

WILLIAM FLOYD

Board of ed candidates

BY RANDALL WASZYNSKI

Two seats on the William Floyd School District Board of Education are open to election for a three-year term. The two candidates running for these two seats are incumbents. A third seat is under appointment through next year since former trustee Anthony Speruta stepped down.

Residents will vote on the proposed \$240 million budget and candidates on May 15 from 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. in the east lobby of the high school.



Robert Vecchio

Robert Vecchio has served as the board's president since 2006 and runs unopposed to serve another term. He has served on the board for a total of 15 years and is a dedicated advocate for the school district. He created Our Community Salutes, a military enlistee recognition program honoring

high school seniors who have enlisted in the Armed Forces for the service that they are about to undertake. He has also taken a significant role in the Tri-Hamlet Community Day Celebration, an event that exemplifies the history of the community that dates back to colonial times. Spotlight on Long Island Schools each Saturday morning on LI News Radio 103.9 is another venture that Vecchio has pursued, focusing on the positive things happening in schools across Long Island.

Vecchio has previously served on legislative and executive committees for the Nassau-Suffolk School Board Association and spearheaded the William Floyd district joining the Statewide School Finance Consortium, a group with the primary goal to secure funding for public schools across the state. He was the inaugural recipient of the NYSSBA Champion for Change award in 2015. He also serves on the Brookhaven Town Board Ethics Committee as well as being a trustee for St. Jude's R.C. Church. Vecchio and his wife Laura live in Shirley and have two children, both of whom graduated from William Floyd.

In the upcoming term, Vecchio would like to see the graduation rate exceed 90 percent and reach 95 percent by the end of the term. He sees the William Floyd Learning Center and William Floyd Academy at the high school level as recent steps to reach that goal and to keep students within district.

State funding is an ongoing challenge for the district, and balancing that with the resources from local property owners in

the form of tax can make things difficult. Vecchio believes that seeking cost savings when necessary is absolutely vital.



Thomas Gross

Thomas Gross has served on the board since 2006 and is a lifelong resident of Mastic Beach, growing up in the William Floyd School District and graduating in 1980. Gross has worked as an electrical foreman for the last 30 years and is a member of labor union IBEW Local 25. He is also a Third Degree Knight in the Knights of Columbus and a lector at St. Jude's R.C. Church.

The most memorable part of service on the board for Gross is the opportunity to participate in the annual commencement ceremony. Seeing the students and being aware of the challenges that some of them had to overcome will always leave a lasting impression in his memory.

In the upcoming term, Gross wants to put an emphasis on breaking ground on the \$39 million capital investment project. He was involved considerably in the planning of these projects and would like to see them completed during the term.


Gross does not see any new outstanding challenges for the board in the upcoming term, however, he stresses that the highest quality education within the district's means, growth in state aid and a 2 percent tax cut represent a continuing challenge for the district.



Lorraine Mentz

Lorraine Mentz was appointed to the board after the departure of former trustee Anthony Speruta. She lives in Shirley with her husband Chris and their two daughters Madison and Mikayla, who currently

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