



Greetings voters, my name is Gerry Ashby, and I am running for the Deer Park School Board. A few weeks ago, the Chamber of Commerce and its volunteers hosted a wonderfully ran school board candidate forum. Wow, what a great experience that was. Thank you.

Naturally, I'm running for office because we all want something better than what we had for our kids. School board does that by having a superior connection to the teachers, district administrators/employees, and parents. Seriously, it's simple. Teachers are the real tangible connection to the kids. If you have happy teachers and staff, you will have happy kids. Otherwise, you get unhappy kids followed by unhappy parents, so then the team is called in to solve the problem. With 30 years of systems engineering work in the US Air Force and DoD, I am a no kidding "out of the box" problem solver. All hard problems can be solved if enough energy and thought is applied, using an effective TEAM. If something isn't working, I'm not willing to throw up my hands. Let's try something else. Yes, teamwork is paramount. Voters, you can count on me to work as an exceptional valued member of the school board team.

While I support the Deer Park School bond/levy measure, it only comes after our schools became overcrowded and our district was forced to take short-sighted "band aide" measures. For the last 10+ years there was ongoing and impending development around Deer Park, and our school board should have acted back then... not recently on 25 September, and conveniently just before elections. Our kids will have to endure until the new school is built. Then what? It's too LATE... the 2nd tidal wave is coming with overcrowding already brewing at the elementary school. I will help solve the future facilities issues with my school board teammates.

I see the bus garage is on the bond. About time, it is WWII vintage facility. This should have been addressed years ago. Their work environment/break area is absolutely atrocious. Are we positive the new bus garage fits the requirements? I am doubtful, and it will be on my list for review if elected. Why can't keep our bus drivers? I will find out and foster a plan for retaining our professional bus drivers.

I have taught at Homelink since 2017, and I can tell you firsthand that Homelink kids are "not treated as equals" to regularly attending school kids. The Homelink environment is portals, partitions, limited supplies, hand-me-down equipment, multiple classes teaching in one room, etc. Here's another example, I was teaching engineering with simple PowerPoint graphics, and Travis Hanson/Molly helped me get Solidworks, a professional 3D CAD software in Homelink. Two years later, the school district unplugged the upgraded Solidworks software because our new computers were subpar. So, the high school kept their Solidworks, while I returned to teaching engineering with Powerpoint. Does that sound fair to you? Sure, there is a plan to transfer Homelink to Arcadia. That's just geography. Their "less than equal" treatment will still be the same. Homelink is our district's diamond, and I will ensure Homelink gets equal funding along with addressing the Homelink waiting list problem.

In no particular order, here are my initial initiatives that I will work with my school board teammates:

- **Address the excessive administrative burdens levied on our teachers from the state, which allows teachers focus on kids and their curriculum.**
- **Work on better pay for Homelink teachers and bus drivers. Are there any pay imbalances elsewhere?**
- **Review 5 years of complaints at all schools to find the problem trends we are not addressing well.**
- **Establish a future school district infrastructure plan and roadmap.**
- **Address small pockets of "favoritism" and "nepotism."**
- **Work on alternative solutions for state mandates that work against the wishes of the parents.**
- **Provide school board community talks on the district initiatives.**
- **Address, rewrite and strengthen the inadequate harassment, intimidation, and bullying policy.**
- **Create equality in between Homelink and regularly attending students**
- **Address the Homelink waiting list**

When I am elected, all members of this community will have a stronger VOICE. I truly am in everyone's corner: kids, teachers, parents, administration staff, bus drivers, coaches, administrators, counselors, custodial staff, and voters ... **did I forget anyone?**