



## 2024 JANESVILLE SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

# Q&A



## Thank you to the candidates who provided responses to our 2024 Janesville School Board Candidate Q&A. We appreciate your time and thoughtfulness.

The School District of Janesville (SDJ) School Board is an important governing body that impacts student learning and the future of our community. School board members serve 3 year terms. **In the 2024 Spring Election, there are 4 candidates vying for 3 seats.**

Forward Janesville does not endorse candidates or host candidate forums. Rather, as the Janesville-area chamber of commerce and leading economic development organization for our community, Forward Janesville provides a venue for candidates to connect to voters via our Candidate Q&A. Questions were developed with input from the leadership of the Forward Janesville Board and our Government Relations Council.

**The 2024 Spring Election is on Tuesday, April 2.** In order for the school district to meet student and community needs, it's important residents participate in the process. Voting in local elections is a way to participate. Visit **MyVote Wisconsin** ([myvote.wi.gov](https://myvote.wi.gov)) for comprehensive, non-partisan information about what's on your ballot, absentee voting details, where your polling place is located, and more.

We hope you find our **2024 Janesville School Board Candidate Q&A** useful and encourage you to share it widely with your personal and professional network.

*School Board Candidate Greg Ardrey respectfully declined to submit answers for the Q&A.*

## Meet the Candidates



**Greg Ardrey**  
**(Incumbent)**



**Susan Johnson**



**Colton Measner**



**Elizabeth Paull**  
**(Incumbent)**



## 1. What motivated you to run for the Janesville School Board?

### **GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

### **SUSAN JOHNSON:**

I'm running for Janesville School Board to bring new energy to our district in addressing the challenges we currently face. I am an active community member who has previously served in elected office. I am dedicated to this community and its future. As a former educator, I am passionate about teaching and learning, and helping all individuals reach their full potential. We need to focus our attention and efforts on identifying the needs of all our students to raise overall achievement and bridge achievement gaps. We can do this by fully supporting our district's staff and families and by collaborating with community partners. The networking I've done in this community will make the difference. Together, we will move our district forward!

### **COLTON MEASNER:**

I was motivated to run for school board because my inspiration is Education First. By that I mean education before any and all else. I firmly believe I have what that takes to continue to make that priority one. I want to continue to allow faculty and students to share their input to keep improving. I have a clear vision, will drive accountability, and will perform the duties with transparency and integrity. My experience within the district as a student was a big motivation. My friends and family were also a huge inspiration, so that I can give back in a meaningful way.

### **ELIZABETH PAULL:**

I am running for reelection for the School District of Janesville School Board because I know that I serve a very special role in this district, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my experience on the board. I have been engaged with SDJ for 12 years as a parent and volunteer. My husband and I have 3 children enrolled in the district across all levels: elementary, middle, and high school. Each day as a parent I interact with children/students, other families, and staff in the district. This high level of involvement provides me with a wide lens and an authentic experience to help me better understand the needs of our student learners, families, and staff. Through my years as a school board commissioner, I have been involved in a number of key projects and programs, including serving as Chairperson for the Policy, Personnel, and Curriculum Committee that meets monthly year-round, serving on the district Strategic Planning Committee, participating in the hiring of our current superintendent, and more. In addition, I was appointed as the Board Liaison for the Janesville Area Council Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) which meets monthly during the school year. Through this organization I help mentor PTA leaders and it serves as an additional opportunity for the community to be able to communicate with me. I also am involved in the parent groups at each of my children's schools which allows me even stronger ties to the district as a whole. Over the years through all of these engagement opportunities, I have been able to learn a great deal about our district's needs and strengths. My professional background is in education as well. I earned a Masters of Arts in teaching degree and taught Spanish at the secondary level previous to serving on the school board. As a 3rd generation educator and a Janesville native, I care deeply about public education and specifically the School District of Janesville. I grew up in Janesville, am now raising my own children here, and partner with my husband to run our family business. I have a vested interest in district success as a SDJ graduate, community member, and involved parent. I believe that I am a qualified candidate for the Janesville School Board.



## 2. What experience do you have that prepares you to be a school board member? What qualities and leadership will you bring to the position?

### **GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

### **SUSAN JOHNSON:**

I've had a lifetime career in education. I've worked in K-12 schools in a variety of roles from substitute teaching and para-educator, to teacher and library media specialist. I hold Master's Degrees in History, School Psychology, and Library and Information Studies, and I've taught aspiring educators in the UW-System. As a result of my vast knowledge and experience in education, I have a thorough understanding of teaching and learning, and the myriad of factors that affect the process. I know how schools work and what they need from their communities to foster student learning and achievement. As a leader, I am resourceful and adept at networking. I've brought these qualities to a variety of Janesville community organizations and non-profits. I've served on the Janesville City Council and worked with the following City Committees: Sustainable Janesville, Parks and Recreation, and the Hedberg Library Board. Currently, I'm serving on the Rock County Environmental Management Systems Committee, the Prairie Lakes Library System, and I'm working with the Rock County Historical Society in writing an Indigenous Land Acknowledgement. I've been a member of the Janesville League of Women Voters for five years, serving as its Sustainability Chair. In that role, I've organized three Earth Week Forums with a fourth one coming this year. These forums have included panel discussions with local leaders and office-holders. I'm working with the YWCA on the Health Equity Alliance of Rock County BIPOC committee.

### **COLTON MEASNER:**

I am a product of the Janesville school district; I know what's going on within the walls of the district. My qualifications are simple. I have a clear vision for the district, will drive accountability, and lead with transparency, and integrity. When it comes down to a project or a task, I will not stop working until it's done.

### **ELIZABETH PAULL:**

As an incumbent I know that I am prepared to serve the School District of Janesville as a qualified board commissioner because I have been successfully fulfilling this role for the last 3 years. In my first 3 years I learned a great deal about the district, our systems, procedures, personnel, and more. I have served as a board member for several volunteer organizations over the last 12 years in Janesville through various PTA rolls. I have been a PTA leader at the elementary, middle, and district-wide level. I am still involved in all 3 organizations as a parent and as the official school board liaison to the Janesville Area Council PTA. In addition to the volunteer work through PTA, I have been serving as a board member to the Children's Museum of Rock County (CMRC) for the last 3 years. I am currently filling my 2nd board term as Treasurer to this organization. It is clear through my decade plus work in the volunteer/non-profit sector that I have high-level leadership abilities, can successfully collaborate with others, and have demonstrated highly effective communication skills. These are all strong assets that I carry with me through all levels of work in which I engage through the School District of Janesville.

Finally I, along with my husband, own a local business in downtown Janesville. As a business owner, I have gained a variety of skills over the years in terms of running a business, employer/employee relations, HR topics, overseeing renovations, and more. Many of the challenges that school districts face, other employers do as well. The school district and business community work hand-in-hand to face the challenges of a constantly evolving world and workforce, and I have been fortunate to be involved in both sides of that relationship.



### 3. What are SDJ's strengths? How would you build on those as a school board member?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

The School District of Janesville's strengths are in its staff. The administration and all staff are dedicated to our students' education. In our current milieu, it is difficult to acquire and retain highly qualified teachers. There is a severe teacher shortage state-wide and nationally. University teacher preparation programs have seen a steady decline in enrollment since 2009 during the Great Recession. Our administration tries its very best to find and retain the best teachers. I've met our superintendent and all the directors within the current administration, and they are all highly qualified. What impressed me the most was how well they work together. There is a spirit of collegiality in this district, which is a strength. I believe it reflects strengths within our community. The teachers I've met so far are also positive and motivated. I'm working with a Rock County Historical Society committee to write an Indigenous Land Acknowledgment statement for the organization. Two of our district teachers are also serving on this committee, which shows that they also realize how important it is for them to network with community organizations in supporting their students and families. Support for multiple student extra-curricular activities is also a strength of the Janesville School District. Extracurricular activities include sports, arts, academic clubs, and hobbies. Students can learn valuable skills they can use later on for their careers and personal lives by engaging in extracurricular activities. Sometimes students stay in school to graduate solely because of their passion for a sport or art.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

SDJ has many strengths to be proud of. We offer many opportunities for our students to have an engaging experience in our district like field trips, internships, Elevate, Youth Apprenticeships, charter schools, etc. Providing experiences like these for students lets them get exposure to careers they may not otherwise know about. We invest in our team members, 80% of our budget goes to our staff and their benefits. Reviewing the entire compensation package regularly will help us ensure we can attract and retain top talent. We have a strong superintendent and board in place that acts with integrity and thoughtfulness. I want to continue to enhance these strengths and all the other strengths this great district has by being an engaged board member.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

I believe strongly that one of SDJ's biggest strengths are our people, our hard-working employees. As one of the county's largest employers, SDJ impacts a lot of people across our city and county as a whole. Part of my mission as a school board member is to continue to use my background in education and my history with SDJ to allow me to make careful/considerate and responsible decisions. I work to build and maintain strong relationships with the employees in the district through my involvement in the parent/teacher groups, outreach in the community, and general visible engagement across all levels.

Other very strong SDJ assets are our community partnerships and community pride! The community as a whole is wonderfully supportive of our district and programming. That pride is clear through attendance at the Parker Arts Academy and other district artistic performances, attendance at athletic events all year long, and the vast engagement of our business community through programs like Global Business Academy, Student Build Program, Youth Apprenticeship, and so many others. I will continue to advocate for these partnerships by staying engaged in all aspects of our district life as well as advocate for expansion in these essential community relationships.





#### 4. What are SDJ's growth opportunities? How would you support growth in those areas as a school board member?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

Strategic planning focus groups last year found that there is a great need for technology upgrades and building maintenance in 2024, and throughout the decade. Students need the most up-to-date industrial and instructional technology, so they may be completely prepared for career and life after graduation. This factor is critical not only for individual students, but also for the economic development and stability of our entire community. Upgraded technology will allow our students to learn the 21st century skills they need for the jobs of today and tomorrow. The average age of district buildings is 62 years. Homeowners all know that homes will need some repairs every few years. After 50 years or so, a home will need some serious investment in its infrastructure. If homeowners wait too long to do it, significant damage can occur, which costs far more than the smaller repairs would have cost.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

While we are a flat enrollment district, we are the 9th biggest district in Wisconsin and need to continue to focus on reading, math, and attendance to become a destination district for students and staff. As a board member I'd ensure the goals and priorities of the district always tie back into those 3 focus areas and be at the center of every decision. Another opportunity is that we can prioritize updating our facilities for generations to come. I will approach the effort with a judicious lens of what we can justifiably afford and what will make the most impact in the long-term.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

The district has been very clear for the last 2 school years that areas of necessary growth fall in the areas of literacy/math scores and attendance rates. I have witnessed the critical work being done behind-the-scenes, tirelessly, by our engaged professionals. A special interest to me in particular is literacy and I have advocated for improved screeners, curriculum, and teacher training in this focus area for years. Truly, my passion for literacy is one of the reasons I ran for school board in the first place. Huge changes have been implemented across the district to address these areas of concern in recent years which is something that I celebrate, including new curriculum adaptations, staffing adjustments, reduced class size, leadership training, and in-depth professional development. I would like to see continued efforts to support learners with language based learning disorders, like dyslexia. I know that the work to better support these learners will enhance the learning environment for all students, as such our literacy rates should improve significantly. The solutions are complex and changes can't be made overnight, but I am fully engaged in these core areas and will continue to remain highly vigilant throughout my time with the district.

Another key area of growth in my mind is middle school programming for those students traditionally thought of as "at risk." I know that we are working on finding solutions and I fully support the work being done so that we can better support students across all levels, but especially these students at the middle level who are struggling more than others.

Two final challenges that I see year after year for many of our families are before/after school care as well as transportation concerns. The district has worked hand-in-hand with the city of Janesville to address transportation issues and students at the middle and high school level have benefited significantly from the improvements to bus access through JTS passes. I am very grateful for these improvements. I still see families with children at the elementary school level experience transportation issues as well and I know that likely impacts attendance rates, but also impacts learning. I am hopeful we can find additional options to support our youngest learners as well.

I have noticed a distinct shortage in before/after care programs throughout our community over the years and this is likely due to staffing shortages that all industries are facing. Not only are there fewer opportunities, but programming costs have increased significantly as well. These shortages and expenses pose serious challenges for families across the district, including many teachers/staff, that have a far reaching impact. It is daunting to make effective decisions when you aren't aware that problems exist in the first place. My goal is to remain an engaged board/community member so that I will have a better understanding of struggles that our students and families face year after year.



## 5. What are your thoughts about the district's DPI Scorecard ranking and what ideas do you have for improvement?

### **GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

### **SUSAN JOHNSON:**

Our most recent report card shows an overall score of 57.3, which falls into the "Meets Few Expectations" category. It was a decline in our students' overall achievement, and is lower than many of our neighboring districts. The score fell just below the "Meets Expectations" level, so it wasn't missed by a great value. However, Districts with lower scores begin to get a negative reputation among parents and families. With the open enrollment system, parents can opt out of a low-performing district. Obviously, we don't want to see this decline happen again. I have the educational knowledge and experience, as well as the community networking skills and organizational experience, to build the support the district needs to raise our students' achievement levels. Our teachers have all the data they need to improve student learning. I will make sure they receive the support they need. We must maintain positive relations with parents, community employers, and taxpayers. All families need to be welcomed in our schools and represented in curriculum and staff so they may be equal partners in their children's education.

### **COLTON MEASNER:**

Obviously our DPI report states we are struggling, and in some areas we are, but it's just one input and doesn't spotlight all of the good growth we are having. We are a two star district. There are schools that are obviously doing far better and even far worse. We have to keep in mind how big our district is compared to others. I believe we could look at what 4 and 5 star districts are doing differently to see what we can implement but also look into bringing in an education specialist for some help. I would like to see staff share best practices among each other more. There are a lot of talented people in our district for newer teachers to model after. With all this said we also have to make sure whatever changes we may make are inside the budget. Continue to keep education first.

### **ELIZABETH PAULL:**

The state of Wisconsin introduced state report card scoring in the 2011-2012 school year. As such, the notion of this type of scoring is relatively new in terms of the lifespan of public education. Often when the public reflects on their own education and compares the scoring that is seen on the district or school report card, we don't reflect on the fact that the same accountability just didn't exist "when we were kids." It is important to be mindful of this concept because schools and districts face challenges that educators 20 years ago didn't experience. With all of that said, accountability is extremely important. Tracking data is very valuable. Growth cannot occur if you don't know where you are or where you want to go. The DPI scoring is a complex system that can create challenges for districts and schools based on metrics like socioeconomic status, creating additional challenges that other districts simply won't face. Scores also are based off of a rolling 3 year average. That means that if great gains had been made in the past year, full vision of that won't be seen on the report card rating immediately.

The district cares deeply about making strides forward in the DPI scores, as we must. I see the dedication week after week and fully support the work being done to address literacy gaps, increasing math scores, and working through attendance challenges. As chairperson to the district Policy, Personnel, and Curriculum committee, I see updates on our efforts each month through introduction and development of rich programming to support these goals. I offer questions, insight, suggestions, and feedback through these presentations to help make sure the rest of the board fully understands the efforts being put forth from the district to direct efforts of our highly-qualified administrators who work diligently to address these areas of concern.



6. Student recruitment and retention for public schools is challenging because of open enrollment and stabilizing or declining school-age populations. What should the district do to ensure SDJ enrollment remains strong? How will you support that as a school board member?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

The Janesville School District must raise its overall student achievement scores. It will raise student achievement by acquiring and retaining highly qualified and experienced teachers. More needs to be done to make our district more competitive and attractive for new teachers, or teachers moving into our community. We are competing with cities all around Wisconsin and the nation. Teachers need solid healthcare and retirement benefits, which do not eat away into their salaries. Districts in Wisconsin need to reverse the trend toward teachers paying more and more of their own healthcare and retirements out of their salaries. We are living in an era where many communities, including Janesville, have a severe lack of affordable housing. In addition, highly qualified teachers all have Bachelor's Degrees for which they pay tuition, often with hefty student loans they need to pay back. Something must give. Our local economy would grow further and faster if professionals like teachers would not have to pay so much for their own healthcare and retirement. With all that said, the community itself must step up more to support our teachers and our schools.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

We have to continue to do what we do. By this I mean, continue to enhance our core principals as a district focused on reading, math and attendance. We should continue the great leadership we have from our superintendent and our district leaders. While enrollment is projected to be flat, if we continue to advance our education experience with community input, we will be successful. I will support anything that does that.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

Fortunately, SDJ recently took the initiative to engage in a long term study that provided us with an understanding of where our community and student population will be years into the future. While we have experienced a declining student population in past years, a similar trend seen across the state, we know that our enrollment has stabilized and is projected to remain stable. That is very powerful to help us make plans going forward for staffing, programming, facilities, and more. With that said, we are always eager to find expansion and growth opportunities. Because we have remained keen on embracing and addressing changing needs of students, employees, and the community, we have continued to grow over the years. The presence of 3 diverse charter schools in our district and addition of unique programming like Parker Arts Academy, Global Business Academy, Craftsman with Character, and other enriching learning opportunities is an example of that commitment. Quite simply, we have become more diverse at a time when other districts have had to reduce programming. I believe that by remaining consistent in our commitment to our district goals, mission, and vision, we will be able to continue to grow and that will attract others to our district and community. As a school board member, I fully support and even have personally mentored student learning. Through my leadership with the Policy, Personnel, and Curriculum committee I am tasked monthly by providing critical feedback, evaluating closely, and encouraging future development of programming that can help us make steps forward for better student outcomes.





7. School districts throughout Wisconsin face a challenging financial environment. Many are increasingly relying on operating referendums to fund local education, including Janesville. What are your thoughts on the situation and how should local education be funded?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

One of the most serious threats to the Janesville School District is its financial stress due to continuously decreasing state funding, especially over the past thirteen years. Loss of state funding has meant tight budgets, adversely impacting our ability to provide options for services to students, as well as its ability to attract and keep staff, and maintain buildings and facilities. These fiscal challenges strain relations between the district and our community. There is no greater public good than our children's education! Nothing has brought greater prosperity to our nation than educating its children. And, children need to be learning during their growing years when their brains are rapidly developing. If the state won't spend its tremendous surplus this year on our children, and their future, then the local community does not have many positive choices. The property levies need to be raised so we can increase property taxes to pay for our schools. The local communities need to step up. It's really that simple.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

I believe we should keep our funding the same. Yes we are facing a challenging financial environment right now, most districts are. The district administration recognizes the need to increase funds available to keep our operations functioning at a high level and offering our students the experiences we do today. Our community has to understand what our operational referendum is for. To keep the lights on, pay the staff, fund school activities, mental health programs, and much more. As a board member, I'd carefully review decisions related to the budget to make sure we make responsible decisions to drive student outcomes.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

Inadequate funding for public education is the number one problem from my viewpoint. The vast majority of the struggles we face in public education stem from the inability to properly fund our school systems to be able to function to the best of their ability. From paying for benefits for employees, updates in curriculum, staff raises to stay on par with inflation, funding special education programs, caring for aging facilities, updating technology on a regular basis, improving safety measures in a changing world, the list truly goes on and on. The reality is that we have to do more and more without additional funds to account for such increases. Due to severely outdated funding formulas (dating back to the 90s) based on revenue limits, our district has been at a disadvantage from a funding standpoint. We receive fewer funds per student compared to other districts and that creates true operational challenges. Reimbursement for special education services are also low in the state. Increasing the funding for special education at a state level would better support all of our students. Many school districts are left without any other choice than to go to referendum because of these funding pitfalls, so that they can continue to invest in their students and future. I am grateful for the strong work that has been done in SDJ related to finances. We have a solid foundation to support us, but the state funding formulas are concerning. It is my hope that adjustments will be made soon to better support districts across the state to have more equitable funding opportunities.



8. Student success is influenced by myriad factors and a school's physical environment is one of them. From health impacts linked to HVAC systems to student engagement and attendance linked to classroom design, a school's built environment is important. The average age of SDJ buildings is 62 years. In your opinion, what priority should be placed on updated and upgraded school facilities?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

According to the strategic planning process held last year, the results show that the three most important goals of the district moving forward are to raise students reading levels, upgrade buildings, and the building and instructional technology. These are the three main goals, and they are all equally important to the district. We need schools that are safe and secure for our children, and for our staff. We need upgraded technology for Janesville's future economic development. Finally, we need adults who are fully literate.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

Buildings don't teach kids, education does. With that said, we need to invest in things like heating and cooling, roofing, ceiling, things of that nature that are critical first. Updating our learning environments will be critical to ensure student engagement and individualized learning and growth.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

Due to my background as an engaged parent, volunteer, and school board member in the district, the challenges that we experience in our school environments are not news to me. When it is a hot May day, I know which classrooms are likely going to be miserable and which schools have more challenging temperature environments than others. My background and experience provides me with a very authentic lens for district decision-making.

Something of note, I have taken the personal initiative, along with a fellow board member, to engage in regular tours around the district. By engaging in these tours, we have been able to evaluate the updates that were performed as part of the last referendum which have critically enhanced safe pathways to each school building in the district. When the recent facilities audit report was provided to the district, I was not surprised by playground ratings, facilities concerns, and other researched topics in the report. I have a firm grasp on our facilities because I care deeply about the conditions of our schools and making sure the decisions I make are informed decisions.

Simply put, caring for our facilities must be always present in our work. It is part of the work that we do every day across the district. Safe, clean, enriching environments are essential for optimal student success. While we cannot do everything on the list provided to us through our recent facilities assessment at one time, we are now able to make informed steps forward in terms of prioritizing areas that need immediate action and establish a long term list of what is next.



9. The 2023 strategic planning process concluded with a presentation to the School Board in mid-February that outlined big takeaways and next steps. What is your perspective on the direction of the district based on this process?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

I attended the last school board meeting where the superintendent discussed the Strategic Plan, and the process used by the district to establish the goals. I'm very familiar with strategic planning, as I've gone through the strategic planning process professionally, and in my non-profit volunteer work. It seems to me like everything went according to best practices. I was impressed to hear about it and to learn what was concluded. I am completely on board with the process, and with the goals established by it.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

I appreciate the time the committee of 65 people put into developing this strategic plan, vision, and mission. It boils down to "Inspire. Empower. Achieve" with a focus on 4 areas. Those areas are Student Academic Excellence, Staff Excellence, Family/Community Partnerships and Resources & Facilities. The values of communication, critical thinking, curiosity, empathy, resilience and work ethic will help our students be successful as they move on after graduation. This work will drive the decisions made by the board and administration and be consistent in metrics from the top down.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

I was highly engaged with the strategic planning process from start to finish and am very proud of the district for taking the steps forward to establish a stronger vision and mission. I am also incredibly grateful for the enthusiastic support provided through the process from all of the community members who participated. Month after month, the large committee that I was a part of came together to discuss, collaborate, and endeavor to guide the district forward with a strong vision/mission. As we are now completing the process, it is very gratifying to see all of that work come together to provide the district a strong foundation for decision-making as we move forward. District leaders are faced with decisions day after day. Having this strategic plan in place will allow us to make thoughtful, informed, and confident decisions that support the goals outlined by our community at large.



10. Students have vastly different support networks outside of school. Due to this, not all students begin the school year on a level playing field. What steps do you think the school district (and community) should take to help ensure our children are receiving adequate support both inside and outside of school?

**GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

**SUSAN JOHNSON:**

The community does need to step up even more than it currently does for our local children. They are the future! Without them being fully educated, economic progress in our community cannot happen. The community needs to fully support all of our students and show them that they matter and that the community expects them to do well. We need to communicate that we want them all to live up to their full potential, no matter what that may be. We need to volunteer more in the schools; perhaps by tutoring, or mentoring. There are many ways to step up, and show support, and more of us need to do it! I am definitely interested in encouraging more retired and partially retired people to do just that.

**COLTON MEASNER:**

There is a diverse population in SDJ. I want us to continue to focus on support personnel to help every student be successful. One critical area of this is individualized learning opportunities which will be a critical component of the facility updates being done. We need to do what we can to make all programs available to students and be mindful of creative ways to bring awareness to them.

**ELIZABETH PAULL:**

I continue to advocate for the development of a wider array of summer school programming for students in our district. Through more diverse summer school options, our students would continue to remain engaged with learning opportunities, be provided with safe and nurturing environments, and have access to more meals throughout the year through the breakfast and lunch programs that the district offers. This is one area of expansion that I feel strongly that we should take action on.

Other areas that I know are struggles in our school community are before/after school care and transportation to/from school as I mentioned earlier. Families without adequate resources are challenged in many ways, but certainly in these areas. I do not believe the district can solve these challenges alone. Stronger community partnerships to find creative solutions for families would be ideal as challenges in these areas often overflow to employers as well. The district has been working on building and maintaining strong partnerships across the community. An example of this partnership in action is the early literacy task force. Creative programming has been implemented to support young learners before they even enter our local schools. I know that more work can be done to help support challenges that our students and families face through continued relationship building like this task force.



## 11. Graduation doesn't represent the "end of the line" for student learning. Rather, it represents the beginning of their "next chapter." What do you think should be done to make sure students graduate with the tools they need to be successful in either the job market or within post-secondary educational opportunities?

### **GREG ARDREY:**

Declined to respond.

### **SUSAN JOHNSON:**

We have a strong Youth Apprenticeship program, but it needs to be expanded. It is a learn-as-you-earn program, where a student attends high school for part of the day, and goes out to work in a job that interests them for the future during the other part of the day. There are 43 students in this program currently but more are interested in it. We need to partner with even more of our local industries, so we can offer this opportunity for more young people. This program fulfills multiple needs. It provides needed occupational and technological skills to students and also gives them a paycheck. It provides much-needed workers for our local businesses, which are having difficulty in finding sufficient workers for the available jobs in our area. Janesville residents are fortunate in having easy access to multiple types of post-secondary education as well. Students may begin attending Blackhawk Technical College or U-Rock before graduating high school and earn both high school and college credits for their studies. This helps keep college costs down for students and helps them finish sooner, so they are out in the work world earlier than they would have been without these wonderful programs.

### **COLTON MEASNER:**

The strategic plan work will help us continue to turnout students ready to engage in their community with a strong work ethic and motivation to be curious how to grow. The opportunities are endless for SDJ students as they graduate and we need to continue to focus on programs to ensure they reach their highest potential.

### **ELIZABETH PAULL:**

The guiding mindset that is maintained throughout all decision-making related to our future graduates is ever-mindful of college, career, and community readiness. High school students have a curriculum that focuses on financial literacy which is incredibly valuable for young adults. SDJ also provides programming focused on building soft skills and study skills that help learners better prepare for academic success, job interviews, and more. Students also have significant choices in class selection, which is a big change from the standard options offered years ago. Students have the opportunity to explore a variety of programming which allows them to face their futures with a better understanding of their personal interests and individual skill set.

SDJ has made great strides in the last couple of years, through the support of our strong business community, to beef up work-based learning programming. The introduction of the Craftsman with Character program is one new offering that is providing groups of students each semester the opportunity to engage with area businesses and explore a variety of career options locally. Youth Apprenticeship is a one or two year "earn while you learn" program affording students to gain hands-on training, meaningful education, a paycheck, and a possible pathway to a life-long career in their field of interest. Participation in this program has expanded significantly through the addition of a Work-Based Learning Liaison. I am very proud of the district's efforts to grow and expand these work-based learning opportunities for our learners, and I know that future expansion and growth is headed our way.

Janesville also offers a wide variety of dual credit options for students to take advantage of: Advanced Placement, Transcribed Credit, Advanced Standing Credit, Start College Now, and Early College Credit program. Participation in these accelerated academic options allow students to gain skills that will help them earn college credit early, but also helps them to be even better prepared for the rigors that students planning to further their education after high school will face. I have expressed a desire to see a stronger focus on recognizing academic excellence as well as more tools for all students/families to understand what programs are available, how students get involved, and which options are best suited to students' future plans.

Finally, our 3 unique charter schools offer an amazing variety of diverse learning options for our students who are in need of something outside the traditional high school setting. Because they all have varied programming, we are able to capture a much wider educational audience than what other districts are able to offer. As such, some of our programs have long wait lists. Expansion in this field is clearly necessary, but I am thrilled that our school district offers diverse learning options that help all students proceed to graduation with success.