

## Meet the Moderator

### Lori Miller

**Lori Miller**, our forum moderator, is Past President of the League of Women Voters in Wheaton. Lori serves as a moderator for a variety of legislative and community events and has been a dedicated non-partisan Deputy Voter Registrar for 16 years in DuPage County. Lori is the 2007 recipient of the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce's Pillar of the Community and Woman of the Year Award for her professional and volunteer service to the community.

## Sponsor Information

### Indian Prairie Parents' Council

**The Indian Prairie Parents' Council (IPPC)** is the umbrella organization for all 34 PTA and PTSA units in District 204. Each unit is represented by its PTA President and IPPC Representative. IPPC meets monthly with District 204 administration to share information about local, state and national issues affecting the education, health and welfare of children and youth.

### The League Of Women Voters

**The League of Women Voters**, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has been helping make democracy strong in Naperville since 1955.

**Indian Prairie  
School District 204  
Board of Education  
Candidate Forum**

Sponsored by  
Indian Prairie Parents' Council  
*and* The League of Women Voters

March 2, 2011  
7:00 – 8:30 pm

Crouse Education Center Board Meeting Room  
780 Shoreline Drive  
Aurora, Illinois

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We have two goals for the evening.

The first is to provide the voters an opportunity to learn more about each candidate and to have their questions answered in an open and unbiased format.

The second is to provide the candidates an opportunity to express their ideas and qualify their platform to the voters.

### Broadcast and rebroadcast opportunities:

The forum will be broadcast live on the internet at [http://media.ipdsd.org/ipdsd\\_live](http://media.ipdsd.org/ipdsd_live)

It will be rebroadcast on Wide Open West channel 6, Comcast channel 10 and NCTV channel 17.

There will also be a video file available at the IPPC website until the election. You may access this file at <http://ipdsdweb.ipdsd.org/IPPC/Default.aspx>.

This Voter Guide is available at <http://ipdsdweb.ipdsd.org/IPPC/Default.aspx> or <http://naperville.il.lvw.org/>.

understanding of what it means to be a globally competitive high school graduate, experience of prior work in IT and education fields, and current work as a tutor and substitute teacher, and accessibility to all subgroups.

3. Given the current composition of the school board, what role do you see yourself taking or continuing, given your experience, personality, and skill set? I will continue my role of goal-setting, monitoring progress, building partnerships, driving continuous improvement, improving STEM education, and engaging all parents in conversations about a 21<sup>st</sup> century education.

4. What specific changes to district goals and/or policy will you advocate for and why? I will use my global perspective and knowledge of what constitutes a great 21<sup>st</sup> century education to drive policies that ensure every 204 graduate has the skills and tools to be successful and happy. Some goals I consider critical are:

- improving our high school rankings in the US News' annual best high schools in the nation list,
- updating technology-related policies and implementing a top-notch student information system,
- exploring the benefit of evaluating and using cost per pupil per subject as another data point in decision-making,
- creating an online interactive district dashboard of district finances and student performance,
- equity in extra-curricular opportunities, especially in areas of 21<sup>st</sup> Century and STEM,
- leveraging the intellectual and financial resources of 204 alumni through an alumni program,
- allocating resources to improving STEM education for ALL K-12 students,
- designing a high school research course and equipping high schools with STEM research labs (as on the coasts),
- hiring a full-time grant writer, and
- reviewing best practices across the country in performance-based compensation.

5. What steps will you take towards creating open dialogue and transparency with the community?

- Ensure that decision-making is data-driven and includes those directly affected by it
- Survey all stakeholders (students, staff, alumni, residents) every few years
- Ensure every school is using enews effectively, and the academics and activities web pages are accurate

## Alka Tyle

**Elementary Attendance Area:** Spring Brook Elementary School

**Children:** Two. Son Aneesh graduated in the top 15 from Neuqua Valley HS in 2010, and earned a scholarship to Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, where he is a freshman. Daughter Isha attends Gregory Middle School.

### **Background:**

- BS- Computer Science, University of Melbourne, Australia
- MS-Computer Science, Rutgers University, New Jersey
- Did software development at AT&T Bell Labs, L'Oreal, and Acxiom
- Managed computer labs at American International School in Asia

**Current Occupation:** Tutor, Substitute teacher, homemaker, 204 board member since 2006

### **Community Involvement:**

- Director, Indian Prairie Education Foundation (IPEF)
- Coordinator, 204 STEM Parents Group
- Board Liaison, 204 Parent Diversity Advisory Council
- Board Liaison, District Wellness Committee
- PDAC Liaison, Gregory Middle School PTA
- Trained Dialog Circle Facilitator, PDAC
- Volunteer for PDAC's World Café
- Advisory Board, Junior Science & Humanities Symposium, Loyola University, Chicago
- Member, Education Advisory Committee for House Representative Darlene Senger
- Director-at-Large, Illinois Association of School Boards DuPage Division
- Volunteer, ThinkGlobal Arts Foundation's Celebrations of Peace
- Volunteer, Hindu Temple, Lemont

### **2. Why do you want to serve on the District 204 Board of Education?**

- First, our economy depends on an educated and globally competitive citizenry. Today's children hold the key to tomorrow's success at the individual, local, state, and national levels. Second, I have lived in over a dozen communities on three continents. The 204 community stands above all the rest, and the level of volunteerism here is second to none. My family and I have benefited directly from it and I want to do my part. Third, my continued leadership will maintain the positive forward momentum in 204: almost five years of experience on the board, core value of living within one's means learned as a first-generation immigrant first to Australia and then to the US, global perspective gained from extensive life and educational experiences on several continents, solid

## Tonight's Agenda

- 6:40 Arrival
- 7:00 Welcome by moderator
- 7:02 Opening statements by candidates  
5 Candidates X 2 min. = 10 min.
- 7:12 Question 1: **What have you done to improve your understanding of D204 in preparation for running for school board, and what new insights did you gain from your efforts?**  
5 candidates X 2 min. = 10 min.
- 7:22 Question 2: **Other than the financial situation what do you think is the single biggest challenge facing the district? What are your plans to address it?**  
5 candidates X 2 min. = 10 min.
- 7:32 Question 3: **What is the most pressing public education issue in need of improvement? Class size, teacher training, curriculum, security, school funding, or something else?**  
5 candidates X 2 min. = 10 min.
- 7:42 Question 4: **In light of the current economic situation and the expected loss of tax revenue to the district, what budget cuts would you advocate for and why?**  
5 candidates X 2 min. = 10 min.
- 7:52 Questions from the audience  
1 minute responses from the candidates
- 8:22 Closing statements by candidates  
5 candidates X 1 minutes = 5 minutes
- 8:27 Closing comments by moderator
- 8:30 Adjournment

## Meet the Candidates *there are three vacancies*

Curt Bradshaw

Lori Price

Mark Rising

Tricia Tillitson

Alka Tyle

**Each candidate was given the opportunity to submit answers to the following questions for voter information. Their answers are on the following pages.**

- Elementary attendance area in which you reside, number of children you have (if any) and what schools they attend
- Educational background, current occupation
- Involvement with the schools, district, or community on either a professional or volunteer basis
- What in the way of your personal background, work expertise, or skills uniquely qualifies you to serve as a member of the District 204 board of education?
- Why do you want to serve on the board?
- What do you see as your role as a member of the School Board, and what steps do you plan to take to perform that role effectively?
- What specific changes to district goals and/or policy will you advocate for and why?
- What steps would you take towards creating a forum for open, two-way discussion and greater transparency between parents and board members?

Our current board consists of busy, “dedicated to family” individuals who serve our community in numerous capacities. While my community involvement is no less than theirs, as a stay-at-home mom of one child, I believe I am more available and accessible. In addition, I enjoy engaging the public and my ability to respect and value different perspectives, enhances the collaborative process. These qualities, coupled with my “common sense, live-within-our-means” approach, will complement the board well.

As a board member of District 204, I will hold the district accountable for maintaining high educational standards WITHIN THE BUDGET, WITHOUT RAISING TAXES! Also, we can no longer rely on Springfield or Washington for bailouts. The District is going to have to continue to dig hard and deep, identify “necessities vs. wants”, eliminate the practice of paying un-itemized bills, and living within our means. I will ask every employee to submit to their department heads three ways to cut cost without negatively affecting the quality of education and/or safety of our students and employees. The resulting ideas should be consolidated and prioritized according to costs, feasibility, and time constraints and continued through the administrative hierarchy. In addition, it is important to represent ALL taxpayers in a timely manner. This is achieved by remembering the school board works for the public and NOT the other way around and agenda items should be driven by the NEEDS of the public versus accommodating the board’s schedules. To enhance transparency I will advocate for the district’s checkbook register be posted online and in an effort to re-connect with the community by re-instating citizens’ committees. In the event that “surpluses” occur, as was reported during the first BOE meeting of the year, I will advocate rebates for every household in the district.

## Tricia Tillotson

Hello! I am Tricia Tillotson and my husband, Bob, and daughter, Katie, have lived in Naperville since 2003. Katie attended Kendall Elementary, and is an eighth grader currently enrolled in Crone Middle School. I have five years of secondary education from Southwest Missouri State University, and completed a radiology certificate program at the University of California. For the past 28 years I have had numerous full and part-time jobs including 12 years of assisting an orthopedic surgeon and 10 years as a pharmacy technician. More recently, I have worked as a recess supervisor for six years and a crossing guard for five years at Kendall Elementary. My education and employment history are indicative of multiple relocations, secondary to my husband's career.

My community service and involvement has been/ is extensive and diverse. I supported Kendall Elementary PTA for five years and Crone Middle School PTSA where I am serving my second year as secretary. Also, I worked with the Girl Scouts of America for five years. In addition, I am the Vice-President of South Pointe Swim Team organization, member/volunteer at Holy Spirit Community Church, and participant in Wheatland Salem Women's Softball Team. For the past two years I have been politically active via volunteering for Wheatland Township Republican Organization, being elected precinct committeeman for Wheatland Township, and helping to create an organization that educates women on political issues.

I believe in service and action! The service I can give to my community is to be involved. We already have administrators who are experts in their fields. So, we need board members who will make sure that THAT expertise is used to do the bidding of the public. Our job as a school board member is to represent and work for the taxpayers of District 204. As a board member, we MUST be fiscally responsible while continuing to support and promote quality education, within the current budget. The school board needs a transparent, responsible leader who will represent the whole taxpaying community. I am so blessed to live in this great country that allows me to be a school board candidate, representing ALL taxpayers and their families. So I am stepping up to serve and I am ready to roll up my sleeves and work for you and your family.

## Curt Bradshaw

**Family:** Dina and I recently celebrated our 14th anniversary and are the proud parents of Noah (8) and Grace (6). Both children attend Brookdale Elementary and previously attended Prairie Children Preschool.

**Education:** Waubonsie Valley High School; University of Illinois, undergraduate; University of Chicago, M.B.A.

**Occupation:** Executive Director, Product Strategy & Development, Invesco

**Community Involvement:** Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee; Active Member, Grace Pointe Church

### **Why do you want to serve on the District 204 Board of Education?**

I'm running for re-election because I truly believe District 204 can be the best in the State and I would like to be part of ensuring we reach that goal. We are an incredibly strong district and have made significant progress toward that goal, but we are not there yet.

In addition, as a District 204 graduate and father of two young children, I have a strong vested interest in the future success of our district.

### **Given the current composition of the school board, what role do you see yourself taking or continuing, given your experience, personality, and skill set?**

Having served on the board for five years, I have a strong working knowledge of the operational and financial complexities of leading Illinois' third largest school district. And, as the only business person on the board, my experience and perspective will be critical to ensuring we continue to be good stewards of taxpayer money in these difficult financial times.

### **What specific changes to district goals and/or policy will you advocate for and why?**

Over the past couple of years, the board has worked hard to develop a District Accountability System designed to clearly articulate our

will strive to listen, learn, and understand the views of the people in order to make the best policy decisions I can make, without a rush to judgment.

Given the current composition of the school board, what role do you see yourself taking or continuing, given your experience, personality, and skill set? I will be able to jump right in and work collectively with the school board given my extensive knowledge of the District. I come to the school board understanding board's goals, the administration's goals, finances, operations, school governance and current issues. I will also continue to learn and listen to my fellow school board members, administration and community to make the best policy decisions for IPSD. I also bring with me the experiences I've gained through working with multiple organizations in IPSD. Finally, through my 20+ years of business experience, I believe I bring a level of financial knowledge and diversity of thought that has been missing from the school board for a number of years.

What specific changes to district goals and/or policy will you advocate for and why? Overall I think our school board has recognized and is working towards some very good goals. **Regarding Goal 1** – Looking at the data, we are doing well compared to State averages, but we need to work harder at moving our kids from "Meets" to "Exceeds." **Goal 3** – Our achievement gap by sub-group needs to improve. Having worked with Special Needs and Diversity Council I have many ideas on this, and where I believe we can make steps to improve. **Goal 4** – Manage resources efficiently and effectively. I'm assuming that finances are included in this questionnaire. I think it is time we create specific goals that focus on IPSD's finances. Address the results of the financial decisions we've made in the past and identify the improvements we can make going forward. In the end, finances will affect all of our school board and administrative goals.

What steps will you take towards creating open dialogue and transparency with the community? Since Dr. Birkett has taken on the Superintendent role, I think this has improved dramatically. However, I still question the way in which certain school board decisions were, and are being, made. I think our Administration and Board of Education can still improve on explaining why there are different criteria for making important decisions. I will stay informed about issues locally, at the state level, and nationally. It will be my job to represent all the parents and taxpayers in the District and I will listen, learn, and understand public opinion to help me make the best policy decisions I can make while always making sure I do my due diligence. I will also continue to attend multiple IPSD organizations meetings to help me be the best school board member I can be and to best represent all of IPSD.

## Mark W. Rising

**Elementary attendance area in which you reside, number of children, and schools they attend:** Nancy Young Elementary attendance area. I have 2 daughters. 12 year old daughter in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade at Granger Middle School and a 7 year old daughter in 1<sup>st</sup> Grade at Nancy Young Elementary.

**Educational background:** University of Wisconsin at Whitewater B.A. Degree in Marketing and Communications

**Occupation:** Sales Manager – Healthcare Software Company. 20+ years in Sales Management, IT Consulting, Sales and Account Management in the Healthcare and Legal Technology Fields.

**Involvement in the schools, district, or community:**

**Schools and District – Attendance at nearly every IPSD school board meeting since 2005!** **Indian Prairie Parents Council (IPPC)** – 2009-2010 IPPC Rep for Special Needs PTA, 2010-2011 IPPC Rep for Granger Middle School PTSA, 2009-2010 Legislative and Unity Committees. **Special Needs PTA** – 2009-2010 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Current Granger Middle School Liaison. Member since 2007. **Parents Diversity Advisory Council (PDAC)** – Current 2010-2011 Executive Board Member and Granger Liaison. Member since 2009. **Granger Parents Diversity Advisory Council** – Co-Founder and also current Chairperson since Spring 2010. **Nancy Young Elementary PTA** – Involved and current member since 2003. **Granger Middle School PTSA**– IPPC Representative, Special Needs PTA Liaison, PDAC Liaison. Involved and current member since 2008. **Indian Prairie Preschool PTA** - Involved member 2001-2003.

**Community** - Naperville Township Republican Organization (NTRO) – Appointed and Elected Precinct Committeeman, Executive Committee Member as precinct's co-chair. **Oakhurst North HOA** Representative. Since 2008. **Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Naperville** - Member since 1998. Past Sunday school teacher. men's choir.

**Why do you want to serve on the District 204 Board of Education?** We are at an important time in the history of our school district and I believe I have a lot to contribute to the board, our district, and to our community. Since moving here in 1998, my devotion and commitment to being an informed and involved parent has grown into a desire and passion to serve our community. Becoming a school board member is an opportunity to best represent and be an advocate for all 29,500 children and parents in Indian Prairie School District. I feel strongly that I can make the best educational and financial decisions on behalf of all parents and taxpayers living in the District without sacrificing the quality teachers and education we have come to expect in this community. I will make it my mission to stay informed about educational and financial issues here at home and at the State and Federal levels. It will be my job to represent everyone in the District equally and fairly, and I

priorities and ensure that D204 continues to deliver results. This accountability system is comprised of our mission, guiding principles, goals and specific targets and measurements. My goals are fully aligned with the six goals the board has set for our district:

1. Increase the percent of students exceeding state learning standards
2. Increase our average ACT score
3. Narrow the achievement gap experienced by key student sub-groups
4. Ensure proficiency in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
5. Manage our resources efficiently and effectively
6. Be student and community focused

By being both accessible to the community and solution-oriented, I have a record of passing policy changes that better the lives of our students. One of the most recent policy changes I championed originated from a parent discovering their child's bus stop was on the front stoop of a registered sex offender. District policy now requires bus stops to be a minimum of 500 ft from the residence of registered sex offenders (and our website now provides a user-friendly link to registered sex offender databases).

### **What steps will you take towards creating open dialogue and transparency with the community?**

In just the last couple of years we have made significant improvements in communication and transparency by: hiring a superintendent who is a gifted communicator, reinstating our annual report to the community, introducing the Connect-Ed phone message system, placing board materials on-line in advance of the meetings, holding press conferences to coincide with significant events, and launching 204TV.org (an on-demand video channel where you can watch board meetings and presentations related to academics and finances).

In addition, I have personally spent time in all of the district's 33 schools and many community organizations listening to parents and taxpayers. I'm driven by the belief that our families and taxpayers are the true owners of the district and will continue to seek new ways to improve upon our existing communication and transparency efforts.

## Lori Price

**1a.** I have been married for 19 years to David and we have two children in the district. Colin is a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Still Middle School and Katie is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Owen Elementary.

**1b.** I graduated from Eastern Illinois University in 1987 with a B.S. in Consumer Affairs.

**1c.** I am in my fourth and final year as President of the Indian Prairie Special Needs (IPSN) PTA and have also been a member of Indian Prairie Parents' Council (IPPC) for four years. I'm active in both Owen and Still PTAs and currently serve as their Legislative Chairperson. Prior to my commitments in PTA, I was also a Girl Scout leader for two years. I am a member of District 204's Special Olympics Advisory Board and am serving my second year on State Rep. Darlene Senger's Educational Advisory Committee. I advocated for the restoration of cuts made to education by organizing "Caravan to the Capitol" last April in which I took two busloads of parents with me to Springfield to talk with state legislators.

**2. Why do you want to serve on the District 204 Board of Education?** Having been on multiple PTA boards, several district committees, as well as an educational advisory committee, I've had the opportunity to work with parents and teachers from across the district, as well as administrators and state legislators. I bring knowledge of the issues and their impact to students, teachers and taxpayers. Serving in this district has also been one of the most gratifying and rewarding things I've ever done. I welcome the opportunity to take my commitment to this district to the next level and to be engaged in the decisions that affect this community. I come to the table with no agenda, but with a true desire to preserve and improve upon the educational excellence that will enable all of our students to reach their greatest potential, mindful of how the board's decisions affect the taxpayers.

**3. Given the current composition of the school board, what role do you see yourself taking or continuing, given your experience, personality, and skill set?** One of the key roles of a school board member is to serve as the leading advocate on behalf of students. I have been an advocate for my own children for 13 years and an advocate for special needs families in this district for the last 4 years. Through my experience in these roles, I have found a passion for advocacy in education that I feel would be beneficial to students, parents and teachers as a member of the Board of Education. I have two children in this district: a son with special needs and a typically developing daughter. I feel I bring both perspectives to the table and can advocate for all parents and students. In addition to being an advocate, another key role of a school board member is to represent the district as a whole. In my role as president of a district-wide PTA, I am engaged with parents and teachers from every part of the district, including administration. I feel I have a

good understanding of how each of these groups needs to work together to insure the success of all of our students.

**4. What specific changes to district goals and/or policy will you advocate for and why?** I would advocate for added emphasis on social/emotional learning. Social success plays an important role in academic success. With so much of society stressing the importance of the prevention of bullying, we need to educate our students on the effects of bullying and give our students the support they need to cope with or counter what are often daily attacks on individuals because of differences; either physical or cognitive, cultural or socio-economical. I would also advocate creating more partnerships within our community. We have an amazing network of individuals (with and without children in this district) and business partners who we can invite to be a part of the ongoing efforts to challenge our children and help them become more engaged learners. By inviting these people to be involved in these efforts, we foster a sense of community for the entire district, not just in our own backyards.

**5. What steps will you take towards creating open dialogue and transparency with the community?** I think much has already been done in this area. Every week there are various communications sent out from the district such as Points of Pride, Around the District, eNews, ConnectEd, and the Superintendent's message. Communication is also going out not only to District 204 parents, but to the entire community through a quarterly newsletter so those in the district without school-aged children can be kept informed of how our tax dollars are being spent and to see the accomplishments of the school district in which they reside. It also allows those members of our district to feel a connection to the community through the schools. In addition, board meetings are now available on 204OnDemand. Through BoardDocs, the public can see what is on the agenda in a very specific format, including the presentations made to the board. In these ways, the district is demonstrating how we are educating our students at the level our community expects and within the financial constraints that our community understands to be reasonable. These efforts need to continue if we are to bring unity to our district again.