

LOUISE SEEBA

1. Will you abide by the DFL endorsement and support the DFL endorsed candidate?
Yes, of course.

2. Why should the DFL endorse you? What values do you share with the DFL?

I seek the DFL endorsement for school board as a lifelong Democrat. I am an AFSCME member and the former vice president of Local 3757. I grew up in a single parent home on the Iron Range. I know what it means to come from modest means. I see the value of the ECFE programs we will need to help close the achievement gap. On a personal note, I was a student in the Federal Headstart program during the 1970s and saw first hand the benefits of early intervention. My commitment to the public schools is long term and it is sincere. I went to public schools, I send my children to public schools, and my husband is a public school educator.

3. What qualifications do you possess for the office that you seek?

As an attorney for the last 12 years, I advocate on people's behalf for a living. I feel I can transfer these skills to benefit the students in Saint Paul Public Schools.

I have a bachelor's degree in management and a minor in economics. Prior to law school, I worked in New York City for investment bank Morgan Stanley. I am capable and qualified to crunch the numbers of the school district's budget.

As a mother of two young children in the public school system, I have a very personal interest to see that the district is performing well.

As someone who is married to a public school educator, I have become intimately aware of many of the issues that public schools have faced over the past number of years.

As a civic minded individual, I have a strong interest in seeing that the Saint Paul Public Schools produce the most effective citizens to strengthen our democracy.

4. Thinking about your participation in other groups, how would you describe your contribution as one of several decision makers?

I have litigated some of the City's most complex and high risk lawsuits during my time as an Assistant City Attorney. Collaboration is the key. I have worked with City departments, various City administrations, and the Courts. I believe that those who have worked with me would describe me as goal oriented. In my position as an attorney, I identify the goal as successful representation of my clients. As a school board member, my goal is increased student achievement.

5. What is your commitment to public transparency? Do you believe that the school board and superintendent should be totally transparent in all decisions, both as decisions are being made and after decisions are made?

I believe we are entering a new era of transparency. It is my hope that this filters throughout all levels of government. The public school concept is one of the most democratic concepts ever invented. I believe it is the cornerstone of our American democracy. Therefore, it would seem natural for the school board to have a transparent decision making process since the ultimate authority would not be the Superintendent, nor

LOUISE SEEBA

the board, but the citizens that elected them in the first place.

6. With an expected decreasing budget for at least two years, what three things do you think that you could accomplish as a school board member?

A. Finding the dollars necessary to support ELL students, at risk youth, and to address safety issues/concerns. It would be very important to me to know that the public felt the students learning a new language were supported, students in an at risk situation had a viable path to get into a better situation and that the public felt our schools were safe places to be.

B. Regardless of budgetary concerns the reduction of the achievement gap would be a focus of mine. Revenue would have to be found to further ECFE programs that are working and to seek out other programs that could help reduce the gap (academic programs in the summer to prevent “summer academic loss” for example). At the secondary level, I believe we should seek out ways to increase the rigor of the curriculum that St. Paul students encounter on a daily basis. Research demonstrates that the level of rigor a student encounters while in high school will allow for more success in the future.

C. I would work closely with the teachers to further develop staff development opportunities by tapping into their professional expertise. I know from my husband that teaching is a very isolating profession. Yet, every teacher has some effective strategy/lesson that could be shared to the betterment of other teachers and therefore increasing student achievement. In short, we need to allow more time for teachers to share innovative curricular and/or classroom strategies. I believe we can go further exploring this concept because it has three huge benefits:

1. It is relatively inexpensive because we would be tapping into the front line professional experts we already have within our district. 2. Student achievement increases when teaching methodology and professional dialogue is enhanced. 3. Teacher morale improves when the professional dialogue is increased by breaking the isolation of the profession. The basic point is we have over 3000 experts (teachers) that we need to provide this opportunity to so student achievement increases.

7. What criteria would you use to make the selection for next St. Paul Public Schools superintendent?

First and foremost, integrity is vital in all administrators. Without it, trust is gone and cynicism creeps into any organization. Furthermore, we should be looking for a candidate that intends to be in St. Paul for many years to come. We should be very wary of someone looking to use the district as a “stepping stone.” Another quality we should be looking for is someone who has a track record of creativity. We will need this to close the achievement gap and to help solve the district’s financial woes.

Ultimately, we need to find someone who will be able to work with the board, the community and the staff to increase the “net in” of students in St. Paul. Finally, I think we need to find a personality that is able to bring all of these stakeholders together.