

Application for Ravenna Public Schools School Board

Applicant's Name: Sarah Birkby

1. Are you a resident of the Ravenna Public School District? Yes or No
Yes

2. Are you a registered voter in the Ravenna Public School District? Yes or No
Yes

3. What is the first day you will be available to join the board of education?
June 14th, 2021

4. What is your primary reason for wishing to become a member of the Ravenna Public Schools Board of Education?

I wish to become a member of the RPS Board of Education because I am passionate about empowering children and young adults with the appropriate relationships, tools, and environments to develop their social, emotional, and academic skills appropriate for their age. I also feel the need to be part of something bigger than myself and make sure the impact of the board's decisions is in the best interest of all children at RPS. As an educated childcare provider, I understand how important it is to ensure the right environment for children and young adults to excel. I know that I will bring value to the board by using my knowledge from my career as a childcare provider and as an educated social worker. I am able to view situations objectively rather than through a subjective lens. This will become crucial when it comes to making difficult decisions.

5. Tell us why you believe public education is important?

I believe public education is important because all children and young adults regardless of their race, socioeconomic background, or religious views deserve a chance to learn, grow and develop with proper and equal resources. By providing an environment that enhances strong relationships with peers, teachers and administration, the students have a better chance at becoming good people later in life. Public education plays a significant part in shaping children into who they will be as adults and I know that I can provide a small piece of that larger puzzle in the students lives by making informed decisions on their behalf.

6. Are you aware of any potential "conflicts of interest" being a member of the school board might present? (family members working for the school district, personal business interests with the school district that represent a potential conflict, etc.)

No, I can not think of any potential conflicts of interest.

7. Can you make yourself available every 2nd Monday of the month at 8:00 PM for the regular monthly board meetings?

Yes, I can make sure I am available for board meetings.

8. Can you make yourself available for board subcommittee work that generally occurs during the weekday in the evening between regular board meetings, if you are appointed to a board subcommittee?

Yes, I can usually make things work in the evenings if I am appointed to a board subcommittee.

9. Which educator had the most positive influence on you?

The educator that had the most positive influence on me was my grade school librarian, Mrs. Mayeux (MY- u). Some may think that a librarian is not classified as an "educator", but I feel like any individual who positively impacts a student and guides them should be considered an educator. In addition to her responsibilities as the school librarian, Mrs. Mayeux was responsible for training students on how to become a lector at our church. This was no small task, but she made it seem effortless. It takes a special person to help an elementary aged student speak confidently in front of over 500 students in church. She was always encouraging me to do better and feel confident in myself when it came to public speaking. I am always reminded of her positive words of wisdom when I have to give a presentation or speak in front of large groups.

10. How do you proceed when you are faced with making a difficult decision?

When faced with a difficult decision I ask for time to process. This is not just for me but for others as well. I understand that in this role I am representing more than just myself and I feel it would be a disservice if I were not transparent with the community and ask for feedback from both sides of the issue. There are amazing people within the Ravenna Community, and I want to make sure that they know I will listen to them with a sense of understanding rather than judgement. By taking time I can also make sure that my decision is based on facts and research rather than emotion. I will approach each decision with the students, teachers, and staff's best interest first because without them the community would rapidly decline.