

Boone candidates outline positions, intentions

By Kevin Duffy
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In the Daniel Boone School District, four candidates are vying for one seat in Region 1, which covers Amity Township.

Each has cross-filed on the ballot for the May 17 primary.

Benjamin Blakesley

Age: 29

Occupation: Marketing/investment management company.

Why are you running? Although the economic downturn contributed to the mess the district finds itself in, a lack of foresight and many poor practices have turned the situation from difficult to dire. I am running to ensure that the district provides the best environment and opportunity for the children of the community.

Most important issue? The district finds itself with an insurmountable budget shortfall due to poor financial decision making and a refusal to plan, forecast and budget for more than a single fiscal year at a time. This must be resolved by the school board and finance committee.

How would you address it? The district is a \$51 million business and should be run that way. No successful business operates without consideration and planning for the future. I will use the best business practices to incorporate effective forecasting and planning into the budgetary process. By utilizing past data, we can anticipate what the district will be facing in coming years and plan accordingly.

Connor Kurtz

Age: 17

<http://www.connorkurtz.org>

Occupation: 11th-grade student at Daniel Boone High School.

Why are you running? Because the district is in dire need of common sense change. As a student, I have firsthand knowledge of what must be changed in order to cut waste.

Most important issue? Fiscal responsibility. For decades, the school board has taxed and spent seniors and young families into financial pain. The school board needs to be a good steward of the taxpayers' money. Tax and spend is not the solution. The solution is to cut wasteful spending in order to provide relief to overburdened taxpayers.

How would you address it? Daniel Boone's taxes are already some of the highest in the state. I am the only candidate who has pledged never to support a tax hike. Likewise, I am the only candidate who has proposed a plan to cut wasteful spending. As a student, I see waste every day. I know what needs to be streamlined in order to make the district fiscally responsible.

David Rathgeb

Age: 44

Occupation: Financial planner.

Why are you running? I feel everyone should give back to their community in ways that make sense to them, and the school board seems like a logical progression for my skills (currently in 10th year on Amity Township Park and Recreation board and second-term president of Amity Township Lions Club).

Most important issue? Providing the best education with a reasonable price tag.

How would you address it? We need to raise revenue and have joint long-range planning. All three municipalities (Amity, Union and Birdsboro) and the district need to find ways to raise revenue through business growth and development.

Al Worrall

Age: 39

Occupation: Vice president, insurance consulting business.

Why are you running? To provide our students a full range of educational opportunities while maintaining a common sense budget and fair taxation rates. I possess the necessary experience to make our district cost-effective and educationally effective.

Most important issue? To maintain a fair, balanced and conservative fiscal policy, especially as the state continues to decrease funding to public schools.

How would you address it? Create a three-year budget with a breakdown of current and previous operating budgets to eliminate inefficiencies, support a districtwide salary freeze and create a community task force of citizens, student representatives and business leaders.

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