

Board of Education Candidates

The terms of office for current board members, Jody Gates, Mike LaCava and Carole Dwyer will expire on June 30, 2023. There will be three 3 year terms (7/1/23-6/30/26). The three candidates receiving the most votes will be elected to the 3 year terms.

JODY GATES



I was raised in a small farming community, attending a small school much like LaFayette.

I also graduated from a small college in Iowa.

My family and I have lived in this great

and welcoming community for twenty years, raising four children who are now young adults contributing to the communities they now live in. They are all alumni of LaFayette.

My six years of experience as a Board of Education trustee include helping to write new mission and vision statements, and new core beliefs. I am part of a school board that met the challenge of the pandemic by leading the way by having students in school five days per week, bringing the district successfully through a long and trying time for us all. More recently I advocated for school building improvements at Onondaga Nation.

One of my favorite things about serving on the school board is all the varying backgrounds we come from. Each one brings a unique perspective working together to make decisions. As one of my former board members so wisely said, "We may disagree on an issue but let's not be disagreeable."

If I am elected I will continue to work collaboratively with other board members, support students by encouraging them to pursue excellence, knowing that every person in every building matters and they can succeed and flourish. Every student deserves an education in a safe and secure learning environment, the district's first core value.

If elected it would be an honor to continue to serve the LaFayette community as Board of Education trustee.

MIKE LaCAVA



Hello fellow parents, friends and LaFayette School District residents. My name is Mike LaCava and I am respectfully asking for your vote on May 16th to renew my seat on the LaFayette School

Board. Beginning in 2005, I served for twelve years and it has been an honor to represent you again in the current school year, advocating for the students, parents, teachers and community members of LaFayette.

I've lived in the community of LaFayette for the past twenty-eight years with my wife, Claire and our two kids, Chase and Riley who both had excellent educational experiences in the LaFayette schools. I grew up in Cooperstown, and Claire is from Greene, NY. We were fortunate to find another small community to raise a family here in LaFayette. In the past, I was actively involved in coaching youth sports, LaFayette Community Council, Booster Club, Optimist Club, and charitable endeavors. I currently serve on the LaFayette Planning Board, Republican Committee and as a deacon at Northside Church in Liverpool, NY.

I was employed by New York Central Mutual Insurance for over thirty-two years. At NYCM, I achieved the level of Senior Vice President working in a diverse team environment. I retired in 2017. I am currently a real estate agent with Next Home CNY Realty. My prior school board experience, as well as my business knowledge, makes me uniquely qualified to serve you on the LaFayette Board of Education. I am fiscally conservative with budgetary experience in both the business sector and the school district setting. This background is a valuable asset with appropriation of funds for the future of our district. A quality education with responsible spending is a key duty for a school board member. I will promote a collaborative approach to strive for even greater transparency with the community. I am an independent thinker and I will focus my decisions on what is best for the students of LaFayette.

I look forward to building on the many successes achieved by our schools and also will actively seek out opportunities for change through the evaluation of existing programs, making necessary adjustments to maximize the effectiveness of education for all of our children. It will be my absolute privilege to be entrusted with continuing to serve LaFayette as a member of your school board. Thank you for the opportunity to continue to represent and serve you.

LARKIN PODSIEDLIK



I grew up just over the hill and went to Fabius-Pompey. I graduated from SUNY Geneseo for college, and Tufts University for graduate school. I received an MS in Agriculture, Food

and the Environment and a Master's in Public Health with a concentration in Nutrition. I have spent my career working in the nonprofit and agriculture sectors in urban and rural areas, doing community nutrition and garden education, philanthropy, school wellness and Cooperative Extension work. Much of my work has been connected to schools. I've trained school wellness teams to develop policies and apply for grants to boost their school wellness work, and I have taught nearly every age group from pre-K to senior citizens how to grow food, cook, and eat healthy on a budget. In my current role as Executive Director at Cornell Cooperative Extension Madison County, I work closely with a Board of Directors, which functions much like a Board of Education. In addition to my professional work, I serve on the board of CNY Regional Market Authority, multiple SUNY Geneseo Alumni committees, and am a member of the Women's Fund of CNY. I recently ended a two year term on the LaFayette Conservation Commission.

We moved to LaFayette in 2019 to raise our young family. My husband is a teacher in another district, our son is a student at Grimshaw, and our daughter is 3. After living in Boston, Rochester, and the Ithaca area we returned to CNY to be closer to family and our roots. We chose LaFayette for its rural character and the wonderful community we saw here.

I enjoy serving my community and seek out opportunities to put my skills in communication and leadership to good use to build a stronger rural community. I want to support and advocate for all our students at all four schools to help them receive the best possible education. I want to work with other board members to find common ground and shared values to help our youth succeed. I also understand the perspective of teachers and aim to learn from their deep understanding of student needs. Our district has unique needs and I would like to help ensure adequate resources for student success. My goal on the board would be to build consensus and shared understanding, be a good steward of taxpayer dollars, support teachers, and advocate for the success of all children in our community.