

2023 School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Kristina Mazzone

Please complete this questionnaire and return via email to OBEAPresident@gmail.com by 6:00 PM on Sunday, August 13th.

1. Why are you seeking a position on the Board of Education?

I am seeking a position on the Board of Education because I believe that education plays such a vital role in all our lives, especially our children and, unfortunately, I am seeing politics starting to affect our system. I have been seeing more decisions being made that do not put the best interests of our children first. I believe we need more transparency within the entire Education department, on all levels. As the mental health crisis is rapidly rising across the nation, I feel we need more programs that focus on helping both children and adults in our schools and within our community. We need to focus on the budget to ensure all schools are receiving the amount needed to grow efficiently and effectively. We need to bring in new ways of thinking and advancing our education department. I believe being a candidate who is newer to the community, I can bring just that. I feel I would be a good fit for our Board because I am not afraid to make decisions that I feel are best. As a mom, my children come first and as a board member who will be inheriting 8000 plus children, that will not change. The quality of education we provide will ALWAYS come first in my decision making. I am not afraid to stand up for what is right, and fight against all wrongdoing being done. I am a mother who wants the best for all children because I believe every child should have every opportunity to be the best versions of themselves. I believe the students should have a right to express their concerns and suggest ideas as well.

2. What do you see as the top three education issues the Old Bridge Board of Education must address?

I believe the top three education issues that must be addressed are:

- A. The transparency within our district. Parents, students, and staff should have an idea of what is being discussed when it comes to the schools.
- B. The budget. We need to ensure that all our schools, both big and small, are receiving the correct amount of funding they need to help them thrive. At the end of the day, if our schools thrive, our community thrives.
- C. Mental health of students, parents, staff, and our community by implementing programs that offer resources and support. I would love to see

3. What is your philosophy on the collective bargaining process?

I totally agree with the philosophy of the collective bargaining process because I believe it is extremely important for our teachers to have a voice. Our teachers spend countless hours inside and outside of the school to ensure our students are receiving the best

possible education. Whether it is taking extra time explaining things to some students, or tutoring others after school, our teachers are the heart of the educational department and should always feel completely valued and secure in their jobs.

4. Explain your understanding of the role of educational support professionals in our school community. What is your position on subcontracting or privatization of these services?

I believe the role of educational support professionals is to help the school run smoothly and make sure our children are safe in many areas of the education department. I believe these employees are just as essential to the students as their teachers, principals, and other staff. I do NOT support the thought of subcontracting them because they should have the same security that all staff have. In some cases, the support professionals are the reason students who need more attention or help receive it. By subcontracting them, it will only hurt our schools and the students. Our children, especially the younger ones, need consistency. For many of the younger students, this is their first time away from their parents and/or home, so seeing familiar faces daily helps to ease this transition. They like knowing their lunch aides', bus drivers and crossing guards' name and as a parent, I like having that personal connection with them as well. By subcontracting them, it adds more risk for different people to be coming and going in and out of the school, not providing a constant routine for our children or teachers.

5. What else would you like the Old Bridge Education Association to know about you as you run for this very important office?

I am originally from Staten Island and moved to Old Bridge a little over 5 years ago. I have three children, two of which are in elementary school, and I work full-time as a medical coder. I come from a large, very opinionated, and honest Italian family which, I believe has taught me how to take criticism well, be honest, loyal and to always stay true to myself. If I say I will do something, I do it and I will not turn my back on it. I am not afraid to stand up for what I believe in. I fully believe that one of the most amazing things I can do as an adult is to be around all different types of people. And when I say this, I mean people who may or may not think exactly like me. People who I could talk to and learn from. I believe it is important to understand each other's viewpoints before making decisions, and that's what I believe we need on the Board. I think it is ok to not always agree with people, but it is critically important to always remain open-minded to other people's thoughts and feelings.

Kristina Mazzone
Candidate Name

8/8/2023
Date

Once again, thank you for completing this survey. Best wishes on the upcoming election.