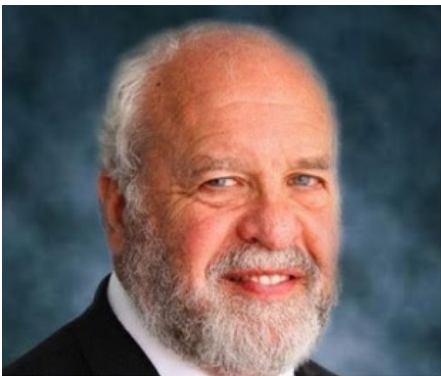




# The Connection

## Voters Fill Two School Board Seats Next Tuesday



Terry Ward



Frances Yang



Josiah Bechtold

### *Seven Hopefuls Seek Northland School's Top Educational Spots*

April 5th, Northland voters will head to the polls and place their ballots for two seats on the North Kansas City Schools Board. The school board governs the second largest school district in Missouri, with more than 21,000 students at 33 facilities, and oversees the Superintendent of Schools.

The seven candidates include incumbents Terry Ward and Frances Yang, running against Duane Bartsch, Josiah Bechthold, Susan Hines, Laura Wagner, and Daniel Wartick.

“The importance of having a good school board member is crucial. As a student, it is so important to me that we have good listeners,” said Maddison Peppers, a sophomore at Winnetonka High School. Peppers was one of four NKC District students that asked questions at a candidates forum on March 22.

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. wanted to engage with residents and inform them of the men and women vying to become our children’s educational leaders for the next three years. What are the candidates thoughts on parental involvement in school curriculum; equity, diversity, and inclusion; and whether school board elections should be held in November?

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. contacted Duane Bartsch and Laura Wagner, but they declined to participate. Andrew Corrao dropped out of the race as of March 25.



Susan Hines



Daniel Wartick

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# Q & A with the Candidates

## *Q. How do you think parents should be involved in determining what is taught in our school districts?*

**TW:** “We offer a wide range of educational alternatives that are designed to ensure that students receive the broad education that prepares them for success in their adult life. Parents should be very involved in helping to design what elements from those offerings best support the aspirations of the students and the family.”

**FY:** “A diverse and inclusive group of parents, students, and teachers across the school district should determine what is taught in our schools. We should have a survey that protects the privacy of parents, students, and teachers readily available for feedback regarding what is being taught. There needs to be quarterly evaluation of the feedback provided by both the focus group and the survey published for the community.”

**JB:** “Yes.”

**SH:** “I trust and support the curricular decisions of the NKC schools. As a parent, I feel empowered and encouraged to engage in open and curious dialog with teachers and administrators to discuss options if I have concerns.”

**DW:** “Partnership with parents and guardians is a crucial part of building our learning communities. Their input and feedback is necessary. Our schools do an incredible job of inviting families to curriculum nights. Families are frequently part of community conversations and strategic planning initiatives. Strengthening the home-to-school partnership is an important component of highlighting the choice families have in their child’s education and the process for using their voices.”

## *Q. How should our schools work with students so that all are met with respect in a manner that suits each one best?*

**TW:** “We have provided training for each of our staff members to increase their ability to respect every student, their needs, and heritage. We are working within the new career pathways to assure that each student has consistent exposure to the same set of teachers who can more fully appreciate the whole student and all of their complexities. We have put systems in place to support individual development.”

**FY:** “Our school board members need to meet with groups of students monthly to hear their voices. I have had the wonderful opportunity to volunteer in classrooms, cafeterias, and meet with student groups. I support the Diversity Council and clubs that allow students to learn and present about diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.”

**JB:** “It is good to treat others with respect.”

**SH:** “One key way to ensure all students are met with respect is through district-wide education and learning opportunities about what actions and behaviors support inclusive spaces. Better personalized learning experiences—that meet each student where they’re at—requires a mix of manual and technology-enhanced supports that facilitates learning and does not overly burden teachers.”

**DW:** “Student voice is another key aspect of strong school communities. We must know our students and build relationships that create safe and inviting learning environments—where all students are inspired to own their learning, based on personal interests and aptitudes. Respecting the diverse points-of-view of our students by listening to what they say they need in order to be successful is of utmost importance.”

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### ***Q. What are your hobbies? What do you do in your spare time?***

**TW:** “I like to play golf; I find it relaxing. I enjoy gardening and creating wonderful outdoor experiences. Cooking and sharing time with friends in small gatherings that foster an open exchange of ideas and experiences. My wife and I enjoy travel.”

**FY:** “I love volunteering for my children’s activities, forest bathing, and hobby farming. Connecting with children and nature allows for a reenergizing of the soul. Loving the earth that we live in is important because there is only one life and one earth. Let’s not waste any of it.”

**JB:** “Read and exercise”

**SH:** “I knit, play guitar, and enjoy cooking. As a parent of two young children, most of my spare time is finding parks or other ways to enjoy the outdoors.”

**DW:** “My current hobby is enjoying my three grandsons. I also enjoy travel, reading, and theater.”

### ***Q. What is your favorite book? Why?***

**TW:** ““Bowling Alone,” by Robert Putnam. It really helped to open my eyes and understanding of the changing social mores. The book is somewhat dated but captures the point of inflection in how our society works, evidenced dramatically with the COVID epidemic.”

**FY:** “My favorite book is “A Computer Called Katherine: How Katherine Johnson Helped Put America on the Moon.” This children’s book is the true story of how a black American female mathematician calculated the trajectories to catapult the US to the forefront of science and space. The challenges and barriers she overcame in her time are inspiring to this day.”

**JB:** “Two actually: the Bible and the works of Shakespeare.”

**SH:** “I really enjoy the writing of Charles Portis. He’s most famous for writing “True Grit.” I love that the main character is a teenage girl determined to seek out justice for her family.”

**DW:** “A classic: “Don Quixote” by Miguel de Cervantes. I never get tired of reading about a person fighting for the right cause and chasing a dream without giving up.”

### ***Q. What did you learn in grade school that shaped the person you are today and the board member you would like to become?***

**TW:** “People come with different skills, but everyone has something to contribute. We should find ways to help others who may struggle. And, from personal experience, be very careful about end-of-school field day: you could break your arm and ruin the whole summer.”

**FY:** “When my father lost his job during the recession, I was on free and reduced meals with punch cards, so I appreciate the equity and inclusion at North Kansas City School District to ensure that students all have a code or card to scan to maintain integrity. I was in English as Second Language until third grade, and now my children are also English Language Learners, so I am especially sensitive to these types of programs to ensure that our multilingual families receive the resources that they need or request. Since I was in Kindergarten, I wanted to be a scientist and a teacher, and now I am living that dream. I want to be a board member who is a team player and a champion for our children.”

**JB:** “I learned that plans are useless but planning is indispensable.”

**SH:** “I learned the importance of meeting people where they’re at and working together to move forward. Mrs. Davis, Mr. Carmichael, Mr. Avery, Mrs. Pinkerton, Mrs. Corwin, Mrs. Dunnington, Mr. Quick, Mrs. Wise, Mr. Grube, Mrs. Bell - all these teachers and others made themselves available to me (and my parents). Teachers made me feel included and heard no matter what issue I brought up. They created safe spaces for me to learn how to learn and cultivate curiosity and genuine compassion for others.”

**DW:** “I came to appreciate the importance of making a difference and giving back to a cause greater than oneself. By listening and uniting the various points of view, our school communities can only get stronger.”



# Lightning Round with the Candidates:

## Hot Topics; Quick Responses

	Terry Ward		Frances Yang		Josiah Bechthold		Susan Hines		Daniel Wartick	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you think parents should be involved in determining what is taught in our schools?	No Answer		X		X		X		X	
Do you feel our schools should ensure all students are met with respect in a manner that suits each individual student best?	X		X		X		X		X	
Do you feel charter schools should be available to all students in the state of Missouri?		X		X	X			X		X
Do you think tax dollars should be spent on vouchers that would allow students to attend whatever school they wish - private, religious, homeschool, or public?		X		X	X			X		X
Do you believe charter schools should have the same requirements as regular public schools?	X		X		X		X		X	
Would you support the implementation of future CDC guidelines in our school system should we encounter a public health emergency in the future?	X		X			X	X		X	
Do you think students should be required to have certain vaccines to attend school?	X			X		X	X		X	
Should school board elections be set for November?		X		X		X		X		X
What Grade would you give the current superintendent and administration, A-F	A		A/B		D-		No Answer		A	

## Vote Yes for NKC Schools on April 5, 2022

The Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. Board of Directors, recognizing the absolute connection between strong schools and healthy neighborhoods, endorsed the April 5th, 2022 North Kansas City School District ballot initiatives, known as Question 1 and Question 2.