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1. What do you see as the educational gaps or weaknesses in our district?
  - Mt Lebanon school district ranks among the best districts in the region and the state, but no matter how strong the district is, there are always areas of improvement. The majority of our children are served very well and we should continue to monitor the essential policies in place that enable our continued success. However, we need to make sure that children that may require special attention do not get overlooked. This includes highly gifted children, who require different challenges than others, and children who have special needs. The latter category includes any child with a condition that may make learning in a typical school environment unusually challenging, such as children on the autism spectrum or children with dyslexia. We cannot and should not allow any of our children to receive anything less than the best possible opportunity and learn and to succeed in our schools. We must always take care to ensure that we live up to our motto, "To Provide the Best Education Possible for Each and Every Student."
  
2. What do you see as the educational strengths in our district?
  - Mt Lebanon School District absolutely excels in providing a robust and broad-based curriculum that allows our children to be exposed to a wide variety of subjects and experience an expansive range of extracurricular activities. The general student population is provided with opportunities that are uncommon in other schools, from academic-oriented activities such as Odyssey of the Mind or the Model United Nations, to arts, music, and sports both common and uncommon, from football to lacrosse. The broad range of academic learning and extracurricular activities virtually guarantees that all students will be able to pursue activities of particular interest to that individual.
  
3. Do you see yourself primarily as a representative of the community or as a representative of the school system?
  - All citizens of Mt Lebanon are constituents of the school district and can vote for school directors, and as such school directors must acknowledge the needs and opinions of all residents. As such, it is of vital importance that we make ourselves available to the general community and listen attentively and respectfully to any concerns that any resident may bring up. However, we must also ensure that the school system is operating at as high a level as possible. The school district is an inseparable and indispensable component of our community, and we serve both the community and the school system by making sure both components can act collaboratively and respectfully.
  
4. Due to time and meeting constraints, all school boards are limited in what they can do. How should the board decide what is most important?
  - The School Board must prioritize actions and recommendations that will enable our teachers and staff to provide the quality of education deserved by our students. This means that the annual budget needs to be prepared and executed and the proper funding allocated to operate the schools and pay the faculty and staff. In conjunction with this, all

contracts with administrators, teachers, and other staff need to be fairly and transparently negotiated. After these core functions are fulfilled, a board can pursue other, less vital but still important actions, such as interagency cooperation, community outreach activities, and fundraising.

5. How will you engage the community to improve public schools in the district?

- Our school district will be most successful if the board, administration, faculty, and parents all communicate transparently and collaborate with genuine respect. Only then can we develop the trust necessary to navigate difficult questions where opinions may differ. To achieve this, the School Board must find ways to engage with the greater community to inform constituents of the issues faced by the board and actions taken but also to listen to concerns that cannot be easily expressed or presented at the scheduled School Board meetings. This could be accomplished through regularly-scheduled school visits or occasional forums hosted at varying times, dates and locations.

6. What in your background leads you to believe that you would be an effective school board member?

- As I am running as a part of a slate, I wish to express the qualifications we provide collectively. Each of us brings different valuable qualities to the board. These include extensive scientific education, which is very helpful in the very essential STEM fields, lifelong love for the arts and music, and extensive community outreach experience. One of us has been a lifelong Mt. Lebanon resident, one is from a nearby community, and one grew up in different state. Each of those origins can provide perspectives that, in conjunction with the other board members who also have a variety of life experiences, can make help ensure that the board makes decisions from a broad range of experiences. Each of us also bring a different perspective based upon the status of our children, as collectively we have children who have graduated, are currently in the schools, and will be attending school in the coming years. Diversity of life experiences can only strengthen the quality of decision-making of the board.

7. How should our district address underperforming schools?

- Our district is fortunate enough to not have to deal with the issue of truly underperforming schools. However, should a situation arise that a school is not performing as well as expected, the causes of the situation would need to be investigated by an impartial party. That investigator would be tasked with analyzing the situation, including interviews with the superintendent, principal, teachers, and other staff members, to understand the complexity of the situation that the school is in. Most importantly, the investigation and results will need to be as transparent as possible and conducted in a spirit of collaboration, encouraging the attitude of “we can do better” rather than looking to point fingers and impose punishment. We can only foster success if we create a supportive environment, both within schools and between schools, and we cannot do that if we investigate issues with a punitive mindset.

8. Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the school board?

- My desire to serve on the school board is mostly holistic in nature; I wish to perpetuate the district's history of excellence by offering a challenging and relevant curriculum while also providing a wealth of enrichment activities. However, issues that are of specific concern to me are the teaching of science and the promotion of diversity in all its forms. The modern world is highly technological in nature and it is imperative that the curriculum and tools we use will allow our students to be able to adapt to fast-changing conditions. Also, all sciences are methods of investigation into all sorts of subjects, and we need to encourage our students to be curious about the world and investigate its mysteries, but also give them tools to be able to solve problems and come to logical conclusions. In this way, they will have the tools necessary to navigate a complex world. It is also important that a love and appreciation of diversity be embedded in our schools' culture as this will also better prepare them for a highly complex and globalized world.

9. What is a school board member's role and responsibility? How does that role differ from the role of superintendent or administration?

- The roles of the school board and the superintendent and administration are clearly distinct from each other. Although a good working relationship will inevitably lead to a greater sense of goodwill, there also needs to be a healthy tension between the two roles in order to ensure that differing ideas are respected and considered. The school board sets the budgets, formulates the policies, and otherwise creates the framework that allows the administration to operate the schools successfully. It is up to the superintendent and his staff to implement the policies and manage the day-to-day activities. These activities cannot be done in a vacuum. It is imperative that a respectful dialogue be maintained at all times, as only then can policies and procedures be modified to reflect the experiences within the schools.

10. How can a school board best communicate with its constituent groups?

- The methods that exist now, including providing meeting times, agendas, and minutes on the web, and filming the meetings so that people who wish to but cannot attend may view the meetings on local cable are a good start. However, more can be done to make sure the public has access to all of the information they need to have a grasp of the school board's activities. For instance, the meetings should all be made available to be viewed and downloaded off of the web. Supplementary materials being discussed during meetings that have not been incorporated into the agenda should be made viewable on screens during the meeting and be made available as downloadable material on the web. Also, official reports and communications should be perpetually available on the web but also emailed or mailed to interested parties if so requested. On the whole, the board must ensure that all constituents feel that they can properly engage with their elected officials and the administration.

11. How would you determine your budget priorities?

- Core academics must be provided for before any other priority is considered. The schools must be adequately staffed, the teachers provided with the appropriate tools, and an appropriate level of support staff provided so that all children within the district can learn what is necessary to be fully productive citizens as adults. After that, the student enrichment activities, including arts, music, and sports, should be prioritized. The needs for a student to have the broadest number of extracurricular opportunities available needs to be balanced against the current financial status of the district and the discernable benefits provided. However, as many opportunities should be provided as conditions allow. Everything that does not directly contribute to the student experience academically or in extracurricular activities should be considered of tertiary importance.

12. What is your vision for education in this community?

- This is true in Mt Lebanon as much as it can be anywhere: our schools are our community. We cannot have a vibrant and engaging community without an excellent school district that will continue to attract new residents as well as retaining the residents living here now. We want to see a broad-based level of engagement between all members of the community, regardless of role, and create, as much as possible, a sense that we are all a vital part of the community and we all fail or succeed together. We want to come together as a community to enable our schools to be an excellent as any school can be and that we all feel a sense of ownership and cooperation. We cannot win by competing against or demeaning each other but only by being open and transparent that we are all striving to make our schools as good as possible.