

March 26, 2024

2024 Yinghua Academy School Board Candidate Statements

The following six individuals will stand for election to the Yinghua Academy School Board in April 2024 for terms running July 2024 through June 2027. Their names and affiliations are below, and their candidate statements appear on the following pages.

There are four open seats on the School Board to be filled by this election. On April 25, official ballots will be sent to all eligible voters via the email on file in Infinite Campus. Ballots will be accepted by email from a Yinghua-recognized email address. All ballots received by Yinghua Academy by 6 p.m. on Thursday, May 2, will be considered on time.

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. School Board responsibilities include supporting and evaluating the executive director, setting policy to ensure the school's ongoing viability, and overseeing the financial management of the school.

According to the Yinghua Academy bylaws, in compliance with state statutes, the Yinghua School Board follows the 1/1/1 governance model: At least one member of 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.

Candidates along with their occupations are listed alphabetically below. Parent candidates' listings include their children's current grades.

2024 Candidates and Affiliations

- Parent/Guardian **Bryan Huang**, 1st, 2nd and 5th; Strategic Sourcing Manager, CHI Overhead Doors
- Parent/Guardian **Chris Klisch**, 1st; Director of Finance, Starkey Hearing
- Parent/Guardian **Paul Landahl**, 1st and 3rd; Sr. Quantitative Equity Research Analyst, Thrivent Financial
- Community Member **Cindy Moeller**, incumbent; Retired
- Community Member **Yinglu Zeglin**, incumbent; Assistant Principal, Ramsey Elementary School
- Parent/Guardian **Ying Zhang**, 2nd; Informatics Analyst, University of Minnesota

2024 Candidate Statements

(1) Parent/Guardian **Bryan Huang**

As a committed parent with four children enrolled in Yinghua Academy, I am dedicated to ensuring the excellence of their educational journey. Originating from Taiwan, I am fluent in Mandarin Chinese, providing valuable cultural insight and support in organizing and enriching social events for the school community.

My professional background as an expert in Supply Chain and Procurement equips me with valuable skills that can significantly benefit the school community. I specialize in negotiating favorable deals and optimizing resource allocation, leading to cost savings and enhanced operational efficiency for Yinghua Academy.

Combining my dedication to my children's education with my professional expertise and passion for educational excellence, I am an ideal candidate for the Yinghua Academy School Board. I am eager to collaborate with fellow board members, administrators, educators, parents, and students to address challenges, seize opportunities, and advance Yinghua Academy's mission as a premier Mandarin Chinese Immersion School.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I am enthusiastic about the prospect of serving the Yinghua Academy Board and community, and making a meaningful difference in the lives of its students.

(2) Parent/Guardian **Chris Klisch**

I am writing to express my sincere interest in serving on the Yinghua Academy School Board. As a parent of a seven-year-old daughter who attends Yinghua Academy, I am deeply invested in the school's mission, values, and continued success.

Yinghua Academy has been integral in shaping the educational journey of my daughter and many other students. Witnessing firsthand the transformative impact of Yinghua's bilingual immersion program and its dedication to academic excellence has inspired me to contribute my skills and experiences to support the school community.

As a parent, several issues facing Yinghua Academy resonate deeply with me. I am committed to advancing the school's mission of providing a rigorous academic curriculum while nurturing cultural competence and global awareness. I believe in fostering an inclusive learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds feel valued and empowered to thrive. I am also passionate about promoting innovation and continuous improvement in education. It is crucial for Yinghua Academy to adapt and embrace best practices to prepare students for success in the 21st century.

My professional background in Corporate Finance equips me with analytical skills, strategic thinking, and financial acumen that I believe would be valuable assets to the School Board. I have a proven track record of making data-driven decisions, managing budgets, and fostering collaborative partnerships, which I believe are qualities essential for effective governance and stewardship of Yinghua Academy's resources. I am dedicated to ensuring fiscal responsibility and sustainability within the school's operations and committed to upholding transparency, accountability, and prudent financial management to safeguard Yinghua Academy's long-term viability and growth.

In conclusion, I am deeply committed to the mission and success of Yinghua Academy and am eager to contribute my skills, perspectives, and energy to the School Board. I am confident that my dedication, experience, and collaborative approach will enable me to serve effectively and make meaningful contributions to the school community.

Thank you for considering my candidacy. I welcome the opportunity to discuss further how I can support Yinghua Academy's mission and vision.

(3) Parent/Guardian **Paul Landahl**

My name is Paul Landahl and I am running for a position on the Yinghua Academy School Board. My two sons (Avinash 3rd grade and Vikram 1st grade) attend Yinghua and my wife (Anaya Mitra) is finishing a two-year term on the YACA board.

I read the results of last year's strategic planning initiative which collected opinions from stakeholders. The theme that stood out was that people wanted "*More Yinghua*": more academic programs, more athletic options, more arts, more enrichment programming, more of everything that Yinghua provides. So, if I am selected to be on the board of Yinghua, my goal will be to conserve and hopefully gather more resources so that we can give the community what they want: More Yinghua!

Stewardship and allocation of finite resources is an area where I have considerable experience. I have served on non-profit boards almost continuously since 2009, when I became the president of Como Student Community Cooperative, a 360-unit graduate student housing cooperative. During my tenure, I identified and reduced major expenses (e.g. rent loss) and was able to improve the financial health of the cooperative. From 2011 to present, I have served on multiple condo boards. While not the same as a school board, the budgets are a similar size and fiscal discipline is critical. I have analyzed and authored policy, set operational budgets and initiated and supervised 7-figure debt-financed capital projects.

A board member should be passionate and optimistic, yet also grounded and realistic. Matching Yinghua Academy's goals to our available resources requires objective and rigorous analysis that starts with a compulsion to gather accurate information and fully understand it. I think I have the background and temperament to be a productive board member. If you agree, then please consider voting for me.

Thank you for your consideration.

(4) Community Member **Cindy Moeller**, incumbent

Why Am I Interested in Continuing to Serve on the Yinghua Academy School Board?

I have been serving on the Yinghua Academy Board for the past five years. In 2019 I was asked if I would fill an open seat for a community member on the board and was then appointed to be a board member. Then I ran in the 2021 election and was elected to a three-year term. This past December I was elected by the board to serve as board chair for calendar year 2024.

I was deeply involved in the founding of Yinghua Academy and have supported the school in various ways over the years. I have a great interest in and commitment to the continuing success of the school and its students.

What Attributes Do I Bring to This Position?

Though I am retired now, I have had considerable experience during my career in both education and business. In my 20's I earned an MSW and then served as a school social worker for 4 years, working primarily with students who qualified for special education services and their families. I then earned an MBA and worked for 20 years in various human resources leadership roles in both large and small companies.

In 2003 I returned to public education and was a Fellow in the New Leaders for New Schools program, a year-long principal training and development program in Chicago. Through my New Leaders' experience, I learned a lot about what practices contribute to a great school with inspired students, parents, and teachers as well as strong academic achievement. I also earned an administrative license to serve as a principal in K-12 schools in Illinois.

In 2005 I returned to Minnesota to be the director of a new charter school that was not able to attract enough students to open. However, I was able to take the work of the founding board of that school and, with their support as well as the involvement and hard work of many other people, "morph" that school into Yinghua Academy. We opened Yinghua Academy in the fall of 2006. I served as the board chair until the fall of 2010.

From 2005 to 2008 I worked at the Center for School Change (then at the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota) and provided support and information to a number of charter schools and charter school boards. That job provided me an extraordinary opportunity to learn about charter schools.

In summary, I would say that the attributes I bring to the Yinghua Board include leadership experience, charter school experience, knowledge of the practices of high-performing schools, strategic planning experience, knowledge of human resource practices, and a focus on teamwork and collaboration.

What Issues Facing Yinghua Academy Interest Me the Most?

I continue to be especially interested in strategic planning and in fundraising, since I think both are essential to the continued success and development of Yinghua Academy. In the fall of 2022 I recommended to the Yinghua Academy Board that we go through a new strategic planning process. That resulted in our work with the Prouty Project in the spring of 2023 to develop a new strategic plan. During the fall of 2023 I worked with two other Yinghua Academy Board members to create a new nonprofit, Friends of Yinghua Academy (FOYA), which will focus on fundraising for Yinghua from new sources like foundations.

(5) Community Member **Yinglu Zeglin**, incumbent

My name is Yinglu Zeglin. I was born and raised in China. I earned my MA in Educational Administration from the University of Minnesota and hold both an Elementary Teaching Licensure and a K-12 Principal Licensure. Over the past decade, I've had the privilege of teaching in various schools with Chinese immersion programs. More recently, I've served as an assistant principal for three years at an elementary school with only English program.

During my tenure on the Yinghua Board, I have actively contributed to strategic planning, fundraising initiatives, and community engagement efforts. Through collaborative decision-making processes, we have strengthened Yinghua's commitment to student excellence, expanded teacher exchange opportunities, and cultivated a supportive learning environment for students, teachers, and families.

With my educational background and experience, I am confident in my ability to provide valuable insights and support across several areas at Yinghua. Drawing from my years of teaching and school administration, I offer a unique perspective on language immersion and educational leadership. My deep-rooted passion for the Chinese language and culture is reflected in my three-year commitment as a Yinghua Board Member. Yinghua holds a special place in my heart, as it marked the beginning of my journey as an educator in the United States. My initial role as an afterschool teacher at Yinghua Academy, while pursuing my studies at the University of Minnesota, provided me with invaluable experiences that solidified my dedication to Chinese education.

As a dedicated School Board Member, I am committed to leveraging my expertise and network within the Chinese education community to enhance Yinghua's offerings and promote cultural diversity. I am excited to continue to collaborate with fellow board members, the school leadership team, and all stakeholders to better support our Yinghua community.

In summary, I am deeply invested in furthering Yinghua's mission to prepare our students to be engaged and productive global citizens by providing a research-based educational program that includes a rigorous academic program, immersion in Chinese language and culture, and a nurturing and supportive school environment.

With my background, passion, and unwavering commitment to Yinghua, I am confident in my ability to continue making meaningful contributions to our school community. Thank you for considering my candidacy for renewal on the School Board. I eagerly look forward to the opportunity to continue serving and collaborating with you all for the betterment of Yinghua.

(6) Parent/Guardian **Ying Zhang**

Hello, everyone, my name is Ying Zhang, and I am applying for the Yinghua Academy School board in hope to advocate for special education (SpEd) and enrichment activities at Yinghua.

I work as a data scientist at Minnesota Supercomputing Institute, University of Minnesota. So data is the centerpiece of my expertise. Let us check the data first. According to the National Center of Education Statistics (<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=64>), around 17% of Minnesota students are enrolled in special education in the school year 2021-2022. And this number is rising year to year.

As a parent of a child with an IEP (individual education plan, one of many special education plans), I fully understand the importance of special education in elementary schools. Every kid deserves an opportunity to learn in a supportive and less restrictive environment so they can thrive to the best of themselves in adulthood. But SpEd also demands more from the school and the teachers. As some of you may know, Yinghua restructured its special education office at the beginning of the school year 2023-24 due to personnel change. So I believe NOW is the right time when Yinghua most needs support from the community and parents to set up a successful SpEd office. If I were elected, I would work with both the school board and the school to come up with policies and plans that can support our teachers and our parents, such as make more resources available, invite outside SpEd experts to host presentations and so on. Eventually I hope we could better serve our children and support our families in need.

Another aspect of special education is called 2e (twice exceptional), which refers to children who are facing mental challenges but with great potential. In fact, not only for 2e students, but also for all students, an inspiring education will keep them constantly challenged given their abilities. For this purpose, I have hosted three enrichment classes at Yinghua. Two of them used the seasonal challenges from First Lego League (FLL), when age-grouped children build and program robots using Legos. So if I were elected, I would advocate for enrichment classes that can introduce more STEAM-related activities to our children, including but not limited to programs like “Minnesota on the Map”, First Lego League Challenges and Readers Theaters.

Finally, I am also applying to the Yinghua school board because I agree with Dr. Lien’s vision to cultivate world global leaders of the next generation. As a leading institute in Chinese learning, Yinghua has provided vast opportunities for the local community to experience a distinctive culture and has so far graduated numerous young citizens with broad, open and creative minds. I hope I can contribute my expertise to keep Yinghua excelling in all aspects. I have enough experience in grant applications from my daytime job. Also by serving as the “popcorn” chair of our scout pack, I learned how to effectively fund-raise within a community. Therefore, I could contribute to grant applications and fundraising for Yinghua during my tenure.

In summary, I believe I have the intention and the ability to serve on the Yinghua school board. Thank you for considering my application, and I truly appreciate this opportunity to advocate for special education and enrichment programs at Yinghua.