

Region 2 Candidate
Michael Rensland
Urban Pathways 6-12 Educator

Education

Woodland Hills class of '94
B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh
M. Ed. in Secondary Education from Point Park University

Work Experience

I have work in the education field for 22 years. In that time, I have taught 6-12 grade Math, Science, Computers, and Finance at Urban Pathways 6-12 Charter School. I have served as a member of the leadership team and as the Mathematics Department Chair. Some of my duties beyond teaching include writing curriculum and creating the master schedules.

Community Involvement

I am currently a member of the Woodland Hills Board of Directors since July 2022.
I served as an member of AmeriCorps through Keys Service Corps.
I coached youth recreation sports (baseball and basketball) for Edgewood Borough.

Why are you running for School Board?

During the summer of 2022, a vacant position was posted in my region. As an alumni and parent of a current student, I was looking for a way to become involved with the district. I want to be sure that all of our students (including my daughter) are given the all of the opportunities they need for a successful journey through school and beyond.

Why is quality public education important to you and your family?

My wife and I both are alumni of public schools. I am for building a strong community. I have noticed that over the years, more and more of the kids in my neighborhood go to many different schools. This makes it difficult to build that sense of community. It takes away that time building relationships with other parents at the bus stop or talking to your neighbors about different school events.

What are 2-3 strengths of WHSD you would work to support & maintain?

I will work to support the current curriculum/class offerings with in the district. I have had conversations with parents of former students, who rave about the educational opportunities their children had in our district.

Woodland Hills has a reputation in our area for its theater program. I will work to support the program to ensure its continued success.

What are 2-3 challenges WHSD is facing and what potential solutions do you have for those challenges?

How we are seen by the public and portrayed on the news is a major problem in our community. I have noticed recently that we have been involved in a more positive way. We need to work to continue to let the public know all of the good things that happen within the district.

Another challenge within the district is finding a way to help decrease the racial achievement gap. There is no definitive solution to this problem, but offering more supports to students and families who are struggling could have a positive outcome.

When faced with conflicting interests, how would you find balance between stakeholders (teachers, administrators, parents, community members, students, Board members) and make decisions?

As a member of the board, I have been placed in difficult situations. I find it best to attempt to get as much information from everyone involved. The two most important groups to listen to are the parents and teachers. Any decision we make will have the most impact on them.

Explain the role the school board should play in determining the curriculum and what is taught in the classroom.

I believe the administration should make decisions on curriculum. They are the ones who have earned degrees on writing and implementing curriculum. The School Board's role in the matter should just be for oversight based on data from the district, as well as feedback from the public.

If elected, at the end of your term, what lasting impression would you hope to have left behind?

It is not about what impression I leave, it is about what we as board members, parents, and other stakeholders can do to better the district for everyone in our community.