**Adam Doby**

**1) Why are you running?**

My oldest daughter is entering 2nd grade at Southwest, and my youngest daughter will be there in less than 2 years. So my stake in the district's success is personal and heartfelt. All kids in the district should have the opportunity to learn in whatever way suits them best, and allow them to achieve their dreams. The last thing a student should ever feel is that they weren't able to do something because it wasn't offered.

**2) What do you think is the biggest need in the school district?**

While budget restraints have been a major challenge, we must assume that those will continue, and work to provide for students in every way possible. We should ensure that the voices of our educators and students are paramount in our decision making. I would like to see us provide enhanced educational opportunities for gifted students, increased vocational opportunities, and equal access to advanced elementary learning programs.

**3) If elected, what are your goals and priorities for the next four years?**

In March of this year, many parents got a rude awakening to the realities of everything that schools and teachers provide to our children. Teachers deserve the support of the school district, achieved through decreased class sizes, pay commensurate with the level of responsibility we ask of them, and updated, readily available supplies. Cohesive community participation is a necessity and accomplished by creating community service projects and events that engage and benefit citizens, businesses and education alike. Brighton and Hartland School Districts have successfully integrated these ideals, which has led to stellar academic achievement in their districts. The hard-work and dedication of our students and teachers can seem overshadowed by our proximity to high-performing districts, and is something we should learn from and improve upon to become the standard for academic success in Livingston County and throughout the State of Michigan.

**4) Niche.com rates the Howell Public Schools as “above average.” Is that sufficient, or do you think Howell Schools should strive for more than that?**

It is never wise to accept your achievements as the best you can do; we can always strive to do better and achieve more. As a board it should be our mission to constantly evaluate our performance and set consistently higher yet achievable goals.

**5) What special skill set/s do you possess that you believe would make you valuable to the board and district?**

I've spent the last 10 years managing food service, most recently with Starbucks as a manager in a high-volume store. My time in the industry has shown me how important education is to success and the huge part positive role models play in development. In addition, my experience with budgeting and addressing financial limitations has given me the skills necessary to navigate some of the current challenges in the district. I've also experienced first-hand how stressful it can be to work while navigating COVID-19 with children.

**6) Howell has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with an in-person plan, plus the option of a virtual, online program for families that prefer that to in-school learning. Do you feel the Return to School program has been successful?**

Overall the district has done a great job managing the start of the school year with the plan that is in place. One problem I had at the beginning was a lack of clearly articulated instructions for what students needed to do on the first day, as we only learned some of the information by asking, not because it was provided to us. The other was that I think masks should have been made mandatory for elementary students from day one to create consistency through the entire district. Outside of that though, I have been very impressed with the plan and the results.

**7) Are you a district parent with children in the Howell Public Schools?**

Yes

**8) How many children do you have, and what school/s do they attend?**

I have two daughters. One at Southwest in Second Grade, and another who will be at Southwest in a couple years.

**9) How can Howell best retain and build on its good academic reputation?**

We need to not settle for being as good as we have been; we need to strive for being better. We should do everything we can to improve the academic outcome for every student in the district, and that starts by providing unique and interesting opportunities for learning. Supporting our teachers and staff by providing them with the resources they need will equip them with the tools necessary to improve upon our current results. Academics, athletics, arts, and activities are all essential to creating well-rounded and fully involved young adults, and should all have a substantial role in each students' education.

**Marcus Wilcox**

**1) Why are you running?**

I have been on the Howell School Board for approximately 5 years and I have enjoyed witnessing the positive changes that have been made. I feel it’s important to have a stable and well-functioning school board and I want to continue in my current capacity to ensure that happens.

**2) What do you think is the biggest need in the school district?**

The standard answer would be to provide a safe and secure environment while educating students so that they are successful with whatever endeavors they take after high school. But, Covid has changed everything in the short term and the biggest need is to safely continue having children attend school 5 days a week in person if parents so choose.

**3) If elected, what are your goals and priorities for the next four years?**

1. Safely continue children in school 5 days a week.

2. Maintain a level headed approach to finances as we will see a cut in funding over the next couple of years due to Covid.

3. Continue to provide the resources to teachers and students to increase test scores and provide as many opportunities for students as possible.

4. Continue the stability of our district we have a great Board and Superintendent that have worked diligently to get Howell Schools open in a safe manner

**4) Niche.com rates the Howell Public Schools as “above average.” Is that sufficient, or do you think Howell Schools should strive for more than that?**

It is a starting point but not sufficient. We have great teachers and staff and we can always do better. Howell schools is the Gold standard around metro Detroit right now on how to educate students safely.

**5) What special skill set/s do you possess that you believe would make you valuable to the board and district?**

I have 5 years of experience on the Board and I have 2 children in the district. I am a local attorney who provides legal guidance to ensure we are not making decisions that would jeopardize Howell Public Schools.

**6) Howell has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with an in-person plan, plus the option of a virtual, online program for families that prefer that to in-school learning. Do you feel the Return to School program has been successful?**

Hands down our plan for Howell schools has been the best in the State of Michigan. We are the Gold standard for how to open schools safely to continue student’s education. The Board took a lot of heat for opening schools 5 days a week. We just completed the 1rst Quarter of school and we have had no student to student Covid cases during that time. There have been some Covid cases but they did not originate in Howell Schools.

**7) Are you a district parent with children in the Howell Public Schools?**

Yes, and both my wife and I graduated from Howell.

**8) How many children do you have, and what school/s do they attend?**

I have two children who attend Howell Public Schools at Southwest elementary.

**9) How can Howell best retain and build on its good academic reputation?**

By providing the necessary resources to teachers so that the students are encouraged and motivated to learn in a safe environment. Not every student will go to college, but we offer a plethora of other opportunities to have every student be successful after graduation. I want to continue alternative programs like the builder’s trade program and increase our AP classes. In addition, I would like to expand our successful robotics program.

**Michael Yenshaw**

**1) Why are you running?**

I was originally appointed to the Howell Public Schools-Board of Education in October 2007, so I am currently the longest-serving member. I have been able to provide institutional knowledge to the other members, having worked with five different people filling the Superintendent role during this time. The District has faced a number of critical/controversial issues through the years that the Board has had to work through. I have strived to make well-informed decisions that I felt were in the best interest of the District, with an emphasis on student success. These decisions are sometimes not well-received or popular, but intended to best serve the educational interests of the District. With this being deemed a “non-partisan” position, I don’t let partisan politics play a part in my decision-making. I have only missed one meeting during my tenure.

**2) What do you think is the biggest need in the school district?**

The biggest need of this District and any district is stability of financial resources to insure that students are receiving the best-quality education possible. It is difficult to budget the operation on an annual basis when the primary source of funding is based on student enrollment figures. Also, as District facilities and equipment age, or new is needed; reliance for this funding is based on voter sentiment during ballot proposals. Howell has been fortunate in the last five-years to have passed a technology bond and a facilities bond.

**3) If elected, what are your goals and priorities for the next four years?**

This electoral position is not an individual one as you are one of seven persons on a board, so personal goals or priorities are not a primary objective of the position. Those are determined in collaboration with other Board members and the Superintendent. I would like to see the funding mechanism for public PreK-12 education in Michigan changed. Proposal A was enacted by the legislature over twenty-five years ago to fund public school districts through the “School Aid Fund” with a formula based on differing per-pupil amounts. As of 2017, Michigan ranks twenty-seventh in “cost-adjusted per-pupil funding” nationwide at $914 below the national average. This needs reform as Howell Public Schools has always been on the lowest-end of the per-pupil amount. Along that line, I would also like to see a reduction in unfunded mandates from the federal and state level. Implementation of ideas, concepts, or laws can’t be accomplished effectively without proper funding. Lastly, it would be great to see a one-hundred percent graduation rate from high school so no students are “falling between the cracks” after leaving the district.

**4) Niche.com rates the Howell Public Schools as “above average.” Is that sufficient, or do you think Howell Schools should strive for more than that?**

In reviewing Howell Public School’s performance on Niche.com, one has to keep in mind that the ratings are a compilation of statistical data analysis and user opinions gleaned by reviews of students, parents, and district residents. The District is rated #181 out of 555 districts in Michigan and #207 out of 561 districts with the best teachers in Michigan. The average graduation rate is listed at 89%. The Financial category shows the District falls below the national average in expenses per student, median household income, and median home value. The Crime & Safety category has the District highly-rated. When taking into account all of the categories listed in the website, the District is rated with an overall grade of “B”. Obviously, the District can and strives do better, but keep in mind that there are all kinds of ways to rate schools; with some of the factors used the District can work on and some the District has little to no control of.

**5) What special skill set/s do you possess that you believe would make you valuable to the board and district?**

I have been known for my integrity, work ethic, attention to detail, and listening to people as an effective and valuable member of the Board. It is important to lead by example when it comes to the business of the Board. I believe this has played a part in maintaining the current stability of the District.

**6) Howell has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with an in-person plan, plus the option of a virtual, online program for families that prefer that to in-school learning. Do you feel the Return to School program has been successful?**

The District has been virtually unique across our region with respect to educating our students this school year during the pandemic with its offering (full-week in-person instruction). This was determined to be the best course of action to keep our students from falling further behind in their education. Most other districts are conducting instruction with different variations of in-person and/or on-line learning. Classes began on August 19th and the first-quarter concluded on October 16th. There have been some employees and students who have tested positive for COVID-19, which has resulted in some individual and classroom quarantines, plus one day of on-line instruction at the high school 10-12 campus. None of the transmissions, to the best of the District’s knowledge, have come from the classroom setting. Only being one-quarter into the school year and with the change in seasons coming, it’s too soon to deem it to be successful. The District continues to be proactive, transparent, and cautiously optimistic with its response to the pandemic.

**7) Are you a district parent with children in the Howell Public Schools?**

Not currently.

**8) How many children do you have, and what school/s do they attend?**

I have three children that have graduated from the District within the last fifteen-years. My wife and her parents also graduated from Howell Public Schools.

**9) How can Howell best retain and build on its good academic reputation?**

The District can maintain its good academic reputation by continuing to provide effective and wide-ranging instructional, social, and emotional supports necessary in pursuit of student success.

**Crystal Zurek**

**1) Why are you running?**

I’d like for my son and his classmates to receive an education where they are taught to think critically about how they can make the world a better place. I’d like for all students in Howell Public Schools to feel welcome, included and cared for. I’m currently an educator for Dexter Community Schools. My 10 years of experience in education will allow me to help the board to make the best decisions for Howell students, the staff and our community.

**2) What do you think is the biggest need in the school district?**

Right now, the biggest need in Howell Public Schools is to keep students, staff and the community safe by implementing safer COVID-19 protocols.

**3) If elected, what are your goals and priorities for the next four years?**

1. To Improve Student Achievement - I would like to help improve our curriculum by advocating for it to be inclusive of all marginalized groups. For example, students should learn about how to be anti-racist and should learn about LGBTQ+ issues across the curriculum. Students perform better when they feel safe and included. We can improve student achievement by celebrating our differences.

2. To Foster Positive Relationships and a Collaborative Working Environment with all Employees - Our employee well-being has a direct effect on how well they perform and therefore will affect student outcomes. I would like to work with the board to implement safer COVID-19 practices. Employees will perform better if they feel safe and healthy. Employee well-being can be affected by their ability to support themselves and their family, so we need to make sure they are being paid a fair wage. We can foster positive relationships and collaboration by offering authentic professional development opportunities.

3. To Build upon the Confidence and Support of the Community - As a board member, I will listen to the community, including parents, students and teachers, to help make the best decisions for our kids and our school district.

**4) Niche.com rates the Howell Public Schools as “above average.” Is that sufficient, or do you think Howell Schools should strive for more than that?**

School districts should always be striving to improve. Something I noticed right away when looking at the Niche.com ratings of Howell Public Schools is that the diversity rating is a “C”. How can our schools be rated as “above average” if we are lacking in diversity? What can we do to attract members of diverse groups to our community? In order to answer these questions, I will advocate for the school board members, staff, students and community to be trained in social justice. We all have a lot of work to do so that we can make Howell Public Schools an “excellent” school district for all people.

**5) What special skill set/s do you possess that you believe would make you valuable to the board and district?**

I believe that my 10 years of experience in education will make me valuable to the board and the district. I’m passionate about education and I’m a caring and empathetic person. I want what is best for our kids and our district.

**6) Howell has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with an in-person plan, plus the option of a virtual, online program for families that prefer that to in-school learning. Do you feel the Return to School program has been successful?**

Numbers of COVID-19 are up in Livingston County and doctors and scientists are projecting that numbers throughout our country will continue to rise. Kids can contract and spread COVID-19 and can end up with lasting symptoms. Even more concerning is that our staff members’ and their families’ lives are being put at risk. Our community is being put at risk by having so many kids in school together without social distancing. The district should have listened to our teachers when many of them asked for masks to be mandatory in classrooms at the beginning of the school year. I am glad that they are now implementing this safety protocol.

As a school board member, I will advocate for safer COVID-19 protocols while still catering to the needs of students. Students can be phased into buildings based on COVID-19 risk-level. Students with learning disabilities and students from low-socioeconomic status households could be phased in first, followed by elementary students, then middle school, then high school students as the risk goes down. A hybrid option would allow for social distancing and limit the amount of staff in buildings. While education is important and most students learn best in-person, the well-being and safety of our students should always come first.

**7) Are you a district parent with children in the Howell Public Schools?**

Yes.

**8) How many children do you have, and what school/s do they attend?**

My son attends kindergarten through Highlander Virtual and his home school is Challenger.

**9) How can Howell best retain and build on its good academic reputation?**

We have great teachers at Howell Public Schools. The district should provide professional development opportunities that are authentic and give teachers plenty of autonomy within their curriculum so that they can grow and improve their teaching.

Our district should also continue to focus on the well-being of everyone in the district. Teaching social and emotional skills, making our curriculum inclusive, teaching critical thinking skills, and providing emotional support through school counselors and social workers, can improve the well-being of everyone in the district so that students and staff will be able to perform at their best.