

Voter Guide: Asad Aliweyd

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

I arrived to the United States in 1995; though I spoke limited English, I excited about my future in this country and will filled hope and many aspirations. Within a couple of years, I enrolled at Normandale Community College and started ELL classes while also working fulltime. I had a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics teaching (5-12 grade), and a Master of Business Administration (MBA). Currently, I am pursuing my Doctorate of Public Administration (DPA). I was a both CMS and Eden Prairie High School mathematics teacher, I was one of the 15 key district' strategic planning team. I an executive director of New American Academy, serve Hennepin County Human Resource Board as well as Twin cities Community Land Bank Board; I do understand very well how the responsibilities and work for the board. Finally I am a father of seven children, and I have been living in this city for about 17 years and improving our public education system is my interest because acquiring best possible education for our children is an advantage to all of us.

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

As a former teacher, parent, and strategic planning team member, I believe that there are innumerable needs for students.

First, large numbers of our students are falling behind in terms of their grade level requirements, so achievement gap is a huge problem to our district.

Second, many students that I saw, observe and work with have a limited personal and team work skills as they graduate from high school. We need to prepare our children to enter workforce environment by developing a well thought curriculum that enable them to be ready to interact, work and socialize with others.

Solutions: Create a task force for “achievement gap and talent building” consist district staff, board members, parents, faith based and other local nonprofits to strategize the best ways that we can overcome these issues.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

Graduation Requirement: I would propose that the high school ought to focus the core graduation choices for students to make sure that they are all meeting the state and district's requirements to graduate and receive their diplomas.

STEM program is not popular to many families in our district, so I would propose a way to make it more communal. For instance, competitions amongst students to develop innovative designs is one thing, and I would like to see and giving awards to those who came up with the best state-of-the-art ideas and designs.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

As Master of Business Administration trained as well as my capacity of serving both government other regional development organizations boards, I will be able to clearly understand the schools' budget priorities and make recommendations to make sure that we save money.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

Authentic community engagement: My plan is to organize, enlist and train Eden Prairie adults to help children to read and write at Kindergarten to first grade. We have a reservoir of ready adults who want to volunteer and give back their talents to the community. I would like to also encourage parents to reach one another to contribute and share their ideas with the school leadership. When you engage the community, people feel trusted and feel comfortable to work with the organization "School district? Positively.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes, I would be pleased to be part of the Fair and looking forward to answer voters' questions to the best of my knowledge.

Voter Guide: Mushid Barud

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

I am a father of six children and have been an Eden Prairie resident for almost 15 years. I am also a former school board candidate and have been involved with civic and business leaders for a long time in efforts to improve the quality of our education system. The City of Eden Prairie is great place to raise a family and I want to be able to give something back to the community. A good and noble way of doing that is serving on the school board.

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

My vision is to help propel Eden Prairie Schools to greater heights and contribute towards the realization of 100% graduation rate which may be a dream but a real possibility not beyond our capacity. My driving conviction is that, with a set of deliberate, tailor-made projects and policies, our schools can be turned into a beacon of success and a hope for our entire state. I also believe there is a need to institute deliberate policies and procedures to bridge the academic gaps among students. This can be achieved with the help of more parental involvement in the children's education. There also need to be more projects designed to assess students and, at an early stage, identify those that are lagging behind so they can benefit from customized programs to supplement them so they are no left behind.

Bridging the achievement gap will have direct long term benefits for our schools.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

Improving the content of classroom hours should be a priority, our schools instruction hours, especially in elementary education, need to be more content-based, with special focus on math, science and technology subjects. Again, I am convinced this will be immensely helpful in developing the students' academic performance. This will obviously result in a welcome increment of class time for students and help them improve the academic aspect of their education, and in the long run help boost college preparedness among students.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

I would like to see first where tax payer dollars are spent, and if there are any duplicate programs that can be combined. There are always ways to save money in any organization of this size.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

I will be able to engage with parents, community members, business community, teachers and other stakeholders to make sure we all work towards the goal of a better schools.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes.

Voter Guide: Dave Espe

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

I am a current member of the Eden Prairie School Board, and I am enthusiastic about running for a second 4-year term. As the only incumbent on the ballot, I bring a wealth of knowledge about what the School Board is required to do, and how the School Board is to function. I have completed two years as the Vice-Chair of the School Board as well as serving on various committees including the Negotiations Committee. If re-elected, I will have the second longest tenure on the School Board (a mere four years).

I am married and have five children, the oldest four are graduates of Eden Prairie High School and my youngest is a junior. I have lived in Eden Prairie for over 16 years. I have coached youth sports for over 20 seasons (baseball, basketball, football and soccer). I am a member of the Praise Band (Servant Song) at Immanuel Lutheran Church, playing guitar and singing. I am a passionate believer in strong public schools, and we celebrate that our Eden Prairie schools are some of the finest in the state, and the nation.

I am also the point person for building the Miracle Field in Eden Prairie, which will give all children, regardless of any physical or cerebral issue, the opportunity to join a team and play baseball. We anticipate starting play in the spring of 2016.

When I was elected to the School Board in 2011, our district was in a very different place than we are today. The district was not functioning well at that time, and in the past four years we have hired a new Superintendent, approved the hiring of many new Principals and Assistant Principals, approved the hiring of virtually an entire new senior staff (reporting to the Superintendent); replaced our governance structure with a new process called Policy Governance to better assign clear roles and responsibilities between the School Board and the Superintendent; and began to bring a focus back to student growth and proficiency. We have renewed our referendums to place the district in strong financial shape. The district has never been in better shape than it is today; we are not yet perfect, but we are improving daily and we have a clear direction as to where we are headed (through the development of a Strategic Plan).

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

One of the most significant issues facing our district (and our country) is the widening gap between the “haves” and the “have nots” (the “wealth” issue). When the School Board was

considering the 1-1 technology plan three years ago (which was to put a computer device in each student's hands), the primary reason I gave my support was that this was a "game changer" – enabling each student to have a computer for their school work as well as research, self learning, etc. No longer was the computer a "differentiator" – now it placed all students on a fairly level playing field.

As a public school district, I welcome any child (regardless of background) to come to our district who truly wants to learn, work hard, and earn a great education. There is nothing more important than educating each and every child.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

Under Policy Governance, virtually all programs and curriculum content fall under the responsibility and decision making of the Superintendent, not the School Board. We monitor the Superintendent's work through our board policies annually, and the board will make a determination if the Superintendent is making reasonable progress. These reports are found on the Eden Prairie School District website. As you peruse the reports, you will find that this is by no means a "rubber stamp" process, and you will notice that we have found work as not making reasonable progress.

One particular area where the Board has taken an active role is that we anticipate that EACH student will be proficient and show a minimum of one year's growth in all of our core subjects (reading, math and science). This becomes the "proof" that our students are indeed learning at the proper pace.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

I want to thank once again the community members approved the referendums over the past two years. These have enabled us to retain a solid financial footing to support our students. Prior to the operational referendum approved in 2014, the district had been on a significant spending reduction plan of approximately \$17 million dollars over the previous 3-4 years. Those cuts helped to streamline our district, and we intend to stay financially responsible. With about 90% of our operations budget committed to employees (salary and benefits), the reality is that any reductions could lead to negative impacts to our district (such as increased classroom sizes). We have directed our superintendent to find a minimum of \$500,000 in cost reductions each year and we plan to continue doing so. As a board member, I will continue to keep a strong focus on our spending, and that we continue to look at the benefits, and risks, as we look at future cost reductions.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

The current School Board has taken a very proactive approach to improving in this area. We schedule community sessions throughout the year to listen to our parents and tax payers. All of our meetings are “open”, meaning that anyone can attend. At every School Board meeting, we make time available for our citizens to come and speak to the board. We publish our phone numbers and email addresses so that anyone can communicate with us at any time. All board meeting materials (agendas, minutes, audio/video) are made available through the district web site – www.edenpr.org.

The district is also always looking for volunteers to come into our schools to help with different programs. You can contact the district administration office as well as any school to find out what opportunities for volunteerism are available.

We want to hear from you, so don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes, I will attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library

Voter Guide: John Kohner

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

- Currently retired. Healthcare Executive with 30 years of progressive healthcare management in multiple venues - Provider, Physician Practice Management, Managed Care, Eldercare, Pharmacy Benefit Management (PBM), Specialty Pharmacy and Integrated Healthcare Delivery Systems.
- I am involve in a variety of Community organizations:

>Rotary International - Eden Prairie Noon Rotary Eden Prairie, MN

Current Actives include:

Chair, Grants Committee

Ethic Day Program Leader. Active participant in program development.

STRIVE (Students Taking Renewed Interest in the Value of Education) - Mentor

Participant in My Book Day where every first grader in Eden Prairie receives a new book with their name on the first page.

Past Leadership Roles:

Rib Fest Chair, Largest Fund Raiser for Club

Co-leader of Intern program.

>Let's Go Fishing Eden Prairie - Captain- take elderly, veterans and children fishing on Lake Riley.

>St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Eden Prairie, MN

Member since 2008

Seed of Support - Mission Haiti, Have traveled to Haiti 6 times since the January 12, 2010 earthquake. Led Healthcare clinic, participate in the construction of sustainable buildings, water well, furniture while focused on improving the lives of Haitian children.

Band of Brothers - Member, Men's group that has provided services in areas after a natural disasters, helping elderly Eden Prairie residents and construction for children/youth ministries.

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

- The demographics of the community is changing. The district needs to continue to evaluate current operations and curriculums to assure students needs are being addressed, within the parameters of the newly approved referendum.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

- I do not have any specific changes to propose. The current board and leadership have built a foundation within Eden Prairie Schools that has demonstrated success. I will evaluate programs for highly gifted students and students who have a harder time being successful.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

- Be vigilant in a systematic review of past spending patterns and challenge current vendor agreements.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

- Attend community events and local organizations meetings to hear what students, parents, teachers, school employees and other thought leaders are feeling about the school district. Listening to Eden Prairie residents will be an important part of being a school board member.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes I will be there

Voter Guide: Greg Lehman

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

As an Eden Prairie resident and a proud father of an EPHS sophomore, I have a vested interest in the academic success of the community's children. Throughout my son's academic career in the Eden Prairie school system, I have volunteered at Oak Ridge, Central Middle school, Cedar Point and EPHS.

I have been involved with academics in some fashion throughout most of my life. I have a BA and an MBA, as well as the IT certifications: CNA, CNE, A+ and Network +. I have taken foreign language classes at MCTC and project management classes at St. Mary's University. I regularly help overseas students with English using online communication tools.

One of the reasons I want to work with the school board, is my belief in giving back to one's local and international communities. I have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity's 'A Brush With Kindness' program, Feed My Starving Children, United Way's 'Project for Pride in Living', Mary's Place, Hennepin Village association and Grace church's Big Serve.

At Knollwood Christian church in St. Louis Park, I am a trustee, mission committee member and occasionally speak before the congregation about communion or missions related matters.

I believe that my background and community and academic involvement have given me the skills needed to be successful at tackling the issues facing the Eden Prairie school district.

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

Two of the growing trends in Eden Prairie School District student needs are related making changes that will address the achievement gap and the skills gap.

The achievement gap: As people from abroad have chosen to make the Twin City area their home, many have chosen to settle in Eden Prairie. This caused significant changes in Eden Prairie's demographics. The Eden Prairie school district's English Language Learner population is growing and the district serves students who speak more than 90 different languages other than English at home. Some No Child Left Behind test results seem to indicate an achievement gap between white student and minority students and those who come from a household where a foreign language is spoken. The school district should carefully consider the best educational practices and put them into effect and raise the expectations of what students can achieve.

The skills gap: Studies have shown an increasing skills gap between the skills that high school graduates have, and those that universities and corporations need are looking for. The Association of American Colleges and Universities found that employers are concerned about prospective employees having a range of skills including written and oral communications, critical thinking, creativity and team work. The memorization of facts and figures is no longer sufficient in today's increasingly global society.

To address this, the Eden Prairie School District should ensure that students complete a curriculum that is sufficiently rigorous and relevant to the challenges they will face in their post-secondary education and employment opportunities. The district should implement a curriculum that taps into a student's creativity and individuality while also ensuring they have the necessary skills in the sciences and mathematics to compete.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

I would like the school board to carefully evaluate the current curricula and educational processes the goal is not merely to meet the state and national baselines, but exceeds them.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

The school district will need to find middle ground between the competing interests while focusing on implementing the best educational processes, standards and technologies.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

I will encourage parents get involved in volunteer opportunities through the offering of free classes to make parents aware of how they can help. I will encourage area companies to partner with the school district to offer input of what skills they are looking for.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes.

Voter Guide: Adam Seidel

1. Describe your background, experience and public school involvement that qualify you for the Eden Prairie School Board.

I have been an Eden Prairie resident, homeowner, and Eden Prairie Schools student since I was five years old - from kindergarten through 2006 EPHS graduation. I know the standard of education we expect. I've worked with countless teachers, parents, businesses, and students in our schools, and knows both the challenges and advantages in Eden Prairie Schools. I know what it takes to make a difference in our schools: in high school, I founded the EPHS singing valentines program, which continues to this day and raises thousands of dollars annually for the choir scholarship program.

2. What are the growing trends in student needs, and how should the Eden Prairie School District address them?

The achievement gap is a widely discussed issue, both locally and nationally, and for good reason. Eden Prairie is in a unique position to address this issue with cooperation from the local business community. As recent cooperation between Hennepin Tech, the Eden Prairie Chamber of Commerce, and EP Schools proves, our local business community is eager to help our schools provide a competitive, 21st century education. Expanding our efforts to increase awareness and encourage pursuit of technical skills fields has the potential to not only benefit a wide variety of learners, but also address our achievement gap directly. I am very excited to be a member of the EP Chamber and have the opportunity to lead the efforts to bring the resources and energy of our local businesses to bear for the betterment of Eden Prairie kids.

3. Discuss any specific changes you would like to make in school district policies, programs or curricula.

I was very fortunate growing up in Eden Prairie in an exemplary school district that provided a superb education. Eden Prairie Schools are already a special place to grow up, so we don't need radical or shocking changes to continue our standards of excellence. What we need to do is fight to maintain the special qualities that have helped make Eden Prairie special. That's why I'm working hard to engage our excellent teachers and staff to take advantage of all their ideas brought by the experience of working with our kids. I will continue and enrich our cooperation with our vibrant and generous local business community. I will make sure parents know their thoughts and concerns are listened to and easy to express. And I will insist we continue to improve transparency so decisions that impact our schools are understood.

I would like to continue and strengthen existing efforts to ensure learning across the elementary schools is compatible. While it is definitely important to empower the teachers and

workers in each individual school to address the strengths and challenges unique to each building, it is also crucial that fundamental concepts and materials are universal enough that no time wasting gaps between students exist entering CMS. A persistent effort to communicate across the district can accomplish this goal without damaging the flexibility and creativity of the great teachers in each building. This will guarantee our elementary learners receive the individualized education they need, but also are ready to go on day one in middle schools.

4. What recommendations do you have for the school district to save money?

The passage of the referendum levy was a major opportunity for our schools, but also a major responsibility for our school board. Our focus needs to be guaranteeing the promises made to the voters as to how that money is spent will be fulfilled, and the new funds will not be diverted to different priorities.

5. How will you engage the community to improve Eden Prairie public schools?

I'm making a commitment to maintain every line of communication for my entire term on the board. I will maintain my website, continue to provide my contact information publicly, and never stop searching for new avenues to provide information. School Board meetings are held publicly, but sometimes people have a hard time finding information on the issues they're interested in. I'll work to make sure everybody knows when major votes and discussions are taking place so input is welcomed and transparency is maintained.

6. Will you attend the Eden Prairie School Board Candidate Fair at 6:00-7:30PM, Thursday, Oct. 1 at the Eden Prairie Library to meet the voters and respond to individual questions?

Yes, I'm excited about it!