

March 31, 2017

Announcement of 2017 Yinghua Academy School Board Candidates

The following NINE individuals will stand for election to the Yinghua Academy School Board this May, for terms running July 2017 through June 2020.

There are FOUR open seats on the School Board to be filled by this election. Official ballots will be sent to all eligible voters via the email on file in the office (or via U.S. mail if you have stated this communication preference) by April 24. Ballots will be accepted into the office by email from a Yinghua-recognized email address, U.S. mail or drop-off, or can be returned during the Annual Meeting of the School on May 1. All ballots received in the Yinghua Academy office by 6 p.m. on Monday, May 8 will be considered on time.

Voters will have the opportunity to meet and hear from the candidates at the Annual Meeting of the School on Monday, May 1, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. in the Yinghua Academy cafeteria. Please plan to attend, and please vote!

The Governance Committee of the School Board has identified a need for board members with experience in academic leadership, finance, risk management, fund raising or personnel. However, note that the primary qualification is that the individual is a willing, committed, and objective leader.

Overview of Candidates and Affiliations

Community Member:

- **Rosemary Lawrence** (*incumbent, seated 7/1/2014*): Former Principal, XinXing Academy, Hopkins Public Schools; Yinghua Academic Committee
- **Shaurntae Nichole Thomas**: Human Resources Manager, Minnesota Independent Living Services

Parent/Guardian (grade of student):

- **Nathan Bode (K)**: IT Application Manager, Cargill
- **Cindy Bursell (K)**: Vice President, U.S. Bank
- **Jason Cintorino (K and 2)**: Program Director, NuWay Counseling Services; Yinghua Academy Governance Committee
- **Brooke Darrah-Hage (K)**: Stay at home mom
- **Paul Haller (4)**: Emergency medicine physician at Regions Hospital in St. Paul; Yinghua Academy Governance Committee
- **Lisa Matre (5)** (*incumbent, seated 9/1/2015*): Operations and Team Lead, True Talent Group; Yinghua Academy School Board Chair
- **Jane Steiner (2 and 4)**: Achievement Coach, Anoka-Hennepin District 11

According to the bylaws of the School Board, in compliance with state statute, the YA Board follows the 1/1/1 governance model, where at least one member on the school board must be a licensed teacher working at the school, one member must be a parent/guardian of a currently enrolled student, and one member must be an outside community member who is neither employed by the school nor a parent/guardian of a child currently attending Yinghua Academy. In accord with bylaws, candidates on the ballot will be segregated by category of board membership and identified as a community member, teacher, or parent/guardian.

2017 Candidate Statements

(1) Community Member: ROSEMARY LAWRENCE

I have considered it an honor to serve on the Yinghua School Board for the past six years. Watching the student body grow, overseeing the remodel/construction of the building, celebrating the recognitions the school has received, and most importantly, seeing Yinghua students thrive as they grow from kindergarten to eighth grade is a great source of pride.

Since I first started the Chinese immersion program in Hopkins, I have felt that being part of such a program feels a bit like seeing into the future. As the students become bilingual and learn about China, it is easy to imagine the many contributions these boys and girls will make in our global community as they move forward in life. There is a special energy that feels contagious as Yinghua comes to life each morning as staff, families and students arrive. I believe that serving on the Board for Yinghua allows me to be a small part of creating the culture that is Yinghua.

As I consider the skills I can continue to bring to the Board, it is with humility that I reference serving as a professional educator for more than 45 years. My experiences range from the east coast to the Midwest and from small districts to county-wide systems. I have been a principal in a small program of 200 students and a larger school with more than 900 students. Having the opportunity to start a Chinese immersion program as well as working with the Confucius Institute, and serving on the Yinghua Board has allowed me to gain a wide view of the complexities of immersion. Since retiring as a full-time principal, I have been coaching principals, teaching graduate level classes in leadership, teaching and learning, and supervising teachers in Special Education and English Language Learning programs. These experiences have allowed me to stay up-to-date with current research based best practices for instruction and learning. My experiences with staff supervision, hiring, professional development, personnel, safety issues, curriculum and instruction have been able to inform the ideas and thoughts I bring to such topics at Board meetings.

Having MN licenses as a teacher at the elementary level, a Language Arts teacher at the Middle level, a reading teacher, a K-12 administrator and a District level superintendent, I believe I am able to offer perspectives on issues from a vantage point that is different from other members of the Board.

I have greatly enjoyed my time on the Yinghua Board and would welcome the opportunity to continue to serve as a community member for another term.

(2) Community Member: SHAURNTAE NICHOLE THOMAS

I am interested in serving on the board at Yinghua Academy because I believe in a diverse, multi-cultural, inclusive, and global society. Within that belief, there is a strong assumption that language, more specifically the mastering of a language outside of one's native tongue, somehow bridges the gap between/among cultures. It is that same belief of mine that has allowed me to continue my francophone journey through the Alliance Francaise of Minneapolis.

During my academic years, I was introduced to both Spanish and French, and fell in love with both languages and cultures. Now as an adult I participate regularly in meet up groups about all things French and all things Spanish. My husband, somehow came to me from Latin America via St. Paul of Minnesota, and for our honeymoon purchased tickets to Paris. I listen to BBC and read French political news. Even though my job as a HR Manager is a very local job, my worldview is global, and my perspective on life from work life balance to

international politics comes from me embracing cultures outside of my own. Thus, I am interested in becoming a member of the board at Yinghua Academy, to share in its mission in creating global citizens.

What I bring to Yinghua Academy is my passion for multi-culturalism, and a professional background rooted in human resources. I have recruited hard to fill positions for my employer and my contract clients, as well as managed and created HR auditing and financial risk management processes that has helped my employer better manage the company's personnel budget, health benefits budget, etc. I bring my experience in risk management and long experience in working through various government financial audits with the IRS (ex. pension/ 401k).

(3) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: NATHAN BODE

I am a father and Northeast Minneapolis resident interested in the long-term viability of Yinghua Academy. I have been excited about Yinghua since reading about the school in New York Times article in October 2014 and realizing this great school was located my local neighborhood. Our oldest child would be a kindergartener in the fall of 2016 and the school immediately went to the top of my wish list. A tour in January 2015 with my wife and a few friends who also had child the same age as ours confirmed my excitement about the school. The following winter our son was initially waitlisted after the enrollment lottery. After an agonizing few months wait our oldest was admitted for enrollment. Grant is now very much enjoying Ruan Laoshi's K-1 class this school year.

I am interested in serving on the board as I strongly believe in the school's mission. I strongly believe in school's rigorous academic approach and the Chinese language immersion. I want to defend those objectives while addressing the long-term growth and facility plans of the school. The school has had extraordinary success and with that comes a lot of tough choices. The school is facing capacity concerns as it continues to grow. I would take part in helping decide the long-term growth strategy of the school.

I live in the Audubon neighborhood with my wife, son and daughter. My wife and I have lived in our current house for 9 years and I have lived in northeast Minneapolis the past 17 years. I've been at Cargill for the past 10 years and currently work as an IT Applications Manager. I graduated twice from the University of Minnesota with my undergrad degrees in Finance and Accounting and later my M.B.A. I have been on the Eastside Meals on Wheels board as treasurer the past 4 years. I also serve on a fund raising and engagement committee for the Aeon organization. Both organizations are active in our local neighborhood and it is a pleasure to be part of them.

I believe I can use my previous work and board volunteer experience to the benefit of Yinghua Academy. In my daily work I manage big picture project requirements. This includes engaging stakeholders across the business for their views and input on the final product. At the same time I work on detailed sections of project work and advise teams in other areas. I have had budget responsibility for various teams during my career. My volunteer experience on boards has taught me to listen to other people's views and work together for the best possible out of the organization.

(4) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: CINDY BURSELL

I am Cindy Bursell and my daughter, Kaia Bursell, is a Kindergartener at Yinghua Academy. In addition, I have 3.5 year old twins (Mila and Liam) who will be joining Yinghua in the fall of 2018. I feel very blessed to be part of Yinghua community as I admire the school's mission and its diversity. As a bilingual speaker myself, I cannot wait to see my three children speaking Chinese to each other and be able to treasure their Chinese language skill for the rest of their lives.

I am originally from Indonesia and came to the United States in 1995 to attend college. I received my BA degree from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Master of International Management (MIM) from University of St. Thomas. For the past eight and a half years, I have been working at U.S. Bank Credit Risk Assessment division which is part of the Risk Management and Compliance umbrella. My primary responsibilities are to assess risks associated to each loan and ensure that each business line has effective process and procedures in place and maintain the compliance to bank's policy and other requirements. Our strong risk management program has helped the institution to stand strong and profitable despite of the challenges that many banks were facing during the economic downturn. Prior to joining U.S. Bank, I spent seven years working for a CPA firm as a Public Finance Manager.

My two biggest passions are education and young children, which is why the board member opportunity at Yinghua peaked my interest. I strongly believe that education can empower people and provide some basic skills that allow them to make this world a better place. I want to help an organization like Yinghua to be the best school for our children. My objective for Yinghua is to promote high quality of education while making sure that our children are properly guided and supported in so many ways to accomplish their goals. I do believe that my skills in leadership, risk management and compliance and finance would benefit Yinghua in many ways as I am committed to lead, share and promote ideas, and execute plans together with other members and staff.

If elected, this will be my first board experience. I am interested to learn from other members and collaborate with others to achieve common goals. I am interested in overcoming the challenges in how Yinghua raise money for the organization and how we can help or support the students who need help to study at Yinghua coupled with the inherent challenges as bilingual school.

(5) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: JASON CINTORINO

I am writing this bio expressing interest in serving on the Yinghua Academy school board after witnessing the incredible development of our children's education with their enrollment in Yinghua. With our daughter's course of education well under way in 2nd grade and her sibling's enrollment in kindergarten, I would like to have the opportunity to serve in a broader capacity to contribute to Yinghua and to our community. I have had the opportunity to become acquainted with Yinghua as a current member of the Governance Committee and as a participant in Strategic Planning action groups to help inform the future of Yinghua. I have a broad wealth of personal and professional experience that can help foster ongoing growth for the academy in regards to staff and students through strong strategic planning skills and expertise.

Prior to my current clinical position I functioned in a high level executive capacity in business both in the non-profit and private sectors. I understand budgetary barriers, navigating complex financial environments and strategic planning for future stability. Yinghua Academy will need ongoing fiscal strength and sustained educational excellence and this will require individuals who can help pave the way through inconsistent and tumultuous economies; I can help provide insight and oversight as a board member to help keep Yinghua's growth trajectories in line with budgetary needs and goals. Some of my strengths in this area are networking capabilities, collaboration skills and relationship building to help support and develop fiscal strength and sustainability; this is a necessary component for the future financial success of Yinghua Academy and the board of directors. In my current position I create, implement and sustain a multi-million dollar a year budget and programming and consistently demonstrate fiscal agility and success with meeting annual budgetary requirements and strategic goals.

I can translate my strong leadership skills to help Yinghua's mission of excellence in education, immersion in language and culture and nurturing classroom and school environment. Thank you in advance for your time and attention with my interest in serving on the school board of directors to Yinghua Academy. I am enthusiastic to continue to learn about the Chinese culture and to be a part of the Yinghua Academy community and the greater Northeast Minneapolis neighborhood. I hope that you will strongly consider my application to serve and contribute to our community.

(6) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: BROOKE DARRAH-HAGE

My name is Brooke Darrah-Hage, and I am a parent at Yinghua. My oldest daughter, Hollis Hage, is in Ruan Laoshi's kindergarten class. Our family is very excited to be a part of the Yinghua community, and I am eager to help support it in any way I can.

I am originally from Wichita, Kansas. I am the oldest of three with two younger brothers. Most of my immediately family still resides there, but Minnesota has been my full time home since 2001. I attended Macalester College, where my major was in astrophysics, and later the University of Minnesota School of Music, where I studied music education.

Macalester strives to give students a multi-cultural experience which has stayed with me. It is certainly one of the reasons my husband, also a Macalester Alum, and I were attracted to Yinghua in the first place. The opportunity for bilingual and bicultural education is very important to us. While at Macalester, I had the incredible opportunity to study West African music under Sowah Mensah, and with his mentorship I was able to study music abroad in Accra, Ghana. Ethnomusicology and sharing it quickly became my passion. Both during and after my time at the U of M, I had the chance to do just that with Lower, Middle, and High School students. Some may call me crazy, but I enjoyed the middle schoolers the most. I have also coached Volleyball for over a decade. I worked as a Junior Varsity and Assistant Varsity coach at Mounds Park Academy for most of that time, and most recently I have had the privilege of working with 5-8 graders at St. Charles Borromeo.

Currently, my time is mostly taken up with my ever surprising children, Hollis (6) and Hanna (3). My husband, Gordon, and I consider ourselves very lucky. The girls keep us on our toes, but make our lives much richer. Like myself, they have varied interests which makes for a hectic schedule.

I am also a private pilot, and I absolutely love to fly. Last summer I had the good fortune to start working on my glider rating which was some of the best, and most intensely stressful, flying I've done. Even aerobatics come in second to flying without an engine. My pursuit of a commercial license was cut short by Hanna's birth, but when the children are both in school I look forward to finishing that and my CFI, Certificated Flight Instructor. Hopefully, I will be able to adapt my teaching experiences to a new and challenging group, adults!

In running for School Board at Yinghua I am looking to give back to the community that has benefitted my daughter this past year. I have experience in the academic sphere, but I am willing to apply myself to any area that is needed. I believe in pursuing goals without inhibition and working to make all things possible. At the last board meeting in response to a question about Yinghua's high academic goals, Dr. Lien said quite succinctly, "If you know it could happen, why not?"

(7) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: PAUL HALLER

I am a current Yinghua parent—my daughter Ming is in Wang Laoshi's 4th grade class. I'm running for an open school board position, and I ask for your support. My career in medicine and medical education has prepared

me with critical thinking skills, resourcefulness and compassion, and I believe I bring a useful perspective to the Yinghua School Board. In 2016 I transitioned from full-time ER work to a part-time schedule in order to allow myself more time for challenging and rewarding outside interests. I began serving on the Yinghua Governance Committee last year and have worked with that team on the policies that guide our school. This has provided me with a working understanding of how our School Board functions and its role in relationship to the school administration and institutional goal setting.

In my hospital work in Saint Paul, I am responsible for providing patient care, and I'm tasked with the education of medical students and residents from the University of Minnesota in development of their bedside skills and critical thinking. I have also had the privilege of participating in training programs in hospitals in Haiti, Africa and Guatemala. The thread that ties my work together is that in all of my settings, I'm using resources, often in creative ways, to improve the health of patients and the knowledge base of future doctors from different backgrounds. This broad exposure to diverse educational systems gives me a lens thru which I can assist the School Board the best use of our resources to support our children's learning.

In 2007 when my wife Lisa traveled to China to bring our daughter Ming into our family, we made a commitment to help Ming retain as much of her heritage as possible. Joining the Yinghua community and helping Ming become fluent in Mandarin is a major part of that commitment. I would like the opportunity to strengthen this school and community in service as your School Board representative.

Please come to the board candidate forum on Monday, May 1 so that we can get to know one another.

(8) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: LISA MATRE

My name is Lisa Matre. I am a Yinghua parent, operations lead professionally, and the current School Board Chair. I am running for re-election to a three-year term on the Yinghua School Board. My son, Benjamin, is currently in 5th grade at Yinghua Academy. As residents of nearby St. Anthony, we love the fact that Ben has the opportunity to attend a Chinese immersion school that is so close to home. It has been a pleasure to watch him grow and learn not just the language, but more about his native culture as well. My family and I are very proud to be members of this community.

Why I am interested in serving on the Yinghua Academy School Board: My involvement at Yinghua first started outside the school board. I have been a classroom coordinator and I volunteered at Chinese New Year performances. I helped to plan and run the Spring Lantern Festival/Gala, and I have always supported the school financially through the various fundraisers each year.

I knew that I wanted to contribute at a greater level and so I began working with the board three years ago, as a volunteer member of the Governance Committee. I was then appointed to the Board in September 2015. I became chair of the Governance Committee in July 2016 and was just elected by my fellow board members as Board Chair in January. It has been a quick trajectory, the work has been challenging, but it is an honor to serve the school in this capacity. I would very much like to continue to participate and contribute to the school board over the next three years.

What attributes I bring to the position: Professionally, I am a detail-oriented individual in my operations role. I handle everything from day-to-day office management and human resources, to strategic planning, vendor negotiations and budgeting. I am known in the office as the one who is calm under pressure.

On the school board level, my involvement on the Governance Committee exposed me to policy review and update. I wrote new policies – Third Party Use of the Gymnasium and the Gender Inclusion Policy. I also helped to facilitate/oversee the 2016 school board election. As Board Chair, I am a member of all the school board committees. Through the work done by those committees, I understand the intricacies of our school and the issues it faces each day.

Additionally, I was very involved in the strategic planning process that started with the community forums in the spring/summer of 2016. I worked as part of the learning group that researched and discussed opportunities and potential risks in how the school would manage further growth. Then, I worked with the strategic initiative action team focused on increasing student engagement. We created an action plan which outlined the desired outcome, the objectives, measures of progress, steps to implementation, and suggested budget for that initiative.

Issues facing the Board are of most interest to me: Now that the school is past its growth phase, it's time to further refine our processes and curriculum to meet the needs of our students, teachers, families, staff and administration. I am excited about the five initiatives that we have chosen to focus on in our strategic plan over the next 3-5 years. It is time to take those initiatives and goals, bring them to fruition, and I want to continue this work on the board. The short form of the strategic plan was introduced to the community in January. In May, the long form of our strategic plan will be shared with everyone. I look forward to working with the school's administration, staff, board members, and the rest of our community in implementing these ideas to ensure the school's long-term health and bring it into the next decade.

If re-elected, I will keep focus on making sure the decisions that are made are in the best interest of our kids' education and for the school's long term success. My commitment remains on our mission to prepare our students to be engaged and productive global citizens.

(9) Parent/Guardian at Yinghua Academy: JANE STEINER

My interest in a school board position comes from my roles as Yinghua parent, K-12 educator, and Nordeast neighbor. My children are Ian (4th) and Suki (2nd), and we live within walking distance of the school. Currently, I am an Achievement Coach and English Language Arts Lead Teacher at Blaine HS, and just recently completed my K-12 Principal licensure program.

My experience as an instructional, administrative leader provides me with valuable skills to contribute to the work of the board, especially within the areas of academic leadership and personnel management. My own leadership roles within the professional learning community and shared decision making models have provided me with valuable experiences in school improvement plan development and support, curriculum writing and implementation, data management, staff development, intervention, literacy, personnel, scheduling, building modification and finance. These experiences have additionally honed my collaboration and communication skills in large group and small team settings. Additionally, one of my primary duties as an Achievement Coach is to retain quality teachers through staff development, mentorship, observation and collaboration.

Issues of Interest: Because of my work in education, I am absolutely interested in supporting the continued growth and development of the teaching staff in their use of best, research based instructional practices in assessment, intervention, and enrichment so that all students will learn and grow to the best of their ability. This interest extends to curriculum as well. There is work to be done to improve the Language Arts program so that it reaches the same academic achievement standards of Chinese and math. As an English teacher, I am committed to using my knowledge and experience to make recommendations to grow this program and others into one

with increased rigor and engagement. I also believe a stronger, tiered Response to Intervention model would benefit struggling students and help to identify the needs of struggling learners earlier.

Last summer I participated on the Diversity and Equity Strategic Planning Committee to offer recommendations for ensuring a welcoming and equitable learning environment at Yinghua for a diverse body of students, family and staff. As a board member, I would prioritize and support the global perspective of Yinghua as we seek to provide an equitable education for all learners. This includes advocating for training in cultural competency and responsive teaching practices.

Yinghua is an amazing school and should be a point of pride for NE Minneapolis! Our family lives just one block off Northeast Park, so as a local parent and resident I am interested in supporting healthy relationships with our neighbors in the park and surrounding area, as well as increasing outreach and partnership within the local arts and business communities. With increased construction and development of the park and streets in the year ahead, I am committed to addressing the challenges by working with the city to keep our school procedures running safely and smoothly.