

Watchmen Voter Guide for Coeur d'Alene School District Zone #3
*** Click on each candidate's name to see their completed questionnaire ***

	Matt Blatt	Heather Tenbrink
1. What is your name, what office are you running for and why are you running for this position?	Matt Blatt, running for CDA Schools district School Board Trustee (Zone 3). I am running because it is time to return our Board and schools to what used to be a normal state of affairs. I object to adults engaging in conversation and teachings on topics that have no place in school.	My name is Heather Tenbrink and I am a candidate for the Coeur d'Alene School Board (Zone 3). All 4 of my children have found academic success in schools in Zone 3 (Skyway, Woodland, and Lake City), and I want to ensure that our public schools continue to provide a robust education for the kids in our community.
2. How could your school district be improved? Please provide your top 2-3 ideas.	The Board must resume its essential role of providing leadership and guidance to the administration. The Superintendent must revert to his role as a subordinate to the Board and focus on Board priorities. The Superintendent must enforce community standards as directed by the Board. He enforces policies through the principals. They must be directed to root out and remove topics and programs which support child exploitation such as social activism, social justice warrior concepts, and sexual-based teaching – all of which have no relation to education and all run contrary to our social values. The district administration is top heavy and laden with a variety of personnel and projects which divert money from essential services like education and school specific facilities. The operational budget and numbers of personnel must be trimmed, and those savings redirected to curriculum support, school-based support, and school specific facilities	Student achievement is a critical area of emphasis for our district. We need to help all of our children more fully master the academic subjects they study in school. As a member of the board of trustees I recently voted to approve our new strategic plan that is focused on student achievement (this replaces the equity framework). I am committed and excited to work through our plan to help students achieve their full potential. Please see https://www.cdaschools.org/domain/2794 for more info on the new strategic plan. I will also work to help our community better understand how money dedicated to educating our children is spent. We rely on taxpayers to fund the education of our children, and I think it is important to help those taxpayers understand what that investment is providing. In addition, I will continue to provide responsible oversight of how funds are budgeted and used.
3. What is your educational philosophy and how do you plan to implement this philosophy as a member of the board of trustees?	Our community and children deserve a proper and classical education founded on the principles of what made America a great nation. As Board member our role is to direct the superintendent and his subordinate staff through policy and procedure decisions. As a board, we must give him specific guidance to remove those programs we oppose, and bring back the program's parents want. In general, we must return to classical literature and civic lessons and stop the introduction of neo-socialist programs which oppose our values. Reading materials should reflect our Idaho culture.	I believe our students are most successful when they have access to excellent teachers, robust curriculum, and a variety of academic courses and extracurricular activities. I will work to ensure that our schools continue to have the resources needed to fairly compensate our teachers and support the courses and activities that help our students find success. I also believe that parent involvement is critical in helping students to thrive. It's important to me that all of our parents feel welcome and know how to be involved in their child's schooling.

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4. What role should “Critical Race Theory” have in the education of children?	Absolutely none. It is an abhorrent concept. It is unfortunate we must be vigilant, but it is important to recognize the proponents of these anti-American programs are smart. Smart enough to keep changing the name, and separating components to slip programming into our classrooms without parents noticing. We already have components in place teaching social activism from elementary through high school. We have Sources of Strength which is design to break down traditional family constructs. Equity has entered classrooms with all levels of students clustered under a single teacher, and most recently a new program called RAMP which is a product of an unabashedly CRT based organization.	I do not support the teaching of Critical Race Theory in our K-12 schools. As a member of the board, I voted for a policy that prohibits schools from requiring students to take responsibility for the past actions of others. When selecting school curricula, I believe we should seek age appropriate resources that present academic subjects accurately and objectively. Our students should learn to rigorously analyze subject matter and weigh evidence so that they can form their own well-reasoned opinions when called for. Academic materials that are intended to advance a political narrative or disparage a racial (or other) group have no place in our schools.
5. Would you support adding diversity, equity, and inclusion to the school curriculum? Why or why not?	Again no. These are programs created to divide communities and break down traditional family and religious based values. All children deserve equal education and opportunities, but not every child is as smart as another. Not every child will take to the violin any more than other children having a knack for differential calculus.	I believe in the Golden Rule, which suggests that we do unto others what we would have others do unto us (see Matthew 7:12). I believe most people adhere to this concept, regardless of their individual religious faith. I believe our schools should reinforce the notion that all people should be treated with dignity and respect.
6. What is your view on the growth of Charter Schools?	They are a great idea as they foster competition – an essential component of American culture. Government run schools need a return of this competition to have the incentives to improve academic outcomes. Furthermore, many people want to have a more direct role in educational options such as religious or conservative based values. Charter schools give parents the option of moving their children to schools more closely aligned with their values.	Charter schools play an important role in providing options for families seeking alternative educational opportunities. However, those institutions aren’t the right option for all students and families. As a trustee for the Coeur d’Alene Public School district, I am dedicated to ensuring that our public schools provide an excellent educational experience so that all students have the chance to receive a first-rate education.
7. Should children be allowed to access obscene materials through school libraries? Please base your answer on the federal definition of obscenity.	No. The only books available via taxpayer funds must be those directly related to their school programs. No child should be accessing a book which contains obscene or sexual content. This is not a 1st amendment or “book-burning” issue. I object to using taxpayer funds to provide materials those taxpayers object to.	Because they primarily serve children, school libraries must ensure that materials balance exploration of ideas against the age and maturity of the children they serve. I trust our librarians and teachers to select worthwhile, age-appropriate library materials. I also have confidence in our policies for challenging library materials if a disagreement arises. I support efforts to make it easier for parents to know what materials are available in our school libraries and which materials their children are accessing. In this way, families can adjust their children's use of the library based on their own values and standards.

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8. Do you support or oppose bathroom and locker room usage based on preferred gender identification? Why or why not?	Bathrooms and sports must be based on biological sex. This whole gender fight is a distraction to everyone. It is a small, vocal, and militant group which is attempting to shape our conversations and focus away from what is important. Furthermore, I object to spending any employee time or taxpayer funds devoted to addressing these irrational requests. Some have proposed spending taxpayer funds on bathroom modifications. I will not consent to wasting taxpayer funds on such projects. We must find some kind way of addressing the underlying problem if a child has been taken down this path by his or her parents.	I support and voted to enact our district's policy requiring students to use the bathroom consistent with their sex at birth, or a designated single-occupant facility. This policy ensures that our district is in compliance with Idaho law. I support efforts to provide more privacy to all students in school restrooms and locker rooms.
9. How should counselors work with parents to resolve issues with their children?	A growing problem in our school system is the incremental development and growth of medical clinics in the school. We do not need to divert taxpayer funds to provide medical care on school property. There are a variety of clinics with trained professionals and access to insurance or welfare for payment. The counselors should be limited to identifying a problem and notifying the principal and family if there is an issue for which they recommend a referral.	Because parents are the primary influence in their children's lives, I believe that children's needs are best served when counselors and parents work together to help a child resolve issues. Except in cases of abuse, neglect, or other situations where the child's safety is a concern, counselors should maintain communication and partnership with parents.
10. What is your opinion on students being able to receive an abortion or change their gender without parental notification?	No school administrator or school-related person should be allowed to engage in this conversation with a minor child in any way or at any time. If made aware of an issue with a minor child, they must inform the parents or guardians and then remove themselves from the engagement.	The only health care our schools are equipped to provide is first-aid, support for students with chronic conditions such as epilepsy or diabetes, and administration of parent-provided prescribed medication. Any other medical care is outside the scope of the school district's involvement. Legal issues regarding parental notification are the purview of the legislature and courts.
11. Do you support the 1619 project? Why or why not?	No! it is pure anti-American propoganda meant to divide our society. While the study of history is always of value, pretending history changes with time is a fabrication.	See question 4 regarding Critical Race Theory.
12. In what circumstances should students be able to receive mental health assistance without parental notification?	Only by law enforcement and only after the school officials have properly notified law enforcement of an issue that cannot be directed to parents or guardians such as abuse.	See question 9 regarding how counselors should work with parents.

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13. Who has the responsibility for the education of children?	Parents do; however we have to have some degree of trust that the teachers have our children’s education as their primary motivation.	I believe it is the responsibility of parents to ensure their children are educated. As a parent, I am grateful for the resources and dedicated teaching professionals our district provides. The CDA school district has helped me fulfill my responsibility to ensure that my children receive a quality education. As a member of the Board of Trustees, it is my responsibility to ensure that all students in our community have access to a “...general, uniform and thorough system of public, free common schools” as outlined in the Idaho State Constitution and that those schools are well-funded and expertly-administered.
14. What should the goal of education be?	Teaching abstract concepts ultimately so that graduates have developed critical thinking skills and the ability to figure out how things work. This is the opposite of many current programs which are trying to teach our children WHAT to think, instead of HOW to solve problems.	An education should provide our students with the skills they need to provide for themselves and thrive in the world around them. Education should help our students to think critically, effectively express their ideas, and make and recognize well-reasoned arguments. It should help students better understand and succeed in the world in which they live. Additionally, we all benefit when we live, work, and interact with other people who have had the opportunity to receive a quality education.
15. Do you support or oppose the legalization of marijuana? Why or why not?	No. I had 13 years as a paramedic to see first hand what happens to those who use illicit drugs. Aside from the moral failure, those who use drugs are unlikely to lead fulfilling or productive lives.	Mind-altering substances that impair a student’s ability to focus and learn do not belong in our schools, regardless of whether those substances are legal.
16. What is your background and why do you feel it qualifies you for this position?	I was a senior Army officer for 28 years. My career included projects and programs to rebuild failed or failing nation governments. I was an advisor to foreign government officials and ministers. My final years of service were in the Pentagon providing analysis of national strategic problems and advice to senior US military and government officials. Throughout my career I was responsible for working with small teams and large organizations. In all cases I was responsible for coordinating many officials – each who had their own vote or veto – ultimately to build a coalition to accomplish the most difficult of challenges.	I am a mother to 4 children who have all attended Coeur d’Alene schools over the last 15 years. I have a vested interest in ensuring our schools are the best they can be. My volunteer service in classrooms and as Treasurer and President of the Skyway PTA has helped me understand how our schools operate and has provided me with opportunities to form relationships with our teachers and staff. My professional background as a tax accountant has provided me with the technical knowledge to understand complex budgets and other fiscal documents. And, my experience serving on the Board of Trustees over the past two years has given me valuable insight into the needs of our students, as well as the budget, funding sources, and administrative structure of the district. Heather Tenbrink