

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.

Michael Ludwig



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?

1. Continue to press for low cost, high quality and meaningful education that is applicable to today.
2. Explore new and novel ways to deliver education to bring out the very best from every child.
3. Build upon CLCS being a positive influence in our community while holding true to our number one district goal “that all students and staff will contribute to a supportive and positive environment that promotes integrity, tolerance and respect for self and others”.
4. To never go above the tax cap and hold any tax increases to the absolute minimum to deliver premium education.
5. Make CLCS the example for Chautauqua County. Whether that is in sports or in the classroom, I want this to be the place that every parent dreams of sending their child. I am proud of what has been accomplished during my term as a school board member, but we need to continue to push the district’s overall instructional program in areas of academic, school-to-work, STEM and other vocationally oriented programs.

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?

At the time of writing this, we are the only district to offer 100% Pre-K – 12th Monday through Friday in school learning for the entire school year WITHOUT interruption while at the same time providing a robust remote option for students and families. This was done through extensive collaboration and an “all hands-on deck” attitude of all our staff including teachers, clerical staff, custodians, building and grounds team, bus drivers and our substitute teachers.

Chautauqua Lake is the only school district in the county with a New Visions Program that is available for any student in the region (Chautauqua, portions of Cattaraugus and Southern Erie County). New Visions, is an academically rigorous STEM/Career and Technical Education program, designed for students interested in pursuing engineering or a related field in college. Students enroll in four college credit-bearing classes which operates in our high school and is integrated with our Project Lead The Way curriculum. Students who complete the program can earn college credits from the Rochester Institute of Technology and from Jamestown Community College. In addition to this, Chautauqua Lake presently offers over 10 courses that are college credit-bearing, 2 AP courses, 3 honors courses and 35+ electives.

As technology advances so does our approach to education. I am incredibly happy to be on the Budget Task Force that helped steer funding so that every student K-12 is provided their own Chromebook computer. This drive to stay current in technology extends into our manufacturing program as well. Our manufacturing program utilizes a variety of real-world equipment such a HAAS CNC Mill and CNC Lathe. Students who are part of our manufacturing program leave high school with the skill set needed to find good jobs in the manufacturing field.

I understand that there is more to school than just academics, that is why I have voted in favor of CLCS continuing to offer a variety of co-curricular opportunities and athletic teams. The district offers 15 varsity level athletic options and 14 co-curricular clubs and activities.

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

Any individual who knows me understands that I have been and always will be a huge advocate for regionalism. It is because of this belief, I voted repeatedly for the CLCS tuition agreement with Ripley. This regional approach has brought about more educational opportunities, kept tax warrants at or below the tax cap as well as attracted new and highly qualified teachers. With our communities continued dwindling census, the only way to continue to provide this high level of educational opportunity is to work with our surrounding districts. I believe that CLCS is and will remain at the forefront of this movement.

What particular experiences or skills qualify you to serve as a school board member? In what school / district activities have you been involved? In what community activities have you been involved?

As a Physician Assistant I have learned that a one-size-fits-all approach to health care is not always productive, nor should this be the same for raising and educating our children. As a father, grandfather, preceptor of numerous Physician Assistants/Nurse Practitioners, medical students, and a Sunday School teacher, I understand that each child is different and learns differently. Along with volunteering at school and being blessed to serve on the school board for nearly 12 years, I have come to understand that our skilled teachers need to be allowed to teach children to the standards set forth while allowing them to tailor this education to the individual needs and abilities of our children.

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

Charity, now 24 years old started CLCS in 1st grade, Amber age 25 years old started in 2nd grade. Isaac is now in 7th grade and Eliana is currently in 5th.

Amy Webb



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 am currently serving on the Chautauqua Lake Board of Education and in the capacity of President of the Board. I have served on the Board of Education for the past six years and have been President for the last two years. I am interested in continuing to serve on the school board, as I enjoy serving our school and community and feel it is important to serve in the area of Education as I have 20 years of experience in the field of education. If re-elected to the Board, I plan to further my learning in order to better Chautauqua Lake Central School and its partnerships with area districts. I would be disappointed if I were not engaged in the evolution of our school after having the past six years of experiences.

My contributions / priorities would be for our district to continue to be fiscally responsible with the budget, plan and engage in progressive differentiated programming as well as increasing the fortitude of our building and grounds as we responsibly move forward with our Capital project. As a district, we continue to evaluate our educational experiences (settings, environments, technology, safety, etc.) and opportunities for post-graduation readiness. We strive to be at the forefront of educational practices with opportunities in career readiness, differentiated instruction for all students, increased STEM coursework and social emotional supports for all of our students. Over the past year, we have experienced many new obstacles because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has given us the opportunity to critically evaluate and change some of our practices in order to best prepare and support our students in new ways.

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?

In order to be a destination district, we need to have many successful components. Ongoing discussions involve ensuring a solid understanding of the academic curriculum that is taught with fidelity by highly effective faculty and staff (data driven instructional practices, differentiated instruction for all students, diverse classes offered, etc.) in combination with supportive social emotional engagement (counselors, supports, curriculum, community partnerships, etc.) for all of our students. Students need to have multiple points of engagement within their school and community - having access to competitive extra-curricular activities (sports, clubs, musicals, chorus, band, etc.). We need to offer strong college and career readiness programs that prepare and invite our young graduates to stay local or return to raise their children in their childhood community.

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

As the student enrollment in our area continues to decline, I think that nurturing and maintaining our current relationship with Ripley Central School is imperative. We will continue to share services in order to offer diverse programs and opportunities for our students

(sports, distance learning, STEM, STEAM, Manufacturing, foreign languages, college credit classes, etc.). We are or have previously engaged in shared services with Ripley, Westfield, Brocton, Sherman, Panama and Maple Grove in order to meet the needs of our students within Chautauqua County. Without our shared services and collaborative efforts, we would not have been able to provide such opportunities to our children. These partnerships have many benefits, as it allows the districts to work collaboratively in sharing expenditures, allows our students to network with other students within our county and promotes leadership amongst young individuals within our county. Chautauqua Lake CSD is not waiting to create opportunities; we are engaged in such opportunities now!

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

Over the past six years, I have served as a Chautauqua Lake Board of Education member. I have had the opportunity to be the President of the Board for the past two years. I feel that my current position as a CSE Chairperson and Section 504 coordinator for Westfield Academy and Central School affords me the opportunity to have an inside understanding of what takes place within a school district. My current position allows me to have an understanding of Special Education rules, regulations and the financial aspects of the Special Education budget. I feel that as an educator, I am able to share my inside knowledge of the inner workings of a school district with my fellow board members. I consider myself a lifelong learner and I encourage others to embrace that same philosophy.

In what school / district activities have you been involved?

As a Board of Education member, I serve on the Negotiations, safety and the Legislative Committees. As a family, we participate in district wide fundraisers, athletic events and community events. We engage in regional sports within our county. We always enjoy attending district-wide liberal arts performances.

In what community activities have you been involved?

Within our community, I continue to participate in Chautauqua Institution's Young Playwright's Project annually, as well as assisting with the Winter Festival in Mayville. My husband and I are proud owners of a 78-year-old family business that is able to give back to our community and promotes community revitalization. We continue to serve our community as supporters of youth athletics, Village of Mayville Volunteer Fire Department, Village of Mayville Community Library and other organizations through our Not-for Profit, Chautauqua Region Music Alliance (which hosts the Chautauqua Grand Fondo annually). In addition, our family attends Holy Apostles Parish in Jamestown, NY.

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

Ben and I are the proud parents of two little Thunderbirds, Teagan and Cord Webb. Both of our children currently attend CLCS Elementary School. Teagan is 9 years old and is in the third grade, and Cord is 8 years old and is in the second grade.