

Mary Lee Talbot



Chautauqua Lake CSD School Board Candidate

Why are you running for the school board? If elected, what will be your top five priorities and why?

I have been involved with the Chautauqua Lake School Board for 10 years, first as a member of the public and then as a board member for six years. I am running again because I love this district and its mission to educate our children. My priorities:

To see that Our New Visions program grows so, with our efforts in STEM education like Project Lead the Way and a classic academic program, all children are developing life-long skills.

To continue to look ahead and see what kinds of job skills and life skills our children will need and be sure that we are educating our children for a future that we only see dimly at present.

To advocate for regionalism so the school districts in Chautauqua County work together, with financial incentives from the state, to provide the best education for all children in the county.

To maintain a strong administrative staff to take board policy and put it into action to maintain the education and sports programs for all children.

To balance the needs of the children with the interests of taxpayers so that our school is properly funded without undue stress for the community.

Chautauqua Lake strives to be a “destination district” for families and students who are looking for a place to reside. What do you know about Chautauqua Lake that makes it a great school district?

Chautauqua Lake is a great school district because the board and administration look for opportunities for students to have the greatest choice of classes and experiences. Project Lead the Way, Chinese classes via internet, working with other school districts to have sports teams for all who want to participate, classes at Jamestown Community College, and the school music program are all opportunities that contribute to the district’s work to be a “destination district.”

As a prospective school board member, what are your views of regionalizing education in Chautauqua County?

I first got involved with the district because of its work for a regional high school. I am involved with the Chautauqua County School Board Association to be our own advocates for state aid to support tuition agreements and other regional solutions to provide all children in the county with the best possible education.

What particular experiences or skills qualify you to serve as a school board member?

I have had a passion for public education and its necessity for a strong democracy since I was in high school. I served on the school board for six years and as an active member of the public at board meetings. I serve on the County School Board Association, planning continuing education events for school board members and interaction with our state and county legislative officials. I helped steer the Board committee that chose the new superintendent. I served on the School Opening Task Force on the health committee and am serving on the Cafeteria design committee for the current building project

In what school / district activities have you been involved?

In addition to serving on the Board of Education, I am actively involved in the Young Playwright project, helping 3rd and 4th graders to write plays, then part of the play readers group who first perform them for the students. I also support the school musicals.

In what community activities have you been involved?

I am a member of the AAUW in Jamestown. I have acted at the Lucille Ball Little Theater and am an active member of the Pratt Fall Players in Chautauqua. I belong to a book club that has been meeting via Zoom. I am the temporary pastor of the Westfield Presbyterian Church and active with the ministerial association. I am also the pastor of the Wright Memorial Church in Irving. Before Covid, I participated in the Purity and Temperance Bowling League.

Are you the parent of children in the CLCS school district?

I am running for school board because I believe that public education is a hall mark of a strong democracy and that our schools deserve the care and support of all people, not just parents.