

Four in the running for UGDSB trustee seat

Written By **JASEN OBERMEYER**

With the upcoming municipal election in October, that also means the election for school board trustee, which for the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB), there are four names in the hat running for the position.

Gail Campbell, Shelly Bergant, John Trafananko, and Kim Reid are the ones running for the position of school board trustee. A story was previously done on Ms. Campbell, while attempts to reach Ms. Reid were unsuccessful.

"It's something that's important to me," said Mr. Trafananko to the Citizen on why he is running. "I see things that are happening. Something's I approve of, something's I am concerned about, and I would like to just have a stronger voice in it."

"I believe every student must have a voice at the board level," Ms. Bergant told this reporter.

As resident of Mono, Mr. Trafananko explained that his strength is having his four children in the system, in both elementary and secondary levels. "I know what the day-to-day issues are, because I live them."

He added that he was previously involved with the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), and chaired several board level committees for it, gaining an understanding on how the board works and what being a trustee entails.

An Orangeville resident for 11 years, Ms. Bergant explained that she brings experience by attending many trustee meetings, and being a former parent council chair at Orangeville District Secondary School (ODSS) when her son was there, along with bring a former parent advisor for student council at Credit Meadows Elementary School.

She described the need to advocate for quality and equality in the student's school career, and looks to "enrich" their experiences, and be a "community advocate" for public education.

Mr. Trafananko noted his concern with how special needs children get addressed. "I've seen how marginal special needs get ignored."

He added that physical education and music "in many instances" are often "sidelined," due to a lack of dedicated teachers, and budget constraints, and a lack of interest. "As a trustee, you have the opportunity to at least try and make the best policy you can."

Ms. Bergant said she would be a trustee that works with everyone, from students and parents, to the teachers, principals and vice-principals. "I would further enrich the existing programs that are already in place."

She also said she would like to see more programs for special education. "As parents, we play a vital role in the development and education of our children and their success at school, and at home."

The election will take place on October 22.