

# Carroll School election From page 8B

## District 3 (Democrat Twp.)

### C. David Bordner

Age: 40  
Address: 6559S. SR 75, Cutler  
Occupation: Owns and operates Bordner's Truck Repair & Alignment



Bordner

"It is time for me to give back and to serve the community that has given me so much," explained David Bordner as to why he is seeking a position on the Carroll School Board.

The purpose of a school board meeting is to manage and take care of the business of the school, explained Bordner. Public comment should be welcome and appreciated but it must be weighed with what is in the best interest of the students, keeping financial constraints in mind.

"Everyone should have the opportunity to give constructive input," he said. Legitimate concerns need to be heard."

Bordner sees funding as an on-going issue that will continue to create challenges.

And owning and operating a successful business gives him an appreciation of those financial challenges facing the school corporation.

"The well-being of the children must come first," he said. "I think our children are well taken care of at Carroll and I think we have a great administration and staff."

Bordner believes a goal for the school corporation should be a 100% graduation rate.

"We need to step back and re-assess our curriculum and find out why our scores are sliding and from there decide what improvements can be made," he said.

"We need to continually mentor our at-risk students, keeping in mind the goal of a 100% graduation."

Bordner believes the best way to improve education is to have strong leadership in the school's administration.

"We need to maintain the vision set out by prior school boards," concluded Bordner. "We need to continue on the same path by being fiscally responsible and by making every attempt to put our children first."

### Michelle Simmons

Age: 44  
Address: 4501 S. 95E, Bringham  
Occupation: Executive director of finance at Ivy Tech, Kokomo Region



Simmons

Michelle Simmons said before she started at Ivy Tech, she was employed in workforce education training. "It gave me a really good view of what employers are looking for when hiring people," she said. "Many times it's not about their academic achievement or their brain knowledge, it's about their work ethic. As a school, it's our responsibility that we give students a quality education, but we need to teach them to be responsible, too. They need to be on time and respectful of teachers and fellow students."

"Not all students are going to go on for higher education and we just have to see that they have the skills to be successful in the work place," she said.

Simmons said if she is elected she will base her decisions on what is going to be the impact to students. She will look at all the ramifications of a decision and put policy in place.

She believes overall Carroll does a good job with its attendance policy, rules and regulations. "Carroll's a little stricter with its rules and that's probably a good thing."

Simmons said she was pleased to see that the last contract negotiation with the teachers went smooth and timely and "we need to continue that trend."

It is not clear yet how the tax reform is going to impact the school system. "Our priority should be to have continuous educational improvement while meeting state requirements and guidelines and making sure our students, staff and teachers are in a safe and pleasant environment. And we'll have to do that on a pretty lean budget."

Learning how to allocate those dollars will be a big issue, she added.

Through her job at Ivy Tech, Simmons is familiar with the budget process.

"I led our strategic planning for the college and then had to meet up the financial budget to match those strategic goals, a process that is probably very similar to a school corporation."

"Because I've lived on a lean budget in higher education, I can give my expertise to the corporation," she added.

"I received a great education at Carroll that allowed me to pursue my bachelor's degree and have a successful career."

Simmons said that she wants to be a part of board that helps students be successful whether they decide to continue their education or enter the work force. A quality education is her top priority.

### Shawn Wickersham

Age: 35  
Address: 120E. 750S., Cutler  
Occupation: Co-owner of Wick's Packing Service, Inc., Cutler & Flora



Wickersham

Shawn Wickersham said he is running for school board because he wants to see that the excellent academic standards that Carroll students are receiving now continues.

Wickersham said he will always be "looking out for our students." That will be his first priority.

His decisions will be based on how they affect students and whether or not they fit into the school's financial situation.

"I believe we have a good school and good teachers," said Wickersham.

"I want to give a voice back to the teachers and give them a say in the curriculum," he said.

Wickersham said it is important that teacher contracts be ratified quicker than they have been in the past.

"I don't like it that the corporation is always about a year late and teachers work without a contract for a year or more," he said. "That's a major issue for me. I personally would not like to work without a contract for over a year."

Wickersham said he is also concerned about a lack of facility upgrade management. He said he believes projects could be managed better to save taxpayers' money.

He sees a need for more hands-on technology classes such as mechanical, like the powers classes they used to have.

"For students who will not be going onto college, many are coming out of high school just not ready for the real work world," said Wickersham. "I don't know what the answers are, but I would like to look at that issue."

Wickersham will bring his business background to the board, if elected. He welcomes public opinion, but added that decisions are made by the board.

"If they trust me to put me on the board that would be great," he said. "I'll work hard for them."

## District 4 (Monroe Twp.)

### Rob Kauffman

Age: 33  
Address: 1011 S. Center, Bringham  
Occupation: mechanical engineer at Wabash National, Lafayette



Kauffman

Rob Kauffman said he wants to serve on the Carroll School Board because he wants the best for his children, and he wants to try to make a difference.

"I feel this is a way to have an extra hand in my kids' education. I can't complain about something if I'm not willing to do it myself," he said.

"We need a more diverse group of people on the board," he continued. I would bring a different mindset, different life experiences to the board."

He said he believes he also makes a good candidate because he has kids in school and he is involved in many community activities and school sports.

Kauffman has several areas of concern with the present school board and the corporation.

"My feelings are that the school board does way too much micromanagement. My view is that the school board should be an overseer and take care of the corporation in general—trustees. More responsibility should be given to the administrators," he said.

Kauffman added that the corporation needs to be forward-looking in regard to teacher replacement.

"Within the next five to eight years, a lot of our teachers are going to be approaching retirement," he said. "We need to have some kind of succession program in place."

Kauffman said he also thinks there are too many extracurricular activities.

"We need to re-evaluate what is best for the students and the community on our offerings," he said. "Not necessarily eliminate some organizations, but re-evaluate and maybe combine some."

Kauffman believes that the top priority for improving education is related to the staff. He said if teachers are happy with their pay and benefits, enjoy their work, and have a good working environment, it trickles down to the students and leads to a good learning situation.

Kauffman said if he is elected

to the school board, he would vote his own mind, taking into account students and their best interests first, and then other concerns.

He said he would weigh the views of the whole school district since the whole district votes for all seats on the school board.

"The community is welcome at public board meetings, and they should be able to speak their mind, but there needs to be some guidelines set," he said. He explained that citizens shouldn't be allowed to interrupt the meeting, but at the end of each topic they should be allowed to ask questions and express their opinions.

Kauffman said it is important for the community to give support to the schools by going to school activities, ticket sales, etc.

### Sam Zook

Age: 53  
Address: 819S 200E, Flora  
Occupation: agribusiness/farmer



Zook

Sam Zook is completing 12 years on the Carroll School Board.

He said he'd like to remain on the board another term to see some things to completion.

As examples, he cited projects in the corporation's 10-year facility plan, including modernization of the junior-senior high school science department.

Zook said his strong points include his experience as a school board member and board president, and especially his financial experience in helping to maintain a strong, viable corporation financially.

He said he adds to that experience by attending district meetings related to corporation business and following the legislature to see how it affects schools.

He said he is also involved with the corporation as the father of four children in the Carroll school system.

Zook said three areas of importance to him are academic performance, the graduation rate, and school funding.

"Education is measured by academic performance," Zook said.

"Improving academic performance requires a number of commitments—implementing technology in learning, modernizing curriculum, instructional accountability, administrative accountability, and community participation," he said.

"Our graduation rate is not bad, but it is falling," Zook said. "It needs to be studied from both administration and student perspectives. Students have some insight that no one else has."

"The financial aspect of the corporation—financial planning and budgeting—is something that's going to need a lot of attention," Zook said. "With all the tax reforms implemented through the legislature, this is going to be a very critical time to interpret what the legislature has handed us. It's a very important time to be conservative."

Zook said the state will be taking over the funding of the general fund over the next two years.

"We don't know how that will work because it will go hand in hand with property tax relief," he said.

"Projecting and monitoring are important," Zook continued. "It's a good time to have seasoned board members."

"Our past performance has made negotiations and certain improvements more of a challenge because we've put such a priority on financial health."

"Our teachers are not the highest paid and are not the lowest paid, compared to teachers across the state," he said.

Zook explained that the things he takes into consideration when voting are administrations' views, parent and student views, taxpayer/community views, and the financial aspect.

"It's a balancing of all those perspectives," he said. He added that it's rarely black and white, and often takes compromise.

In the area of public comments at meetings, Zook said as president, he opens the floor up to "other business" at the end of the meeting.

He said if he knows a vote is controversial, he allows more time for discussion, including public discussion, before the vote.

"If I know there are several there for a purpose, then I set ground rules based upon the situation and the number of people wanting to express their views," he said.

Board policy calls for prior written request for citizens to present matters to the school board. Zook said the president has the authority to take comments or not, and traditionally, citizens have been allowed to speak, whether they have made prior arrangements or not.



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