority. In the last 12 months, we have invested more than \$278,000 in security enhancements in our schools, with more investment still to come. No matter how many drills and safeguards we already have in place, we can always do more. Students learn and teachers teach best in a safe environment. Security and safety will always be a priority for me.

Our district has a robust financial planning process. We are fiscally sound in both the short- and long-term. The Board approved the adoption of Fund 46 (Long-Term Capital Improvement Trust Fund) and an updated 10-year Capital Plan. In addition, the district is also considering the potential for debt defeasance – methodically and systematically paying down debt early to save future interest expense. These are exciting initiatives that will continue to drive our district's success. Despite our proactive budgeting and planning, we can never take our eye off the long-term fiscal picture as things can change very quickly when so much of our funding relies upon decisions at the state and federal levels.

7. How can the district enhance academic programs and curriculum? What changes would you recommend?

Student proficiencies in our district have been declining since 2015. That is unacceptable. As noted by the Director of Curriculum and Learning, much of that decline can be attributed to curriculum drift which was then further exacerbated by the response to the COVID pandemic (lockdowns and virtual learning). The Board and the Superintendent have already taken action to improve student proficiencies. Our district recently updated ELA curriculum and standards to meet new DPI requirements. Our ELA curriculum had not been updated in over 10 years! These updates will go a long way towards improving our student achievement, not just in ELA, but likely in all subjects. Students need to be able to read and understand in order to comprehend every other subject. We also reintroduced 8th grade math into the middle school curriculum this year as we noticed that, for a number of students, there were some significant skills being skipped over by jumping right to Algebra from 7th grade mathematics. This addition, again, will translate into increased achievement for our students. The district has identified the deficiencies, and the Board and Superintendent have already taken swift and appropriate action to get our district back on track.

8. How can a board of education effectively communicate with its constituent groups?

There are numerous ways that the district communicates with the community including emails, school-specific newsletters, district-wide newsletters, and social media posts (Facebook, Instagram, X). All Board business is conducted in public meetings. And all Board meetings and committee meetings are, not only streamed live, but also posted to the district website to be watched by anyone, at any time. Of course, those meetings

are also open for anyone to attend in person (and speak during public comment, if they so choose). Meeting agendas are posted as legally required so that interested community members can see what will be discussed at the meeting. Constituents can also send emails to the Board as a whole or to just select board members. Personally, I love hearing from constituents on what matters to them. The Board is doing its absolute best to ensure that necessary information is available to the public.

9. How can the district attract and retain teachers and educational assistants?

The School District of Menomonee Falls has always attracted high quality employees. We are a district of choice for, not only students and families, but also for teachers and staff. People want to work for successful organizations, where they are appreciated, where they find meaningful work, and where they are compensated fairly. Educators are no different. Our staff are major contributors to our students' success. While there are always budget constraints to consider, we will continue to provide our staff with a competitive salary and benefits package.

10. What can be done to improve student achievement and college readiness specifically for low-income students?

All students deserve a high-quality education and opportunities for a successful future, no matter their background or income level. Any changes we make to improve student achievement and college readiness address the needs of all students equally. However, the district has implemented a number of policies that specifically reduce financial barriers for low-income students. We offer free/reduced lunches and waived/reduced student and athletic fees for those whose incomes qualify or for those who experience a financial emergency. Additionally, we follow the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Act to address the needs of students and families experiencing homelessness.

11. Considering the pace of technology adoption and change, what is your vision for education in this community?

The world is changing at a rapid pace. Could we have imagined, even 5 years ago, some of the things we are seeing with technology today? Artificial Intelligence (AI) certainly brings new opportunities, but also significant questions and concerns. I cannot claim to have all the answers here, but I do commit to being an advocate for our district to stay current with new technologies (and new safeguards) and add appropriate educational opportunities for students, when necessary. It is equally important that our students continue to learn soft communication skills and the ability to connect with their peers, teachers, and future employers, face-to-face on a personal level. Technology absolutely opens new worlds, but we cannot ignore the importance of the connections we make with others on a personal level.

