

# OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SubDistrict 8

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| <b>William Forsee (Democrat)</b>  | <b>Question</b>                           | <b>Lacey Merica (Democrat)</b>   |
|---|---|--|
| 3/01/13   | <b>Date Filed</b>                         | 2/28/13  |
| 3/10/2013, Noon, sent report of extending to March 14 deadline; 3/12/2013, assigned resident caller had family emergency, new caller assigned; 3/13/2013, 11:39AM, said would do by 3/16; 3/13/2013, 12:13pm, emailed questionnaire along with answers candidate gave in the ;fall 3/15/2013, Morning, candidate called to see how to send answers; 3/15/2013, 3:56pm, ANSWERS RECEIVED.  | <b>Contact Info</b>                       | 3/10/2013, Noon, sent report of extending to March 14 deadline; 3/12/2013, assigned resident caller had family emergency, new caller assigned; 3/14/2013, 10:55 and 11:08pm, left phone messages; 3/14/2013, 11:09am, emailed questionnaire; 3/18/2013, 8:51am, emailed FINAL deadline to be included is 3/19. 3/30/13, 12:16am, sent "last chance to be included" email. Answers copied from email response received Sat, 30 Mar 2013, 7:16pm. Note: Candidate could have had opportunity to view opponents' responses.   |
| Background: www.williamforsee.com, Married, wife Carol 36 years, Two Children and four Grandchildren. Lived in Bellevue for 36 years, Taught for 37 years: now retired, Two years in the Cincinnati area, 30 years for Council Bluff Community Schools, Five years at Burke High School. Graduated: Eastern Iowa Community College: AS degree 1969, University of Northern Iowa: BS degree 1972, University of Nebraska Omaha: MS degree 1978   | <b>01 Biographical</b>                    | I am a lifelong resident, and current homeowner in South Omaha. I attended Ashland Park, Kellom, Ashland Park-Robbins, and Bryan Middle before graduating from Bryan High in 2001. In 2006, I graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in Biology. In 2011, I earned my MBA from the University of Nebraska-Omaha. I currently work as a claims adjuster at Applied Underwriters, managing a portfolio reserved at over \$11 million. I previously worked in the Nebraska Legislature, serving as an administrative aide to Senator Heath Mello. I am an active member of Holy Ghost Catholic Church, currently serving as the secretary of the Parish Council.   |
| My motivation for seeking this office is very personal and centers on my experiences as a classroom teacher for 37 years. The idea that all schools are identical and the problems are all the same is a common misconception. The problems at Burke High School, which services to the deaf students are unique to Burke; South High School and Bryan High School meets greater ELL services. The OPS Board needs to evaluate each school and gear the education of the students at a particular school to meet the needs of that population. Having been taught in different classrooms I understand these particular needs and understand the different approaches needed to meet these needs. | <b>02 Motivation</b>                      | I was motivated to seek this office because of my belief in the power of education. All children have the right to a quality education, and the school board must make sure we have effective teachers with the resources needed to accomplish this goal. The key issues I plan to address if elected are 1) increasing the openness and transparency of the OPS board, 2) building stronger relationships with community organizations, including non-profits, businesses, trades, and higher education institutions, and 3) working to ensure tax payer dollars are spent on education, not administrative costs.  |
| My experience as a member of the Metropolitan Community College Board of Governors I feel is of great value. I am experienced with working with an educational Board and the role they play with running a large educational institution. In setting a positive learning environment for the students and staff, often starts with a positive educational Board. I have also worked closely with State Legislators to expand "Dual Enrollment" opportunities for high school students and will continue to address the expansion if elected to the Board. The expansion of "Dual Enrollment" has been brought to my attention as an important concept for District 8 students and parents.        | <b>03 Qualifications</b>                  | I have several strengths that would benefit the OPS Board if elected. I have past experience working with private businesses, government entities, and community members. I have been a part of groups such as the South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance and the South Omaha Environmental Task Force, that bring people from different groups and points of view together to find solutions to the issues facing South Omaha. Through these past experiences and my current employment, I have become very adept at sharing the same information with different people in different ways to tailor it to their understanding and concerns. In a group, I am a consensus builder. I try to find the common ground between differing view points, and then identify solutions based on shared ideas. I am a teamplayer and willing to put in hard work, and long hours, toward solving a problem or reaching an agreement. Finally, I believe I would bring a fresh, new voice to the OPS Board. I am a 2001 graduate of OPS, having attended OPS schools for kindergarten through 12th grade. I am a homeowner and life-long resident of South Omaha. As my mother is a teacher, I have been around education issues my entire life. While working for Teach For America in college, I was able to learn about national education issues. Through my past work at the Nebraska Legislature, I learned more about how Nebraska as a state views education and the issues facing today's students. All of these experiences combined have given me unique perspectives of education in Omaha, and I would be able to draw on them if elected to the OPS Board. |
| The United Nations Agenda 21 is not germane to the Omaha Public Schools.  | <b>04 Sustainable Development</b>         | [not answered]   |
| The OPS Board technically has one employee and that is the Superintendent. The relationship is that of employer to employee and this should be a positive relationship if the Omaha School District is to run smoothly and for the benefit of the students, staff and community. But again the superintendent is our employee and as such is responsible to the Board and thus to the interests of the constituents we represent or I would represent in District 8.  | <b>05 Superintendent and School Board</b> | The relationship between the school board and superintendent should be a system of checks and balances. Day to day operating decisions should be made by the superintendent, but shared with the board as needed or requested. Decisions on the overall direction of the district and other major issues should be collaborations between the superintendent and the school board, with the school board having the final vote. The school board should not serve as a rubber stamp for the superintendent or other administrators within the school district. If the best interest of my subdistrict conflicts with the goals or actions of the superintendent, I am not afraid to ask him/her to meet with both me and constituents to discuss the situation and work towards a resolution.  |
| The Learning Standard should be State Standards. Most State Standards are higher than the national standard at this point, why should we lower or standards. The increase in STEM education should be one of our goals and one of the States goals as this is where we will find the jobs of the future.  | <b>06 Nationalized Standards</b>          | I believe Nebraska should set its own learning standards. However, we must ensure that our standards meet or exceed any national standards. This is necessary to make sure our students can succeed if they move outside of the district before graduation and to give them an equal, or higher, footing when they attend college and are mixed with students from around the country.   |
| The States with the abstinence only programs have the highest teen pregnancy rate; the problem of teen pregnancy must be addressed. If the students are given proper sex education and the proper use of contraceptives this would be a positive step in reducing the rate of teen pregnancy, and the spread of STD's.  | <b>08 Abstinence, Contraceptives</b>      | I support schools using the "abstinence -plus" education model, which does include information about contraceptive use, but has a strong emphasis on abstinence.   |

# OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS – SubDistrict 6

| <b>William Forsee (Democrat)</b>  | <b>Question</b>  | <b>Lacey Merica (Democrat)</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| I have been to Lincoln and Testified on behalf of the State Science Standards. I feel the learning standards should start on the State level with input from the local school boards. The program called "No Child Left Behind" did not live up to its touted goals. School districts cheated on test scores and teachers had to teach to the test. This isn't true learning, the students must become critical thinkers and be able to understand the ever changing work environment and prepare for the jobs of the future.   | <b>07 State Standards</b>                              | "Teaching to the test" does not benefit our students or give them the knowledge they need for success after graduation. Instead of stressing standardized test scores as a way of measuring school success, I believe we must monitor individual student achievement. A student who enters 5th grade reading on a 1st grade level and exits reading on a 4th grade level has made major progress, but that progress will not be reflected in their standardized test scores.   |
| I was a Biology Teacher who uses the term theory as a scientist would use the term "theory". Evolution is a Theory based on research, thus it is factual, and should be the cornerstone of all science classes.   | <b>09 Scientifically Criticize Evolutionary Theory</b> | Part of science curriculum includes teaching children about the scientific method. This includes learning about theories and how they are tested. The theory of evolution should be taught, along with how it was tested when first proposed and why it was accepted.  |
| The best SCIENCE should be how we educate our students with regards to climate change. I have seen the effects of climate change because of my research with 3 Earthwatch coral reef projects. These projects were: Jamaica Coral Reefs 2005, Diving WWII Wrecks Micronesia preservation 2009 and Restoring Belize's Coral Reefs 2011.  | <b>10 Global Warming</b>                               | Science curriculum should include information about global climate change.   |
| The role of the public schools is to respect a person's religion, but also follow the Supreme Court's Rulings with regards to separation of church and State.   | <b>11 Religious Freedom</b>                            | [not answered]   |
| [not answered]  | <b>12 Lifestyles</b>                                   | [not answered]   |
| No. I sent my son to a military school during high school. That was my choice and I do not believe tax payer funds should have been used to pay for our family's choice. The last thing the Omaha Public Schools need is for the limited funds they receive to be directed to either charter schools or through a voucher system. What would be of greatest benefit to our students; small class size especially in grades K-4, rigorous classes especially in the secondary schools. The adequate and equitable funding for our students is what is needed, not vouchers and charter schools.  | <b>13 Education Support</b>                            | I do not support vouchers or charter schools. I do support programs like the Nebraska Textbook Loan Program which school districts to purchase and loan textbooks to children attending private schools. I would also support creating tax credits in Nebraska for those donating to private schools or scholarship funds for private schools.   |
| I have no business connections with the Omaha Public Schools.   | <b>14 Education Business Connection</b>                | No.  |
| I do not support any new amendments to the U.S. Constitution.   | <b>15 Parental Rights Amendment</b>                    | [Not answered]   |
| [not answered]  | <b>16 Governing documents</b>                          | In this position, upholding the Constitution means making the decisions necessary to enable all children to receive a quality education, helping ensure our country lives up to the ideals established in the preamble of the U.S. Constitution.   |
| [not answered]  | <b>17 Constituents' concerns</b>                       | As one of my goals is to increase the openness and transparency of the board, I will work to increase communication with all residents of Omaha, not just those in my subdistrict. I will move to have all meetings after normal working hours to enable more people to attend school board meetings. I will work with my fellow board members to increase our channels of communication, including social media. In my subdistrict, I will hold regularly scheduled meetings where constituents can bring their concerns regarding school issues. |
| [not answered]  | <b>18 Family</b>                                       | My family is supportive of my decision to run for the Omaha Public Schools Board of Education.   |
| [not answered]  | <b>19 Personal/Political</b>                           | [Not answered]   |
| [not answered]  | <b>20 Political decisions</b>                          | [Not answered]   |
| [not answered]  | <b>21 Abortion/capital punishment</b>                  | I believe in the seamless garment of life.   |
| [not answered]  | <b>22 Past President</b>                               | [not answered]   |
| Our graduates are prepared for the working world. However there are many opportunities OPS could expand upon. These opportunities could be an expansion of additional career academies, more vocational programs and an increase in the number of Dual enrollment programs. The State of Nebraska could look to programs in the surrounding areas and the different pathways those students have in earning college credit. I know OPS could become a leader in this endeavor, since we already have a great magnet program, which would dovetail nicely with any college program. Community Activities: Established an Internet safety program to teach adults how to protect children from online predators at Metro community college, Served on the Iowa Academy of Science Social Issues Committee 1982-1993, Served on the Judicial Nominating Commission for Sarpy County Juvenile Court, President of the Iowa Committee of Correspondence 1988-1993, when it merged with the National Center for Science Education, Steering Committee Member for two science symposiums held in Iowa, Project director for two Science Symposiums held in Nebraska, Excellence in Teaching Award for Biology from the Iowa Academy of Science, Phi Delta Kappa (PDK), Member of three Earthwatch research studies, Bellevue Police Community Foundation, Life Member of AmVets, Member of the Nature Conservancy, Operation Lifesaver-Nebraska, Member of the tree advisory board for Metro community college | <b>23 Anything else?</b>                               | [not answered]   |
| married, Spouse: Carol, High School: Clinton High School - Clinton, IA, College: U of Northern Iowa; UNO, Degrees: BS; Masters, Professional Associations: Iowa Academy of Sci, National Sci Teachers Assoc, National Center for Sci Ed, NSEA, NEA, ISEA  | <b>Extra biographical</b>                              | single, High School: Omaha Bryan High, College: University of Nebraska - Lincoln; University of Nebraska - Omaha, Degrees: BS - Biology (UNL); MBA (UNO), Church: Holy Ghost Catholic, Civic Groups: South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance (SONA), Applied Underwriters,   |

See next page for details of actual questions asked.

## OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD Questions

| Question Key  | Actual Questions asked. “*d” questions offered as minimums to answer   |
|---|--|
| <b>Date Filed</b>   | The date the candidate officially filed with the County election office.   |
| <b>Contact Info</b>   | Contact Information - ranging from the details of when we inputted the candidate's responses, to attempts to establish contact, to if we still need a volunteer caller, to if the candidate is unopposed and therefore not on the list to contact.   |
| <b>01 Biographical</b>  | *Please include biographical information, e.g. family members, church affiliation, employment, etc., you consider important for voters to know and/or reference your website.  |
| <b>02 Motivation</b>  | *What has motivated you to seek this office? Is there a key issue you hope to address?   |
| <b>03 Qualifications</b>  | *What three primary qualifications do you bring to this office?  |
| <b>04 Sustainable Development</b>   | * Discuss how the sustainable development presented in the UN Agenda 21 comprehensive plan can be a benefit or detriment to the citizens. What do you believe should be the government's role in establishing green policy?  |
| <b>05 Superintendent and School Board</b>   | How do you view the check and balance relationships between the superintendent and the school board? How do you picture representing the interests of the constituents if they differ with the superintendent's?   |
| <b>06 Nationalized Standards</b>  | *Some are pushing for nationalized learning standards (federal curriculum) and assessment systems. Do you agree or disagree with that idea? Why?   |
| <b>07 State Standards</b>   | Discuss the various curriculum standards that the State Board of Education has been working on. What is your thinking concerning the “teaching to the test” approach?  |
| <b>08 Abstinence, Contraceptives</b>  | Should schools teach abstinence-only sex education? Why or why not? Should schools teach about contraceptive use?  |
| <b>09 Scientifically Criticize Evolutionary Theory</b>  | *Should teachers be required to include scientific criticisms of evolutionary theory in their science curriculum? Why or why not?  |
| <b>10 Global Warming</b>  | Should curriculum include debate as to whether global warming exists, is man-caused, or part of the cycles of nature?  |
| <b>11 Religious Freedom</b>   | Should Muslim students have freedom to pray at specified times? Should Christian students have freedom to pray in public? Should those without a specific religion be free to cancel other religious practices?  |
| <b>12 Lifestyles</b>  | *Should schools promote all lifestyles, beliefs and values to be equal?  |
| <b>13 Education Support</b>   | What support (e.g. vouchers, tax credit) should alternative schools (whether charter, home school, private school) have from taxes collected for education?  |
| <b>14 Education Business Connection</b>   | Do you, a family member, or your employer have any business relationships serving education? Please describe.  |
| <b>15 Parental Rights Amendment</b>   | *Do you oppose or support a Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution? Why? (See <a href="http://www.parentalrights.org">www.parentalrights.org</a> for proposed language.)   |
| <b>(These last questions we ask regardless of what office is being sought. You may not think these relate to your office, but how you respond to these controversial questions might help the voter know how you would respond to other controversies in office.)</b> |  |
| <b>16 Governing documents</b>   | What do you see as the major governing documents for this position? Have you read them? What does it mean to “uphold the Constitution” in the position you seek?   |
| <b>17 Constituents' concerns</b>  | *What plans do you have for remaining aware of your constituents' concerns and desires?  |
| <b>18 Family</b>  | What role has your family played in your seeking this office? In holding this position, how do you foresee it affecting your family?   |
| <b>19 Personal/Political</b>  | To what degree should an office holder's personal principles be reflected in political decision making? To whom/what will you go for counsel in decision making?   |
| <b>20 Political decisions</b>   | Is it appropriate to use the Bible or other religious writings in making political decisions? If so, what would you use? If not, why not?  |
| <b>21 Abortion/capital punishment</b>   | *What definition do you give for each of these terms: pro-life, pro-choice. Which is your view and to what level of conviction do you hold that view? Some say capital punishment is a pro-life issue. What is your perspective?   |
| <b>22 Past President</b>  | *What key considerations did you use in deciding how you voted for President in 2012?  |
| <b>23 Anything else?</b>  | Declare anything else you want voters to know about you.   |
| <b>Extra biographical</b>   | Biographical information from what candidates provided the Douglas County Election office and/or other web resources. Candidates are asked to email <a href="mailto:kathy@voterinformation.org">kathy@voterinformation.org</a> if any information is inaccurate. When known, candidate's website is noted. |