

**Keys to the Candidates**  
**Compiled by the League of Women Voters of Bloomington-Monroe County**  
**for the**  
**2016 General Election**

**MCCSC Board, District 2**

Jim Billingsley  
Sue Wanzer

***1. What are your qualifications for the office you are seeking?***

**BILLINGSLEY:** For my entire adult life I have been interested in improving education and expanding educational opportunities and choices for all children, regardless of their family's financial status or what neighborhood the child lives in. I have a genuine desire to keep the focus of education on where it should be – on the child, and **not** necessarily on what's best for the bureaucracy, the union, or an expensive top-heavy administration.

**WANZER:**

- Served faithfully and honestly for multiple terms providing stability, fidelity, common sense
- ENGAGED, RESPONSIVE, INCLUSIVE
- Always available to discuss and listen to all, even those with differing opinions to learn and understand
- Support for all children and their families
- Active and vocal supporter for teachers, staff, and Superintendent
- Led the effort equalizing insurance payments for staff so those with lowest salaries were not paying most
- Proposed adoption of Domestic Partnership Benefits before marriage equality.

***2. How would you work to ensure transparency in school board operations?***

**BILLINGSLEY:** Since the MCCSC is the single largest recipient of tax dollars in Monroe County, it is extremely important that the corporation's operations, policies, and financial affairs be completely transparent. Many scare tactics are being used to promote the referendum. But if the referendum fails and yet the public has awareness of all expenditures, then non-essential spending is more likely to be cut rather than vital classroom resources. I would particularly insist that expenses for travel, conferences, entertainment, employee fringe benefits, complying with federal mandates, attacking charter schools, and promoting the referendum be published in detail for public consumption. Furthermore, all reporting of budgets and expenditures should be presented in a simple straight-forward manner that the typical layman can understand.

**WANZER:** I would continue to ask the board to not just discuss in public, but to share why and how members arrive at their conclusions. We need to always remember that as elected

representatives of our community, we are responsible to answer to the public. That means responding to individuals when they have questions, being willing to discuss the needs and challenges of public education, and always inviting the public into our discussions.

I would like us to return to the board practice of inviting comments for every agenda item, especially those on which the board will take action. Public comment at the beginning or end of the meeting is not enough to receive input into those agenda items the board considers each month.

### ***3. Should teachers have a role in the development of system-wide policies and priorities and, if so, how can the school board ensure that they do?***

**BILLINGSLEY:** As far as system-wide policies and priorities pertain to issues that affect learning and academic activities in the classroom, teachers absolutely should have a role in developing those policies and priorities. There is also a role for parents, principals, and the community. Teachers are the ones “in the trenches” having daily interaction with the students. They know best what they’re dealing with, what is working (or not working), and they know what resources they need to effectively teach. The school board must insure teachers are represented in meetings and committee activities that affect the classroom. Teachers should especially be empowered to affect policy that maintains discipline in the classroom and minimizes distractions that hamper the learning environment the teacher is trying to maintain.

**WANZER:** It is critically important that everyone have a voice in the school corporation, its policies, and priorities. This especially should include teachers. Teachers are among the most knowledgeable about teaching, learning, proper educational environment, classroom management, and the needs of a diverse population of children. Therefore, yes, they should have a role in the development of policies and priorities, and in most situations they do.

Teachers have input through their building principals and the Monroe County Education Association. Through those channels they have the opportunity to discuss and recommend ideas for changes. I also believe that any teacher should be allowed to feel comfortable discussing general education issues and ideas with members of the school board just as any other community member.

### ***4. Is it appropriate for the school board to oppose state mandates if they run counter to the community’s interests or desires and, if so, how should that be done?***

**BILLINGSLEY:** There is constitutional authority for state involvement in education. There is NO constitutional authority for federal involvement in education. It’s far more appropriate for the school board to oppose unconstitutional and dangerous federal mandates such as Obama’s recent mandate allowing boys (for no other reason than “they feel like a girl that day”) to use

girl's restrooms, locker rooms, showers, and sleep in girl's hotel rooms on overnight field trips. The assault on our children's safety and privacy must be stopped, and frankly, the failure of the current MCCSC school board and superintendent to vehemently oppose Obama's voyeurism mandate is a major reason I'm running for school board. Federal mandates costs taxpayers millions, hurt children, and should be actively fought by the board.

**WANZER:** Yes. Since school board members are elected representatives of the community, it is incumbent on them to represent the community, advocate for their needs and desires, and oppose those mandates by the state which do not reflect the values of the community.

Opposition should be done through open and transparent discussions by the board with input from our community, drafting Resolutions and public statements from the Board, and lobbying of state officials. Additionally each school board member as an independently elected representative has the obligation to share views with the public and state agencies.

I will continue to publicly oppose the use of ISTEP to grade schools and evaluate teachers, as well as the diversion of public taxpayer funds to vouchers and charters.

***5. Given the importance of recess to children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, what are your thoughts on crafting a district wide policy that prohibits the practice of withholding recess as a punishment in our schools or eliminating recess altogether?***

**BILLINGSLEY:** Yes, I agree that recess is important to children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development and I would never advocate eliminating recess altogether. I think teachers would revolt if we didn't provide an outlet for kids to burn off energy. However, I also believe that learning there are consequences for bad behavior is important for a child's moral character development, and if the consequence is giving up recess for that day, then hopefully a lesson will be learned. Theodore Roosevelt said: "To educate a man in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society". Withholding punishment for bad behavior is likely to create more menaces and fewer virtuous citizens.

**WANZER:** MCCSC guidelines strongly discourage withholding recess as punishment. In our individualized learning practices, students may be directed to a different activity or program, but it should not be used as punishment.

Recess is highly valued since physical activity is a necessary part of a kid's day. The Indiana Department of Education does not regard recess as instructional time, which I believe it should be. It is part of appropriate development of the whole child and aides in overall learning.

Recess should be valued as vital to instruction, should be counted as instructional time because it aides in instruction, and should be at least twice a day. If counted as instructional time, a second recess would not extend the length of day.