Eight candidates are vying for seats on the Independent School District 15 school board. Candidates running for one of three seats for a four-year term are Shannon Collier, Barbara Jahnke, David Roberts, Juanita Reed-Bonifice, Marsha Van Denburgh and Malcolm T. Vinger II. Running for one seat for a two-year term are Betsy Roed and Scott Schwarz. The profiles appear in alphabetical order.

Each candidate was asked the following:

- **Name**
- **Address**
- **Occupation**
- Tell about your background and family, including how long you have lived in Independent School District 15.
- Describe your involvement with ISD 15 schools in the past five years. What do you believe qualifies you to be a school board member?
- What do you see as the school board’s roles and responsibilities, and what makes a school board effective?
- What is your vision for education in ISD 15?
- What three goals do you hope to accomplish if elected to the school board?
- What are the biggest issues facing ISD 15 and how would you address them?

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### Shannon Collier

**23629 Eidelweiss Street NW**  
St. Francis, MN 55070  
**Running for 4 year term**

Hello ISD 15 community. I’m Shannon Collier and I am hoping to get your vote in November to join the School Board. I am a stay at home mother of four wonderful children with a background in Dental Assisting. My husband and I have girl/boy twins in third grade and a son in kindergarten at East Bethel Community School. We also have a four year old daughter in preschool at the Lifelong Learning Center. My husband is hard at work serving our community as a K9 Deputy for the Anoka County Sheriffs’ Office. I believe that joining the School Board would be a great opportunity for me to give back to our community. The roles of the School Board are very important, they help ensure that our district is getting the best quality of education and that we stay within our limited budget. I believe that the members of the School Board should be seen as often as possible at school functions and activities. I would like to be a voice for us, as parents, and to listen to concerns and to hear about great opportunities for students from the school staff. I feel that communication is the key to success for our children. I would like to find federal grants that would allow every family in our district to have access to the internet in their homes, especially since technology is the wave of the future. We, as a community, need to make sure that our school district stays current with all of the new and up-to-date educational opportunities out there for our children. With the epidemic of Autism Spectrum Disorder and ADHD we need to make sure that our special education programs are also giving our children the best educational benefits. I would like to share how great our school district is with other communities and to pioneer new ways of teaching our children that other schools will model themselves after. I would like to help you feel confident that Independent School District 15 is a wonderful and safe place for our children to grow and learn and to ensure their success in the future. Please voice your opinion loudly and show you care about your children’s education, and vote for Shannon Collier.

### Barbara Jahnke

**PO Box 190**  
St. Francis, MN 55070  
**Retired School Counselor Running for 4 year term**

I am a 20 year resident of St. Francis, the mother of 3 sons and 8 grandchildren, with a 30 year career in public education. I’ve been employed as a school teacher, school counselor, and community counselor, working with indigent and homeless people. Because these causes are so meaningful, I have also volunteered many hours in these fields. I am a 20 year resident of St. Francis, the mother of 3 sons and 8 grandchildren, with a 30 year career in public education. I’ve been employed as a school teacher, school counselor, and community counselor, working with indigent and homeless people. Because these causes are so meaningful, I have also volunteered many hours in these fields. I would like to help you feel confident that Independent School District 15 is a wonderful and safe place for our children to grow and learn and to ensure their success in the future. Please voice your opinion loudly and show you care about your children’s education, and vote for Shannon Collier.
welfare of our community and the enhancement of public education. In retirement, I will have the background experience, along with the time and energy to devote to board business. I will be available to do the work approachable for input and accountable to students and citizens.

Independent School District 15 School Board must lead the way in creating educational opportunities for all students. It is responsible for development of policy and long term planning to achieve the goals set forth. The board needs to actively investigate the concerns of Independent School District 15 through open communication with students, parents, staff and community citizens.

I envision Independent School District 15 schools to be a place where parents and guardians seek to enroll their children because of the strong educational practices in District 15. Students will graduate from our schools with the needed skills, academic and interpersonal, to become independent citizens.

As a school board member, I will strive to ensure a democratic decision-making process in these ways:
- Make informed decisions
- Honest communications
- Persistent effort

Independent School District 15’s issues:
- School funding and how it is currently utilized
- School safety in the digital world
- Well rounded curriculum that prepares students for life, which includes an interpersonal skills component

These concerns will be addressed through a sound democratic process, which seeks information and considers the needs of all.

Juanita Reed-Boniface
2462 Lake George Drive NW Oak Grove, MN 55011
Educational Consultant, JRB Associates, Inc. and beef producer
Running for 4 year term
- 39 year resident of Oak Grove
- Elementary and high school education from Nebraska public schools
- Bachelors degree, University of Nebraska, specialized training in adult education and volunteerism
- 35+ years experience in education including teaching, instructional design and delivery, administration and public relations
- Served as member of Oak Grove City Council 9 years, currently member of Lake George Improvement District Board of Directors
- Children were educated in Minnesota public schools and are St. Francis High School alumni. Son Kent is a member of the SFHS Hall of Fame
- Leader in professional and community organizations
- Recipient of numerous honors for career achievements and community service
- Married to Dick Boniface, two children, five grandchildren

Involvement
- Member of the Diversity Outreach Team and was the “connecting link” between the team and University of Minnesota resources.
- Selected and presented children’s literature agriculture book bundles to Cedar Creek Community School, St. Francis Elementary and East Bethel Community School
- Served as a guest reader at St. Francis Elementary and Cedar Creek Community School for family reading nights
- Visited all ISD 15 preschool classrooms for two years reading stories and leading an educational activity. (2012 & 2013)
- Agriculture pen pal to Miss Thorson’s 4th grade class 2008-09 and did a classroom presentation on sheep and wool for the students.
- Initiated and coordinated Lunch and Learn senior adult program 2010-13.
- Member Sandhill Center of the Arts Senior Advisory Committee
- Recommended St. Francis Elementary for Anoka County Farm Bureau $200 Travel
- Grant to Natural Resources Field Trip October 2013 Grant approved and will be awarded
- Supported Youth Teaching Youth Diversity Program

Assets
- I bring to the school board position: long time resident of the school district, lifelong commitment to public education, thoughtful decision making and problem solving, ability to seek out and study the facts, analyze long and short term consequences, listening skills, dependability and sincere caring for students, teachers, staff and citizens.

Role and responsibilities
- The role of the school board is to serve as the local governing body for the school district. As such they work with the school administration to set policies, manage human and capital resources, advise on curriculum priorities and programs to maximize quality education for citizens in the school district.

A school board is effective when there is open communication, trust and respect among school officials and school board members, willingness to compromise, and study all aspects of an issue before making a decision. They work as a team.

I believe that working together works. A winning team has members
who depend on each other, they don’t compete. Each do their share. They work together and take time to ask, “How are we doing? and fix problems before they get out of hand.

Vision
My vision is for ISD 15 to be one of the top 10 school districts in the state of Minnesota. Our district will have high standards of excellence, creativity and innovation in the educational process, and will seek new ways to meet future challenges. We will have safe and respectful learning and working environments for students, faculty and staff, and lifelong learning opportunities for our citizens, cradle to the grave.

Three goals
1) Take steps to become one of the state’s top 10 public schools with lifelong learning opportunities for all—pre K through adult.
2) Explore new ways of doing things. For example, use of technology, cooperation with other educational institutions, and use of facilities and methods to maximize use of resources.
3) Build cooperation, respect, cohesion and continuity within the school board.

Biggest issues
1) Maximizing resources—both human and capital—in a time of uncertainty of public funds.
2) Maintaining and exceeding academic excellence to prepare all students for a positive, successful future.
3) Building community and communication among residents of ISD 15.

I would approach all of these issues in three ways: First, listen to residents, faculty, staff and other board members. Second, learn—gather and study information, ask questions, analyze, define and clarify the problem. Third, lead—drawing upon my academic and life experiences, working with school board members and school faculty and staff to seek out and implement the best course of action for our school community.

David Roberts
20865 Wintergreen Street NW
Oak Grove, MN 55011
President of Dave’s Heating and Air Conditioning
Running for 4 year term
I am a father of three children as of the time that I answer these questions, but by press time I should have my 4th child. My daughters are in kindergarten and second grade at Cedar Creek Community School, and my son is involved in the ECFE program at the Lifelong Learning Center. My family moved to our home in Oak Grove in 2010. We own Dave’s Heating and Air Conditioning in Columbia Heights.

I have served on the Advisory Council at the Lifelong Learning Center since 2010. Through the council, I have assisted with many events for our community. In March of 2013, I was appointed to the ISD 15 School Board. I believe that I am qualified to continue serving on the school board because I have a proven commitment to excellence in our schools and look to continue to be an active part of the solution.

The jobs of the school board, among other things, are to set policy, create a vision and handle the business of the district while supporting the administration to give our students the best education possible. I also believe a role of the school board is to maintain an active relationship with the community it serves. In my opinion, a school board is most effective when there is an open and constructive dialogue between members.

My vision for education in our district is to continue to find and utilize challenging curriculum. I would like to see the continued use of technology and STEM to expand our delivery and course options. Another avenue I wish to explore is options for programming and extracurriculars in the middle school as a way to keep our students actively engaged. I believe that this is one of the most critical stages in our children’s education.

My three goals if I am elected to the school board are:
1) To continue to search for ways to provide the best education possible while remaining fiscally responsible.
2) To conduct the business of the district in a way that is both transparent and understandable to all those that we serve.
3) To find ways to institute programming that will keep us on a competitive level with school districts around us.

The biggest issues I see that ISD 15 faces are public perception and funding. For public perception, I would continue to work to strengthen the relationship that our district has with the community. There is little that we can do about state and federal level funding. I would explore ways that we can be more creative with the resources that we do have, and seek information from students who open enroll to other districts on how we could have retained them.
Betsy L. Roed
213 – 217th Avenue NW
Oak Grove, MN 55011

Running for 2 year term

- My family moved to East Bethel in 1978. I attended East Bethel Community School, St. Francis Middle School and graduated from St. Francis High School in 1995. My husband Patrick and I moved from East Bethel to Oak Grove in 2005. All of our children have attended Preschool at the Lifelong Learning Center (LLC). Our son Charlie is in 3rd grade at Cedar Creek Community School (CCCS). Our daughter Rachel is in 1st grade at CCCS. Our youngest daughter Lacey is in her final year at LLC.

- I was on the Early Childhood Advisory Council for three years. I chaired and volunteered at many events. Starting last year, I spread my availability and volunteered at both the LLC and at CCCS. Last winter, I was chosen to sit in on a panel at a Destination Kindergarten class at CCCS and answered questions from parents of incoming kindergartners. I am the type of person that people feel comfortable approaching and expressing their concerns to. I know that I have the means and the resources to get informed answers out to the community in a timely manner.

- The School Board’s roles and responsibilities are to support our staff and students. The board must continuously strive to make our schools the best working and learning environments for everyone, all while staying on budget. An effective school board is one that is willing to think and work together. Also, an effective board is one that will search for every last detail in order to make an informed decision on behalf of the students, staff and taxpayers.

- My vision is to have ISD 15 continue to stay ahead of the technology trends. Not only is it the way of the future, but it also helps children learn from a different approach. This is a phenomenal opportunity for children who may need a non-traditional method to help them succeed.

- My main goal for ISD 15 is to strengthen community relations and morale. I would encourage more community members to attend school board meetings. I would help people find a committee to join. There’s something for everybody. I would like to approach the open enrollment issue. I would love to see all of our students attend the schools within our boundaries.

- I will work to improve the communication lines between the school board and the voting public.

- One of the biggest issues facing ISD 15 is the public’s perception of the district. With social media being a common outlet to voice frustration, negative and most often, incorrect information is being put out there as truth. People see that as the truth and jump on the negative bandwagon without ever looking into finding out the facts. I believe that if I can have people come to me FIRST, I can help them find the answers they are looking for. Even if it may not be the answer they’re looking for, I can at least provide them with a reasonable explanation to decisions that have been made.

Scott Schwarz
22609 Zion Parkway
Oak Grove, MN 55005
Business-to-business sales

Running for 2 year term

- My family and I have lived in the Independent School District for eight years. Our four children have all attended and graduated from St. Francis High School.

- My involvement with the schools has been with my kids. Soccer, band, pit orchestra, College in the Classroom, conferences, etc., trying to stay involved with their learning and the learning process as much as possible. Updating myself on what is going on in the district and within the state when it comes to education and funding education. What qualifies me is what may qualify a number of people, the experience of four kids going through District 15. They each have different learning habits, desires, and plans for after high school. Working with them and their teachers gave me an understanding of the different things that are offered for different kids, with the same result of graduating and being ready to move forward after graduation.

- We, as school board members, have the responsibility to make sure the funds we receive for each pupil in our district are used to educate and work with the students to achieve the best education possible. These dollars need to be allocated to the people and the services that are working directly with
My vision is that each child can be educated to their full potential and be ready for the next step out of our district, whether it is college, military, the trades, self-employed or working for others.

Three goals
1) Confirm our budget for the next three years and confirm we will remain within our budget
2) Of the $300 per student increase we will be receiving, discuss the best areas to allocate those funds
3) Assure the people in our district that the funds we receive are going to the staff and resources who directly affect our students’ learning and education

Biggest issues
1) Rising costs of expenses—how does it affect the budget?
2) State mandates—how do we achieve these mandates within our budget and not asking for property tax increases to achieve these mandates?
3) Determining if the state’s change in the graduation testing to the new testing system, how does it affect the learning of the students so they are prepared after graduation?

Any questions or opinions, I can be reached at: Schwarzsc@hotmail.com or 763-898-6985.

Thank you.

Marsha Van Denburgh
5270 206th Avenue NW
Oak Grove, MN 55303
Running for 4 year term

Background
I have a long family history in education. My granddaddy taught school in a one room school house in rural Kentucky. My mother taught kindergarten and my brother is a high school English teacher in the Los Angeles Public School system. I have nine children and do therapeutic foster care. I moved to the district 14 years ago.

Involvement
This will be my second term as a school board member if elected. The past five years I have served as both a school board director and for one year as the chair of the board. It takes a year or two to understand the processes, policies, and budget for a district like St. Francis.

I have learned on the job how to listen to the employees, parents, and community members. I make myself available via phone and email to staff and community.

Since I have been on the board, I have voted for both All Day Every Day Kindergarten and STEM.

Role and responsibilities
We are charged with running the district in all aspects. Much of what we do is to set policy and approve funding. I believe we need to keep the administration following policy and not let decisions be made before the school board even knows what is happening. The school board needs enough information and time from the superintendent to make a good decision. Frequently, I have been asked to make last minute decisions with little to no background details.

Vision
St. Francis has some great teachers. They need to be allowed to use their expertise to educate our students. I want to bring the district back to the collaborative work place it once was and restore Site Management Councils to their former responsibility and what is outlined in current policy. The fear of retaliation must be removed from our teachers and support staff, so that we are not hiring 30 new teachers again, but keeping the teachers that display the quality our families have come to expect.

Three goals
1) I want the district to spend money in a fiscally responsible way and be fully transparent in doing so.
2) I want our employees to enjoy coming to work and remove the fear of retribution in the workplace.
3) I want to increase the educational difficulty of class offerings and add subjects such as computer coding as a requirement from elementary to high school to prepare our students for the job market. This aligns with our commitment to STEM.

Biggest issues
Currently, much of our staff is very disillusioned. In the past six months, I have talked to more teachers than the first three years of my term. We must restore faith in our administration. The top down decisions that come from our superintendent and his hand-picked allies must be replaced with those made at the individual building level as it was a couple of years ago. That system was successful and made teachers want to work for our district. When morale is restored, our students will get a better education. We have a lot of great teachers that need to be allowed to work to their potential. I explore these issues because it is right, not because I will gain personally.
**Background**

I am a husband and father of two young girls. I am an engineer and businessman. We have lived in Nowthen for 12 years.

**Involvement**

I have attended several school board meetings, donated to many fundraisers, known many whose children have graduated from ISD 15, and am a taxpayer and a voter in the district. My background, my family and my ties to the community qualify me for the school board.

**Role and responsibilities**

The school board is the representative of the owners/investors (parents/taxpayers) and customers (students/parents) to the school and its employees. An effective school board recognizes its precarious role with the owner/investor/customer mix and how its functional and monetary decisions affect all in the district, even those without children in the school.

**Vision**

Generally, to have the highest quality education for the children on a reasonable and rational budget.

**Three goals**

1) Maintain control of the budget.
2) Ensure the staff can and will do the job.
3) Provide the best education for the children’s futures.

**Biggest issues**

Declining enrollment, the budget and taxes.

We need to research and develop a synergistic solution to maintain a quality education without breaking the banks of the taxpayers or the parents.