



SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE BACKGROUND

November 3, 2026 Election

Note: This information will be released to media personnel, district website, and general public.

First & Last Name: Joel Hollerich

Phone Number: 952-220-5562

Email Address: joel.hollerich@gmail.com

Employment: Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

Children in the School District: 3, 2 at East and 1 and Prairie Winds

Background:

I grew up in Garden City MN, attended LCWM and Mankato State University, and moved to the twin cities metro area after college. I moved to Madison Lake 7 years ago. My mother was an elementary school teacher for her entire working career. I have four children who have been in four different schools in district 77, and my wife is currently a teacher in the district. I have worked primarily in banking and/or for non-profits for my adult life, in both front line positions working with clients, and in leadership roles, as well as spending many years in analytical roles, and held investment licenses. I have helped to coach baseball and football, and served at church in various roles over the last 25 years. Recently, my work has been focused on housing for low and moderate income families.

1. Explain why you would like to serve on the Mankato Area School Board.

1. A basic well-rounded education gives people choices and opportunities. I want every child who goes through our schools to have those choices and opportunities. People who have more choices are happier and have better outcomes in life. Our local, State, and National economy needs skilled workers and people who can think critically. I work in housing, and it's hard to find people who can and want to, fix a boiler or install new windows. We have children in our schools who have already checked out by middle school and don't see the value in getting an education. We have many good teachers who can connect with students and inspire them to achieve more, but doing that can be very hard in large classes without enough para-professional support, or without the ability to remove 1 child who stops the learning of the other 29. We have too many kids who can't read at grade level, too many kids who don't graduate, and too little accountability for kids who won't follow basic rules of behavior. We're losing kids to other schools because parents are doing whatever they can to try to raise kids who have opportunities and choices. I want to reverse that and not only keep kids in our district, but bring students from other districts because the education at MAPS is too good to miss.

2. How can you contribute to a successful school board?

2. With experience in economics, finance, accounting, budgeting, and leadership, I can help with budgeting and trying to do more with less like the district seems to need to do each year. Having worked in property management, I know how to spot problems and prioritize improvements in operations and capital investments, as well as finding things that drain resources. A teacher shouldn't have to publish a wish list on Amazon to make sure he/she has the things that are needed to educate students. I've worked in positions where I was hiring new staff, and know how to find the candidate with the right character to inspire people as well as having the right skills for the role. I'm not afraid to ask questions or push back when presented with information if it doesn't match what my eyes are telling me or when something in a report looks out of alignment with department or organizational goals.

3. Is there anything else you would like to share?

3. Our district places a lot of emphasis on mental health and student well-being. I think the biggest difference we can make in students' mental health is helping them read at grade level so they feel like they can actually do the work, and in turn give them hope that they can graduate and have the future they are dreaming of. I think we need more support for teachers in the classroom. I think we need to do special education well and also need to maintain our AP offerings, as well as make sure we keep band, choir, shop, and other non-college prep classes. We need to show kids that there are lots of good and honorable jobs to be had that don't require a college degree. We need to encourage entrepreneurship in our schools so that we can continue our good and diverse economy here in Mankato. Our schools need to be safe, and staffed with the resources to protect students and staff, and support kids who are struggling with issues not related to academics if at all possible. I think we also need to encourage parent engagement, and find ways to help parents be involved, such as ride sharing to concerts and sporting events, and scheduling conferences that can also accommodate parents who work second and third shift positions. And we need to make sure all our students can be as successful academically as they desire to be. I think the strategic roadmap has too little focus on academic success and too much focus on the school environment.

Signature:

Date:

7-17-2026

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