

Wauwatosa School District: Board appoints Wauwatosa resident and district parent to Vacant Board seat

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Wauwatosa, WI – The Wauwatosa School Board voted to appoint Mrs. Jessica Willis to represent Seat 7 of the School Board during a special meeting on Monday, June 27, 2022. The vacancy was created by the resignation of Mr. Steven Doman.

Mrs. Willis has served as a public educator for 16 years, and during the 2021-22 school year, she served as a substitute teacher in the Wauwatosa School District. Her long history of driving inclusion goes back to 2006, when she worked for Columbus City Schools in Columbus, Ohio. She also partnered with the City of Bexley and the Bexley City School District to increase inclusivity, as well as recruit and retain teachers of color. Mrs. Willis is heavily involved in the PTA at Jefferson Elementary School, where she helped create a welcoming committee for incoming families and students.

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the Wauwatosa School District community as a Board Member,” said Willis. “I look forward to leveraging my expertise to gain a deep understanding of the community’s needs, drive accountability and transparency, and offer constructive feedback and support to Dr. Means and our District leaders.”

The appointment was made by a vote, after hearing from a total of six candidates

for appointment. Mrs. Willis received four of the existing Board members' votes, and candidates Mr. Todd Dahlgren and Mr. Chris Garza each received one vote. Mrs. Willis' appointment was unanimously approved by the Board.

Each candidate submitted application materials including a Notice of Interest, letter of introduction, resume and/or letter(s) of referral. Each candidate was provided an opportunity to speak before the Board and the community during Monday's meeting. Among the questions candidates answered were:

- How have your life experiences and skills prepared you for this responsibility?
- What skill, knowledge or disposition will you bring to the Board that you believe is currently needed?
- The Wauwatosa School Board is a policy and governance board. Describe how you will balance being knowledgeable and contribute to oversight while allowing the Superintendent to guide day-to-day operations and strategy implementation.
- A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion was identified by District stakeholders as a key priority. How have you demonstrated a commitment to this priority in other work/volunteer opportunities you have been a part of?
- Of all the things the Wauwatosa School District is responsible for, what are the three most important to you?
- When faced with a controversial topic within the District community, how would you arrive at your decision?

Mrs. Willis told the Board that she is committed to ensuring that the community in which she lives is strong and that the school district ensures all students have access to the best educational experience so they have the opportunity to thrive.

Mrs. Willis took the oath of office following the vote and will serve her term through April 2023, when the seat is up for election.

“I’d like to thank each of the candidates who volunteered to serve our community,” said Mrs. Sharon Muehlfeld, School Board Vice President. “Mrs. Willis, your priorities of enhancing diversity, equity and inclusion; creating a positive community culture; and improving academic performance are aligned with the strategic plan that is currently in development, and I strongly believe you will be an asset to the Board and the Wauwatosa community.”

In addition to Mrs. Jessica Willis, the current Wauwatosa School Board members are:

Mrs. Sharon Muehlfeld, Vice President, Seat #6

Mr. Michael Phillips, Treasurer, Seat #5

Dr. Eric Jessup-Anger, Clerk, Seat #3

Dr. Jenny Hoag, Seat #1

Mr. Michael Meier, Seat #2

Mrs. Leigh Anne Fraley, Seat #4