

MEETING: BOE Special Meeting 7/20/2021 6:30 PM

Comments are listed in the order submitted via the electronic form.

Name: Khemarey Khoeun

Dear District 219 Board Members,

I am writing to you as a Skokie resident, the parent of two young children who will be attending Niles West, and with nieces and nephews currently attending Niles North. I am invested in the D219 student community.

We as a community have experienced collective trauma over the past year, with the pandemic and social unrest that woke many people up to the injustices that marginalized communities face on a daily basis. Much of the dialogue about equity and justice has been centered within D219. I thank the Board, the Superintendent and the many parents and community members who have led the effort to engage in difficult conversations to reimagine what's possible for our students as they are attending high school. The community process should be respected.

However, there has also been much noise and tension as issues have come to the forefront on the leadership level. This trickles down to our students and they are as much impacted. We need a path forward together as a community - in a way that demonstrates the complexity of the issues and the different needs of our students.

I hope that as you consider the appointment of a new Board member to fill the vacancy left by James Specker, that you will select someone who brings in a perspective centered around our students' needs and not politicized on any particular agenda.

This is a unique opportunity to have representation that reflects the diversity of the district - from a geographic, racial, religious, and educational or professional background. Also think about whether the individual is a parent with children currently attending D219. This should not be a requirement, but should be considered in terms of current board makeup and representation on the Board.

Given the diversity of our community, we need board members who understand and respect community process and community input. Board members should be voting with the interest of the student community at large in mind, not any particularly interest group. There has to be a balance so that our most vulnerable students are protected and heard, not invalidated. This may appear to be contradicting goals, but this is why open, respectful dialogue is critical in identifying innovative solutions.

I hope that the board will keep these goals in mind as you interview candidates to fill the vacancy. We need an effective governing board that can work together despite differences - for the betterment of our students' education and wellbeing.

Sincerely,
Khemarey Khoeun