To the voters:

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford (LWVGH) is pleased to bring you the printed version of the Voters Guide for the West Hartford municipal election which provides information on all of the named races in one place as well as a sample ballot. All of the candidates received questions developed by the LWVGH; they provided answers and short biographies in 325 words or less. The League believes that by reading the candidates’ thoughtful responses and viewing our candidate debates done in cooperation with West Hartford Community TV, citizens can make their own informed decision on election day, Tuesday, November 5. You will also find helpful information on voter registration deadlines and how to check if you are registered. Additional election related information can be found by doing an online search of the West Hartford Registrars of Voters.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan organization celebrating its 99th year. It was established in 1920, the year in which the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed women the right to vote. From its inception, the League has been committed to promoting responsible political action through informed participation of citizens in government. Our mission “to produce informed voters” has not wavered over the nearly 100 years of service to the community. The coming year will be marked by numerous 100 anniversary events which we invite you to participate in.

We hope that you find the Guide helpful as you prepare to vote. We also encourage you to check out the schedule for the televised debates and candidate profiles that will be aired on WHCTV many evenings right up until election day. You can also view the debates through the station’s “You Tube” channel. An online version of the Voters’ Guide can be found at www.lwvgh.org. Finally, we invite you to become a member of the League of Women Voters. Contact Membership Chair Libby Swietek at 860-561-2886 or lib5410@gmail.com.

Carole Mulready
Voter Service Chair, LWVGH

---

State of Connecticut Official Ballot

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town Council</td>
<td>1A</td>
<td>2A</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>6A</td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>8A</td>
<td>9A</td>
<td>10A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for Any SIX</td>
<td>CAROL A. BLANKS</td>
<td>BETH KERRIGAN</td>
<td>LEON S. DAVIDOFF</td>
<td>LIAM SWEENEY</td>
<td>BEN WENGRAD</td>
<td>SHARI CANTOR</td>
<td>ESSE S. LABROT</td>
<td>ARI STEINBERG</td>
<td>SEAN PASSAN</td>
<td>AMANDA ARONSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
<td>1B</td>
<td>2B</td>
<td>3B</td>
<td>4B</td>
<td>5B</td>
<td>6B</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>8B</td>
<td>9B</td>
<td>10B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for ONE</td>
<td>MARY FAY</td>
<td>LEE GOLD</td>
<td>RICK BUSH</td>
<td>CHRIS WILLIAMS</td>
<td>AL CORTEZ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republican Party</td>
<td>1C</td>
<td>2C</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>6C</td>
<td>7C</td>
<td>8C</td>
<td>9C</td>
<td>10C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for TWO</td>
<td>JAMES PATRICE WOODS-WEBER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Families Party</td>
<td>1D</td>
<td>2D</td>
<td>3D</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>5D</td>
<td>6D</td>
<td>7D</td>
<td>8D</td>
<td>9D</td>
<td>10D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote for ONE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRITE-IN VOTES</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

November 2019 | WEST HARTFORD LIFE
2019 Voters’ Guide Questions for Town Council Candidates

1. What is your position on development in West Hartford? Explain a policy you might particularly favor.

2. Are you willing to support becoming an energy self-sufficient community? By what means? By what date?

3. If state funding to the town is reduced, what are your plans to deal with the shortfall other than increasing taxes?

2019 Voters’ Guide Questions for Board of Education Candidates

1. What is the role of 21st century vocational education within an academic curriculum?

2. How should K-12 curriculum include the computer literacy required for this century including financial literacy, privacy and coding?

3. In these challenging fiscal times, how do you continue our strong arts programs?

If you would like to hear responses of Town Council candidates on additional topics, please check out the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford’s debate with live audience on WHCi (West Hartford Community interactive), our community television station and interactive media location at www.whctv.org. You can find the debates at the station’s YouTube Channel or on Comcast Channel 5 or Frontier 95. There will be a direct link on the home page.

Carol Blanks
Democrat

1. We as a town should move carefully and do our best to attract firms, e.g., tech companies, which would increase our tax base and employ our residents. A non-profit may not address the growth we seek.

2. There are many incentives that should be utilized. We have moved to increase greening of our schools, recycling of our waste, but there is so much more to do hopefully all municipal buildings and vehicles will also go green very soon as well. The Connecticut Green Bank, along with power companies have innovative programs for our homeowners and commercial property owners to assist them in obtaining clean and efficient energy. We have to as a Town express and promote the value of going green and the cost savings in the long run for all. I would expect if we are aggressive in our approach, adopting many programs and incentives, then we will increase our green footprint by fifty percent in the next five years.

3. Our legislative delegation must collectively fight for every state dollar along with working on the many inequities in state funding formulas which have in many ways shortchanged our Town for many years. If that effort fails and the status quo remains and a shortfall occurs in what we have operated with than, we must look to scale back on services and seek the most efficient government as possible. We should have an ongoing task force or committee, that consistently makes recommendations to evaluate and streamline operations. Raising taxes again must be the last resort. I know from my experience on the Board of Education, that streamlining and evaluating all dollars is quite difficult but it’s doable, as we have trimmed and consolidated in many areas to save money. In addition, we must implement and support a central grants office that would seek every grant (state, federal, and private) which would raise revenue for many programs that could be affected in the event state funding is lowered.

Rick Bush
Republican

1. I support fiscally and environmentally sustainable development that will increase jobs and tax revenue while maintaining our small-town feel. Development is integral to the success of any community and we need to focus on reducing our current mill rate and broadening our tax base to benefit our town residents without increasing traffic or congestion.

2. I think we should focus on self-sufficiency and conservation items that have the greatest impact NOW. West Hartford was one of the first municipalities to achieve certification as a Sustainable CT Community. We should build on this success by pursuing economic development opportunities that focus on making our community even more sustainable such as offering incentives to business and residents.

3. We must insulate ourselves from the volatile state budget regardless. We should start by focusing on incentivizing business growth and homeownership in our community, pursuing certain service sharing agreements [regionalization] with neighboring communities and diversifying our local revenue streams by the following: a) Increasing development to increase the grand list; b) Regionalize resources in ways that work for West Hartford; c) Reduce redundant services and municipal employees; d) Outsource where available; e) Maintain existing infrastructure instead of new construction; f) Postpone non-critical upgrades; g) Reduce consumption.

We can also try to modify the current Ad Valorem system that the MDC uses to tax West Hartford based on the value of our property and collected tax revenue not our actual sewer usage.
Ben and Jacob.

3. Even with state aid, the Democrats’ only solution has been to increase budgets and taxes. Taxes have nearly doubled in a little over a decade. Add in unfunded liabilities and infrastructure projects, and it’s unsustainable. The Republicans requested West Hartford’s budgets to be flat, and independent of state aid. Connecticut’s financial problems are worsening; state aid is continually threatened as a budget item. Over 30 municipalities have not increased taxes. West Hartford should be one. Giving back the $4 million surplus that arose after the budget was prepared, instead of spending it, would have avoided a tax increase. We need other voices; I have the experience to represent everyone, regardless of political party or no party.

1. We are a developed town. Growing the grand list, increasing business, and improving quality of life are important; it needs protection. This property has wetlands and contamination, requiring millions of dollars in remediation. Republicans fought against the town purchasing what will be a money pit. It is zoned residential. In focus groups, commercial development was not deemed desirable. Zoning is important to residents and shouldn’t be changed whimsically. There are areas where commercial development fits. There are many uses that would fit that property.

2. The US has never been more energy self-sufficient and efficient than today. Costs versus benefits need weighing. West Hartford can work towards cleaner energy as buildings are built and renovated. I like geothermal, and solar, which are clean and efficient. Given the high taxes we pay, and the age and poor condition of our infrastructure, a timeframe shouldn’t be established that will place huge tax burdens on seniors, working families, the middle class, and business. But we should develop a strategy.

I have served on the Town Council since 2004 and as Mayor since 2016. I am a UCconnect graduate and a registered CPA. I’m a UCconnect trustee and actively volunteer with the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center, West Hartford Rotary, Foodshare, Hartford Symphony, the Jewish Federation, the American Heart Association, and the American School for the Deaf. My husband, Michael, of 34 years and I are proud to call West Hartford home for ourselves and our children - Josh, daughter-in-law, Theresa, Sam, Ben and Jacob.

1. Development is essential to our community’s success, but must be aligned with our town’s character and values. Reinvestment, development and redevelopment of property are crucial to our vibrancy and future. I am committed to strengthening our economy with thriving commercial centers throughout town – adding over 90 businesses in the past 18 months while maintaining strong home values.

2. Making West Hartford “greener” remains one of my top priorities. In 2018, we were one of the first municipalities to achieve SustainableCT’s “Bronze Level” certification. Town energy use is down 18 percent in 5 years and still decreasing. We are investing in environmental technologies, including installing twelve solar sites and two new solar arrays on Town Hall and King Philip Middle School. Our 2019 renewable energy credit purchase should be 100 percent, and we are implementing an energy plan that will lead to a completely carbon free township.

3. As Mayor, I have fought to protect state aid, which is primarily dedicated to education. Even in difficult state budget cycles, our successful, diverse schools remain nationally ranked and are run efficiently, with per pupil spending in the bottom 40 percent in the state. If this state revenue disappears, we would take any reasonable step possible before increasing taxes on residents. This includes working closely with town leaders and the Board of Education to seek meaningful cost savings or make necessary service cuts without undermining our schools’ excellence or our quality of life.

Leon has resided in West Hartford since 1997. He received his B.A. from Clark University and his law degree from Case Western Reserve University. Leon and his wife, Lexy, have two daughters, Becky and Lani, who attended and graduated from the West Hartford public schools.

Leon is an attorney as well as the coowner of The Paper Station. The Davidoffs are members of The Emanuel Synagogue.

Leon was first elected to the Town Council in 2017. Currently, he chairs the Public Safety Committee. He has been a Chair/Member of the TPZ.

1. The Town of West Hartford continuously seeks to attract smart economic development proposals that are in harmony with the character of our community. Responsible development is the key to growing our tax base and keeping our community vibrant. My years of zoning experience uniquely qualify me to balance the economic benefits of development with preserving the rich residential character of our town.

2. West Hartford is recognized as a leader for its success in enacting policies that conserve energy and lessen our dependence on fossil fuels. The environment and our taxpayers demand, and I concur, that our energy policies play a significant role in our budgeting, purchasing, day-to-day operations and development policies. Climate change is real, the time to act is now. We must adopt forward thinking energy policies that utilize alternative renewable clean energy sources such as solar and wind.

3. My Democratic Council colleagues and I have worked diligently with our state legislators to stabilize state funding to our community. I will fight for West Hartford’s fair share of state funding for education and other local budget priorities, such as road and bridge repair. My Council voting record demonstrates support for fair and responsible budgets. I will continue to support our excellent public school system, our professional public safety departments and our libraries, senior centers and recreation programs. You can count on me to find efficiencies, anticipate future liabilities and protect our fiscal reserves.

Mary Fay is a Republican running for re-election. She is a financial services senior executive.

1. We are a developed town. Growing the grand list, increasing business, and improving quality of life are important; it needs protection. This property has wetlands and contamination, requiring millions of dollars in remediation. Republicans fought against the town purchasing what will be a money pit. It is zoned residential. In focus groups, commercial development was not deemed desirable. Zoning is important to residents and shouldn’t be changed whimsically. There are areas where commercial development fits. There are many uses that would fit that property.

2. The US has never been more energy self-sufficient and efficient than today. Costs versus benefits need weighing. West Hartford can work towards cleaner energy as buildings are built and renovated. I like geothermal, and solar, which are clean and efficient. Given the high taxes we pay, and the age and poor condition of our infrastructure, a timeframe shouldn’t be established that will place huge tax burdens on seniors, working families, the middle class, and business. But we should develop a strategy.

3. Even with state aid, the Democrats’ only solution has been to increase budgets and taxes. Taxes have nearly doubled in a little over a decade. Add in unfunded liabilities and infrastructure projects, and it’s unsustainable. The Republicans requested West Hartford’s budgets to be flat, and independent of state aid. Connecticut’s financial problems are worsening; state aid is continually threatened as a budget item. Over 30 municipalities have not increased taxes. West Hartford should be one. Giving back the $4 million surplus that arose after the budget was prepared, instead of spending it, would have avoided a tax increase. We need other voices; I have the experience to represent everyone, regardless of political party or no party.
I am married with 2 sons who are seniors in WHPS. I am completing my second term on the Town Council, presently serving as Deputy Mayor. Originally a high school shop teacher, I cofounded an insurance agency that was purchased by The Travelers.

1. Striking the proper balance is key to sustaining a desirable West Hartford. Towns are required to create a State Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 years. Ours is in the process of being updated. This document provides the framework by which all development decisions are made. It is critical that we strengthen our tax base with quality development to help ease the tax burden for both residents and business owners. Smart development such as mixed-use housing, mass transit development, and experiential businesses must not be at the expense of our green space, parks, and trails.

2. It is imperative that we continue to support all initiatives that move us closer to energy self-sufficiency. Not only does it make good fiscal sense to be self-sufficient, it is also good for the future of our environment. Our town has made great strides in the direction of self-sufficiency and has reduced energy costs by 20%. Our conservation efforts include: the purchase of our town lights (from which we realized immediate savings by installing energy efficient bulbs), the installation of solar panels on municipal buildings (where roofing allowed), and the installation of solar panels on the Town Hall. Further, we hired a part-time Energy Specialist to focus on energy efficiency and self-sufficiency in a timely fashion.

3. Our town relies on state funds to help to pay our bills. It would cause financial hardship to provide the necessary services we have come to rely on should we have deep cuts. The extent of any cuts would determine future courses of action. Our Town Manager would ask each department head to submit the specific cuts to be made to make up the difference.

Lee resides in Town with his wife, Monica and their two sons.

Lee graduated Lehigh University, Phi Beta Kappa, attended UCONN Law and is a partner at Butler, Norris & Gold.

He serves on Kingswood-Oxford Advisory council, is active in Little League, and served as Vice-President for Tumble Brook Country Club, the President of Talcott Glen Condominiums and on the Board of The Emanuel Synagogue.

1. With The Center, Bishops Corner, Park Road and Elmwood, we have a unique town. We need to do more to develop these areas. We need to create an environment which will keep attracting new businesses but also keep our existing businesses flourishing. We need to compete for corporate jobs, many of which currently go to surrounding towns. With the sale of the UCONN property, an opportunity exists which should benefit West Hartford. We must examine the development of this parcel to see how it can best impact our Town. It will be helpful in attracting and maintaining business and lower our residential property taxes.

2. I am in favor of being energy self-sufficient as soon as economically possible. While wind or solar energy are my personal choices, both require large structures to produce and store this energy. The look of West Hartford would be different if these devices were added to the landscape. It would also require monetary considerations affecting the budget. Therefore, this decision should be put to a public referendum and not decided exclusively by the Council.

3. The State of Connecticut passes funded mandates requiring towns to perform functions. Thereafter, the State may withdraw the funding but still require the mandate producing a shortfall. We need to look at the budget on a zero basis and have each department justify each dollar on every budget cycle. We cannot afford to have automatic inflationary increases, as departments may shrink or grow. To this end, I believe we should establish a multiyear budget plan. This would save time and money.

Liam is a lifelong resident of West Hartford and a Hall High graduate. After graduating from Temple University, Liam worked for Senator Chris Dodd and is now a principal at Penn Lincoln Strategies. Liam is a founding member of Active City, a local nonprofit to help underprivileged children, and he also was a mentor with West Hartford Public Schools. Liam and his wife Whitney are parishioners at St. Patrick-St. Anthony’s Church, and they live in the Marley School neighborhood with their son Rory and daughter Claire. Liam chairs the Administration and Technology subcommittee and sits on the Public Safety subcommittee.

1. I strongly support smart development that will continue to attract young families, new businesses and is affordable. Specifically, a development that I am most proud of is Park Street development with the Sisters of Saint Joseph. This development was affordable with rents starting at $1,300 a month, creates at gateway to Hartford and lastly creates desirable housing in a thriving part of our town, the Park Road Community.

2. West Hartford has been a leader in energy conservation. As the Chair of the Administration and Technology Committee, my committee oversaw all of the forward thinking programs the Town of West Hartford has embarked on such as installing solar panels on schools and town buildings. In fact, the Town made an investment in hiring a part-time Energy Specialist that has helped decrease the Town’s energy usage by 20% over the past 5 years.

3. Mayor Cantor and the rest of my colleagues have constantly comb through each budget to find efficiencies. Just this past year, I helped to steer a proposal to reduce the amount of money the town spends on paper for official use by moving to an online system document system. Additionally, this past budget reconfigured our trash and recycling collection to reduce costs. These are a handful of things we have done to help create savings. We will continue to be vigilant in finding efficiencies.
1. To maintain the excellent quality of life we enjoy in West Hartford, we need to continue to encourage such smart growth initiatives as transit-oriented development, inclusionary zoning, and infill projects that contribute to walkable commercial areas. I am particularly excited by the new housing on New Park, in which we have combined affordable and market rate housing units with a redesigned streetscape with new bike lanes and better pedestrian access.

2. There is no greater threat to our planet than that of climate change; governments at all levels need to help reduce our carbon footprint. West Hartford has already expanded solar opportunities, encouraged electric vehicles, added bike lanes, and used more efficient lighting for our streets, but we certainly have more to do. Combining our Conservation and Environment, Pedestrian and Bicycle, and Clean Energy Commissions into a single organization will help move us in that direction.

3. We continue to be underfunded by the state, as the current formulas do not properly evaluate the wide economic diversity of our community. Sudden and significant cuts in state aid would lead to significant cuts in the types of services we have come to expect. To mitigate this, I would urge the legislature to relieve the town from the ad valorem tax imposed by the MDC. For the longer term, continued commercial development will help preserve services even as we face state cuts in state aid. For the longer term, continued commercial development will help preserve services even as we face state cuts in state aid.

My family chose West Hartford to be our home, fourteen years ago. Both of my children have been educated by our public schools.

My career concentrates on civic engagement and social justice advocacy. I am the Director of Organizational Culture at the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund, which focuses on equity in education. Previously, I was a Program Director at Everyday Democracy, where I trained coalitions on how to create dialogue about poverty and diversity issues with a goal of creating community-driven solutions.

1. Development must be economically sustainable, mitigate negative impacts on the environment, and be well planned with community input. Revenue generating development that expands the grand list would benefit taxpayers and the entire community. I only support incentives for businesses that are good corporate citizens, prioritize hiring town residents, and pay living wages. Regarding housing, I would support a policy set aside a minimum of one affordable unit.

2. West Hartford should become energy self-sufficient and energy efficient as soon as practically possible, not only to save costs but also to protect our environment. While the town has been successful in reducing energy costs significantly, we must continue seeking improvement and actively pursue opportunities to develop more renewable energy sources such as solar power and to support state legislation that makes it possible for municipalities to purchase clean power on behalf of residents.

3. Every budget shortfall requires careful inspection of each line item to balance essential services that meet our community’s needs with continuing to prioritize school funding and maintaining public safety. West Hartford has not received the state funding that we require despite having many residents with deep need. This trend seems likely to continue even as Town Council looks for additional services so we must continue to support our state legislators as they fight for our fair share of state funding.

Voting Reminders

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5. The last day to register is October 29. Election day registration is available in W.H. Town Hall.

- Register to vote weekdays in the registrar’s office during business hours.
- Town Hall, 50 South Main Street.
- See www.westhartford.org/vote for extended hours.
- Polls are open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Remember to bring a form of ID – Any pre-printed form of ID that gives your name and address OR name and photo OR name and signature: Ex/driver’s license, utility bill, school ID, passport, etc.
- Your completed ballot can be fed into the electronic reader in any direction.
- All polling places are handicap accessible.
- A new Accessible voting system is available.
- Search: Registrars West Hartford CT for information and practice.
- At the polling place, refer any questions or problems to the moderator.
- Find your polling place www.westhartford.org/vote
Go to the Explore box on the left; click on Voter Registration Lookup; fill in town, name and birth date to check that you are registered and where your voting location is.

You can make a difference

Why not join the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford? You could help to prepare voters’ guides like this one. Or you could become involved in studying important issues in our communities such as education, health care, or environment.

E-mail Libby Swietek at lib5410@gmail.com or call 860-478-5760 for more information.
Membership forms are available at www.lwvgh.org.

A THANK YOU for making a difference

The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford wishes to thank all who have contributed to make this issue of the Voters’ Guide possible. They include the people who contribute to our annual finance drive that makes so much of what LWVGH does possible; our writers and proof readers; the political party chairs; our West Hartford LIFE partner, Barbara Ouellette; and a special thanks to the candidates who spend time to write their thoughtful responses.

Questions?

For any questions regarding voting and polling place:
contact the Registrars of Voters office in Town Hall
860-561-7450. Registrars are Beth Kyle (Republican) and Patrice Petersen (Democrat).
1. The role of a K-12 system is to prepare students for an ever-changing world. Students should be able to choose classes that best serve their passions and career plans. As a former Technology Education teacher, I know the benefit of introducing students to real-world skills. Many of my former students turned their passions into careers, and I want to make sure West Hartford students have the same opportunity.

There are many challenges, like making sure our classrooms are properly equipped and updated in a timely manner, as well as investing in training for educators. Students should be able to choose courses that are right for them at their local school.

2. As a secondary education teacher for almost twenty years, I have seen a small portion of my students take courses related to financial literacy, privacy, and coding. Financial literacy courses need to become a graduation requirement. Too often we push this training off onto our parents who think these valuable life lessons have been covered by the district.

The important task of informing our students about the dangers of the internet is often tasked to our guidance counselors who follow a scripted curriculum. This issue needs to be covered in a more elaborate manner, where students can be assessed and given feedback from certified teachers trained in the content.

I have been impressed to see the implementation of Advanced Placement classes that focus on computer skills like coding. I think this opportunity needs to be made available to all students, and at a much younger age.

3. As our traditional class sizes increase, and depend more on the use of technology, the preservation of meaningful arts programs has become crucial. Students can engage in collaborative problem solving, practice freedom of expression, and test their creative abilities across a wide array of courses - i.e. Dance, Art, Theater, Choir. Keeping art programs to me is just as important as our core courses.

The important task of informing our students about the purpose of problem solving, decision-making, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. This curriculum must, in an equitable manner, encourage students to use technology responsibly by instilling a sophisticated understanding of the ethical and safety issues inherent in using technology across settings.

3. The West Hartford Public Schools continue to be recognized for their strong arts programs despite the trend seen in many school districts where cuts are being made. Fortunately, some of the contributing factors that have allowed us to not only maintain but strengthen our offerings are not completely dependent on budgetary restraints. These include strong parent engagement and support, active volunteers, well-established relationships with community organizations, frequent fundraising, and providing mentoring opportunities.

I am prepared for this role. My graduate work is in education, I have worked as a classroom teacher, and I have experience with school administration. As an educational and nonprofit consultant, I have been involved with strategic planning, facility planning, curriculum development, and am fluent in safety and security issues. Recently, I served on the leadership team of the Bridge Family Center, so I understand the diverse needs of children and families in our town. My husband and I have kids at KP and Hall.

1. Career and Technical Education (CTE) is an important part of a modern curriculum. I sit on two subcommittees of the Governor’s Council for Women & Girls: Education & STEAM and Economic Opportunity & Workforce Equity and am involved in workforce-training initiatives and college-completion research, so I see how powerful the impact of this curriculum can be for students of all socioeconomic backgrounds.

2. It should be incorporated throughout the entire K-12 curriculum, and I support how West Hartford is strategically deepening its work in this area.

3. We begin by acknowledging that the arts are just as important as any other subject. I am a docent at the New Britain Museum of American Art, so I see firsthand how art synthesizes learning from other content areas, demands critical thinking and deep analysis, and allows students to practice both courage and restraint as they create art themselves and engage in conversations about social issues. The arts can also be a lifesaving outlet for students and support mental health.

We are in the business of childhood, and the arts nurture fundamental aspects of the human experience. Much of our academic content teaches children how to think; arts content teaches them how to feel. Society needs to nurture both for peace and prosperity—and the U.S. Department of Commerce and private-sector workforce analysts who identify the most valuable career clusters to support agree.

Elected member of the West Hartford Board of Education. Mark was previously an owner of Guide’s Diary. He currently advises and assists in the development and execution in the areas of strategy, marketing and business development to drive improved revenue and profitability growth of businesses. He’s a retired military engineer officer, an Iraq war veteran where he earned the Combat Action Badge and a Bronze Star. He resides in West Hartford with his wife Nella and their three children who attend West Hartford public schools.

1. A vocational education is essential both as a career path and in our West Hartford curriculum. West Hartford currently offers several programs, automotive, an introduction to health careers with an EMS certificate, manufacturing, woodworking, baking/pastry arts, culinary arts, retail fashion and merchandise, game and web design.

For those students who want to pursue a more robust vocational career, our high schools work closely with the local technical schools to ensure our students have a clear pathway for their success.

2. Our students are very fortunate and start in kindergarten using iPads and laptops in 1st grade. I supported and pushed for this throughout my tenure on the board. To give you an example how successful this has become, West Hartford had the second most AP Computer Science exams taken in the state, only behind magnet schools where it’s mandatory. West Hartford’s goal over the next few years through curriculum review and a dedicated administrator who’s an expert in technology and curriculum integration is to be a national leader in computer coding from K-12.

3. West Hartford has one of the best arts programs in the state and is a hallmark of our educational system. Over my tenure on the board, we’ve had some very challenging budgets and have made some difficult and necessary cuts, however, I’ve always supported the art programs and I will continue to do so. They’re a gold standard and standout in the state.