

March 18, 2019

### Announcement of 2019 Yinghua Academy School Board Candidates

The following FOUR individuals will stand for election to the Yinghua Academy School Board in April 2019 for terms running July 2019 through June 2022. Their names and affiliations are below, and their candidate statements appear on the following four pages.

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) **on April 4**. Ballots will be accepted in 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 April 11. **All ballots received in the Yinghua Academy office by 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 18** will be considered on time.

Voters will have the opportunity to meet and hear from the candidates at the Annual Meeting of the School Board on **Thursday, April 11, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.** in the Yinghua Academy cafeteria. Candidate statements will be video recorded and shared electronically with voters the following day.

The School Board relies on a diverse base of knowledge to provide good governance. The primary qualification is that the individual is a willing, committed, and objective leader. Given the composition of the School Board and the backgrounds of the Board members who will continue to serve on the Board, we have identified a need for board members with experience in these areas: licensed teachers employed at Yinghua Academy as teachers; and candidates with experience in nonprofit strategic planning, human resources, fundraising, Mandarin-language education, and the law.

According to the bylaws of the School Board, in compliance with state statute, the YA Board follows the 1/1/1 governance model: 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 accordance with school bylaws, candidates on the ballot will be segregated by category of board membership and identified as a community member, teacher, or parent/guardian.

### Overview of the Four 2019 Candidates and Their Affiliations

#### Licensed Teacher:

- **Erica Rasmussen**, English Language Arts teacher at Yinghua Academy

#### Parent or Guardian (*grade/s of students at Yinghua*):

- **Nathan Bode** (*K and 2*): IT Manager at Cargill
- **Cindy Bursell** (*K and 2*): VP-Credit Risk Manager at U.S. Bank
- **Charles Robinson** (*incoming K and 2*) Director of Engineering/Senior Engineer at BKV Group

## 2019 Candidate Statements

### (1) Licensed Teacher at Yinghua Academy: ERICA RASMUSSEN

Hello, my name is Erica Rasmussen, and I am a second year English teacher at Yinghua Academy. I graduated from South Dakota State University with an Early Childhood Education degree with an emphasis in Elementary Education. Before living in Minnesota, I taught in the City of Milwaukee where I had a great opportunity to teach in the classroom and foster school and family relationships. My husband and I moved to Minnesota in 2017 so he could start Physical Therapy School at the University of Minnesota. This transition brought the opportunity to work at Yinghua Academy. With this being my second year here, I now feel ready to take the next step to be a member of the School Board.

I am interested in serving on the School Board to continue my learning as a teacher and to help the school grow. My greatest interest is in the academic issues of our school. My teaching philosophy is to prepare my students for life as a student and life as an impactful member of society. I would like to see how I can help improve our core subjects and help us foster relationships with students so they can become respectful, responsible, and successful adults.

I believe the following will highlight my qualifications and show how I can be a valuable asset to the School Board. I'm adaptive. There are many times where your first lesson or idea doesn't work, and I feel I can think outside the box to figure out what the next idea is. I'm good at making connections with others. This is important to me because I want to build relationships, which, in teaching, are a key part of creating a successful classroom. This can be translated into working on the School Board by communicating and working together with the other members and the school community. Finally, I can bring my diverse teaching career to bring new ideas and solutions to Yinghua.

I thank you for your time and willingness to hear my thoughts on how I can be a valuable member of the School Board.

## **(2) Parent: NATHAN BODE**

My wife Rachel and I have been excited about Yinghua since first hearing about the school in the fall of 2014 and realizing this great school was located right in our neighborhood. We were lucky enough to get off the wait list three years ago and now our oldest child Grant is enjoying being a 2<sup>nd</sup> grader and our daughter Willa is loving kindergarten this year. I am very much interested and committed to the long-term success of Yinghua Academy during my children's school tenure and for years to come.

I have had the pleasure of serving on the board for a one-term appointment. That opportunity has only increased my interest in serving this great school. I have learned a lot during the past year and my belief in the school's mission has only grown during this time. I strongly believe in the school's rigorous academic approach and Chinese language immersion. I want to defend those objectives while addressing the long-term needs of the school to keep it strong for years to come. I want to be active participating in helping decide both current school concerns and the long-term strategy of the school.

I live in the Audubon neighborhood with my wife, son, and daughter. Rachel and I have lived in our current house for eleven years and I have lived in Northeast Minneapolis the past eighteen years. I've been at Cargill for the past twelve years and currently work as an IT Manager. I graduated twice from the University of Minnesota with my undergrad degrees in Finance and Accounting and later my M.B.A. I was also recently on the Eastside Meals on Wheels board where I served as treasurer for five years ending in 2018.

I believe I can use my previous work and board volunteer experience to the benefit of Yinghua Academy. I would like to continue to build upon my knowledge of the school gained during the past year, and use my finance background to contribute to long-term school financial planning. 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, and my project focus is almost entirely on implementing finance projects for large businesses. My volunteer experience on boards has taught me to listen to other people's views and work together for the best possible outcome for the organization.

### **(3) Parent: CINDY BURSELL**

I am Cindy Bursell, a parent of three beautiful children who currently attend Yinghua Academy (Kaia – 2C, Mila – K2, and Liam – K2). It has been an honor for me to serve Yinghua Board for the past ten months. Prior to my election to the School Board, I served on the Finance Committee, and I continue to serve on that committee. I could not be more proud of the school's accomplishments to date from the academic and financial standpoints. I believe that a large part of the success of Yinghua is due to the strong and supportive Yinghua community. Being part of this community is a dream come true for my husband, Jeff, and me. We believe and admire the school's mission and vision, particularly in preparing our children to be the global citizens, teaching them to be bilingual, and providing them with a rigorous academic program. I am confident that these factors will really help our children to do many great things in the future.

I am originally from Indonesia and came to the United States in 1995 to attend college. I received my BA degree in Communication from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Master of International Management (MIM) with a Finance concentration from the University of St. Thomas. For the past ten-and-one-half years, I have been working at U.S. Bank Credit Risk Review 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 the bank's policies and other requirements. Our strong risk management program has helped our institution to stand strong and profitable despite of the challenges that many banks faced during the economic downturn. Prior to joining U.S. Bank, I spent seven years working for a CPA firm as a Public Finance Manager.

To me, Yinghua is not an ordinary school due to the challenges of a bilingual and rigorous academic program. My goal is to ensure that the school will continue to have adequate support for our children and parents. Seeing students coming to the school with big smiles and stress free (despite all of the challenges) is my ultimate goal. I view Yinghua as a solid and reputable school and would like to see Yinghua continue to grow and become a better institution in the future. I want to help Board members set the school's priorities and goals and monitor the implementation and execution of these goals. Finally, I would like to ensure that we have a stable and strong balance sheet, so our financial capacity can support all of the programs and activities that our children and teachers need as well as providing a safe and clean building environment.

My two biggest passions are education and young children, which is why I have a strong interest in serving an organization like Yinghua. I strongly believe that education can empower people and provide skills to allow them to make this world a better place. This Board experience will allow me to learn more from other members and collaborate with others to achieve common goals. I do believe that my skills in leadership, risk management and compliance, and finance will benefit Yinghua in many ways as I am committed to lead, share and promote ideas, and execute plans together with other members and staff.

I hope my background and skills are a good fit for Yinghua. I am excited for another opportunity to serve the Board.

#### **(4) Parent: CHARLES ROBINSON**

When I first learned of Yinghua I was skeptical of the concept of language immersion for my children's education. However, we attended a few informational sessions and quickly became convinced of the benefits. We also discussed this with the Bode family who are friends of ours. Once we won a spot in the lottery, we were "all in" and very excited to join the school and its community. Now, three years later, my daughter Anika is thriving in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and my son Bjorn is excited to join kindergarten next fall to become a Yinghua Dragon.

My current role as the Director of Structural Engineering with BKV Group has me managing twelve individuals and project scheduling for 60+ projects for my team which works in various stages of construction. Being able to build consensus, remain calm, and lead the group toward a decision are important skills that I have learned in my career and are essential to a successful project, big or small. This position has taught me the need to listen to stakeholders' concerns as well as balance what I think is best for the project. The ability to interact with people from different backgrounds, educations, and viewpoints and express my ideas in a way that everyone can understand is something that I find is one of my better attributes, and I feel these skills will translate well to being a member of the Yinghua School Board.

Finding a way to be an active part of the school planning and strategic planning for the future are of interest to me. With three years of Yinghua parenting behind me, I have become an advocate to friends and coworkers on the benefits of immersion. I am interested in learning how the numbers of class sections are chosen and how future planning may impact waiting lists for kindergarten. Finding ways to allow more students the opportunity to experience Chinese immersion will only strengthen the community, and I would like to help find ways to find spots for more students.