

Candidate:

Katie Raaen –

Parent (2nd and 4th Grade)



What motivates you to want to become a DaVinci Academy school board member?

I am motivated to join the DaVinci Academy School Board because of my strong commitment to ensuring all students, including my own children, receive the best possible education. As the Director of Strategic Marketing and Business Development and a mother of two boys at the school, I have a vested interest in the success of our students. I'm particularly passionate about advocating for students with special needs, as I work for a nonprofit that provides jobs for individuals with disabilities. Through this experience, I've seen the impact of supportive educational environments and am dedicated to ensuring our school provides the resources for all students to thrive. Additionally, as a member of the Senior Leadership Team and co-chair of the Business Strategy Committee at my organization, I've developed strategic plans focused on growth and funding. I believe these skills can help DaVinci Academy continue to succeed. I am excited about the opportunity to collaborate with the board to foster a school culture that values inclusion, academic excellence, and community engagement.

What do you feel are the top three most important responsibilities of the school board?

Financial oversight and budget approval, adopting and overseeing policies, setting the long term strategic vision and high-level goals.

What specific skills, expertise, and/or contributions would you bring to the school board?

I bring a strong background in strategic planning, financial oversight, and advocacy to the DaVinci Academy School Board. As the Director of Strategic Marketing and Business Development, I have extensive experience in creating and executing long-term plans that drive growth and sustainability. I have led and participated in the development of both 3- and 5-year strategic plans and co-lead the Business Strategy Committee. Additionally, I have a solid understanding of business financials and budgeting, ensuring that resources are used efficiently to align with the organization's goals and mission. I believe these skills will help guide DaVinci Academy's continued success, supporting both its academic and operational priorities.

As a mother of children with unique learning needs and working at a nonprofit that provides jobs for individuals with disabilities, I am passionate about advocating for students with special needs. I understand the importance of fostering an inclusive environment that provides all students with the resources they need to succeed. I would work to ensure the school creates a supportive, welcoming atmosphere while strengthening communication between the board, parents, and the community to ensure all voices are heard.



How will the DaVinci Academy community benefit from your participation?

The DaVinci Academy community will benefit from my participation by bringing a strong focus on strategic planning, financial sustainability, and inclusivity. With my experience in developing long-term growth plans and managing budgets, I can help ensure that resources are used efficiently to support both academic excellence and operational success. Additionally, as a parent of children with diverse learning needs and a professional working with individuals with disabilities, I am deeply committed to advocating for an inclusive and supportive environment for all students. I will work to strengthen communication between the school board, parents, and the broader community, ensuring that more voices are heard and that decisions reflect the needs and values of our diverse school community.

How is membership on the school board compatible with your current professional and personal obligations?

Membership on the School Board aligns well with my current profession and personal commitments, as my job is supportive of my involvement in community activities like this. As the Director of Strategic Marketing and Business Development, I have the flexibility to manage my time effectively and prioritize my responsibilities. Additionally, I currently pursuing my MBA, which will further enhance my ability to contribute to the board through stronger strategic and financial insights. My professional and academic pursuits, combined with my commitment to DaVinci Academy as a parent, allow me to offer meaningful contributions while maintaining balance in my career and personal life.

Have you ever served on a non-profit board or school board, if so describe the board, length of term, your role, how you were involved, and what you accomplished.

Yes, I was on the Northland Family Center Board from 2019-2021. The Northland Area Family Service Center in Remer, Minnesota, serves as a resource for families in the Northland Community School District and parts of the Leech Lake Reservation. Established in 1996, this nonprofit organization offers a variety of programs aimed at supporting and empowering families. Their services include Family Support, Healthy Families America, ParentChild+, Preschool, Child and Teen Checkups, etc.

Candidate:

Heather Newcomb –

Parent (3rd, 4th, & 7th Grade)



What motivates you to want to become a DaVinci Academy school board member?

I have been asked by a few people to run for our school board over the years. This has been both inspiring and intimidating. I am a regular volunteer at the school and can see how hard everyone works to make DaVinci a success. I feel more familiar with the faces at DaVinci and confident that I can take the next step now to be an active member of the board. I appreciate seeing our community come together and grow. I want to ensure that our school continues to be a place of listening to learn and finding solutions that will work best for everyone at DaVinci.

What do you feel are the top three most important responsibilities of the school board?

I think the top three areas of focus for the school board should be creating policies that make students, staff, and families feel safe at DaVinci, finding the focus and direction to make sure our students excel, and making sure we are using our financial and physical resources responsibly.

What specific skills, expertise, and/or contributions would you bring to the school board?

I have a heart for our community and have worked with the Equity Committee for two years to invoke more community involvement. I have experience in office management and communication which help me understand the organizational side of things and creating timelines needed for success.

How will the DaVinci Academy community benefit from your participation?

I have a good rapport with many of the teachers and parents. I have a good understanding of scheduling and logistics to ensure that we can both keep our students, staff, and families informed and involved as much as possible.

How is membership on the school board compatible with your current professional and personal obligations?

I am available on the fourth Monday evening of every month and for committee meetings as needed.

Have you ever served on a non-profit board or school board, if so describe the board, length of term, your role, how you were involved, and what you accomplished.

Not Applicable

Candidate:

Amanda Linn –
Parent (1st Grade)



What motivates you to want to become a DaVinci Academy school board member?

I love that my daughter attends DaVinci Academy. We felt ecstatic when we got the email saying she had been allocated a spot in the Kindergarten Lottery. I love the fact that DaVinci supports the arts and sciences, something I as a nurse hold very dear to my heart and profession.

I am devoted to helping my children grow and become well round human beings. I feel that it is our job as parents to help guide and support them as they become responsible educated members of our community. I have often heard it said "It takes a village to raise a child." By taking an active role on the board, I would not only be able to support my children and their education, but all the children that attend DaVinci Academy. I can help be their village and advocate for their future. I would also be able to help support the educational institution and their goal to provide a quality and comprehensive education to the students attending DaVinci Academy in our community.

What do you feel are the top three most important responsibilities of the school board?

1. The Students – each student is unique. It is pivotal we meet them on their level and do what we can to help them be successful in their education and school achievements. Each child needs to be seen for who they are and what will help them rise to their full potential.
2. The Staff – They are the front-line workers helping our children learn. Making sure they are supported and given the resources they need to achieve their goals and educational curriculum requirements.
3. Fiscal responsibility to the school – With all the changes in the near future regarding funding of education, it is very important the school remain fiscally stable and use the resources it has in ways that will benefit the students and teachers with minimal waste.

What specific skills, expertise, and/or contributions would you bring to the school board?

As a mother and nurse, I know that I am uniquely qualified to handle a variety of situations. I am well versed in time management, critical thinking, prioritization, active listening, providing education and teaching opportunities, conflict resolution, effective communication, and developing interpersonal relationships. I work extensively in an environment that requires a team to come together to ensure positive outcomes.

Working as a nurse at HCMC, the safety net hospital in Minneapolis has also provided me with vital insight into Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity. I often work with a population of patients that come from various backgrounds, cultures, religions, languages, and life experiences. Some patients are homeless, underinsured, uninsured, non-English speaking, or may not have any support from family or friends nearby. I know that every person's needs and views of the world are shaped by their experiences. It has taught me to be aware of implicit bias and how important it is to advocate for people and their unique needs.

I can bring to the board ears that will listen, a heart that has genuine concern, the ability to reconsider my personal viewpoint and change my mind, an appreciation for change, and resiliency to see the job through to the end.

How will the DaVinci Academy community benefit from your participation?

I fully acknowledge that I do not know everything about DaVinci Academy, how it works, and how it is run. This is only our second year at the school. I do see this as a possible strength for me. I do not know how things have been done or the history of the organization as well as others. This gives me the ability to look at concerns or problems that can arise with a new set of eyes and potentially able to provide an alternative perspective or input. I am not afraid to change my mind or acknowledge things I do not know.

Working in the profession of nursing, the only thing that stays the same is change is inevitable. I believe in evidence based practice. When I do not have an answer, I will research how to find it, ask the questions, talk to those who are experts in the field, and seek outside input to better understand the best way to come to a resolution.

How is membership on the school board compatible with your current professional and personal obligations?

Currently I work casual at the hospital, and I determine when I want or am able to work. It provides me with the flexibility being a mother of 3 kids requires. It requires I work at minimum two - 8 hour shifts a month. I am married to a very supportive man (Matt), who also happens to be a nurse.

I fully understand that being a member of the board would require time for meetings, planning, and committees. I have the time available and the flexibility to be present and active on the DaVinci Board of Directors.

Have you ever served on a non-profit board or school board, if so describe the board, length of term, your role, how you were involved, and what you accomplished.

I have not.

Candidate:

Kristin Broman –

Parent (Kindergarten & 3rd Grade)



What motivates you to want to become a DaVinci Academy school board member?

More than ever, I feel we need an increase in servant leadership in all governing bodies. I believe that a great leader is someone who does more listening than talking and can find creative solutions to existing problems. This is the first year our kids have been at DaVinci and we have watched our children flourish. I am eager to help where I am needed to ensure that our school is set up for success for all students and all staff. I believe the diversity of our school is what makes us resilient as a community.

What do you feel are the top three most important responsibilities of the school board?

I think the top three responsibilities are supporting our teachers, supporting our students, and managing our school budget. For me, these three pillars are all equally important and work in tandem with each other.

I believe that creating an environment where teachers have the ability to grow their skills is tantamount to the school's success. This means that they need access to training and resources and feel that they have room to grow and build within the DaVinci community. Our students need a safe and supportive space to learn. Education is no longer a one-size-fits-all style which is wonderful, but also comes with its own obstacles. This is where student success policies and accessibility are key. Resources will be limited during the term length of this board position. This requires creative solutions when it comes to balancing our budget. Implementing passive incomes streams like the School Store is an excellent example of this.

What specific skills, expertise, and/or contributions would you bring to the school board?

Implementing accessibility is one of my strengths. My cultural background, travel experiences, and my work history have given me a unique perspective on what creates accessible environments. I believe that children who are struggling to learn just haven't been able to access successful pathways yet. I run a cottage foods small business which means I manage many diverse roles. I handle all client communication, marketing, scheduling, teaching, bookkeeping, inventory, and product creation. It has helped me hone my skills in every area of keeping a business running smoothly. I use every class and experience to streamline my processes and I excel in creating new accessibility pathways for my students.



How will the DaVinci Academy community benefit from your participation?

I am an action-oriented person. I believe that each problem can have a unique solution and I do not accept broken processes with the excuse of "that's the way it's always been done." The DaVinci community is diverse and constantly evolving so we must adapt as well. This does not mean "move fast and break things." The most important part of fixing processes is taking the time to learn how it currently works and then problem solve for the areas that may need a little more support.

How is membership on the school board compatible with your current professional and personal obligations?

I own and operate my small business by myself. I control my own schedule to best fit the fluctuating needs of my family and time constraints which means I can devote as much time as needed into this role. I have volunteered for many small roles through my church and local community but now I am ready to dedicate focused time on one area. I could not think of a better cause to focus that effort on than the community of DaVinci Academy.

Have you ever served on a non-profit board or school board, if so describe the board, length of term, your role, how you were involved, and what you accomplished.

I have not served on a board before but I am excited for the opportunity to be considered for this role. I am ready to dedicate time and passion to making sure that each DaVinci community member feels supported from the staff to the students and families.