

Sam Catterson

Bio: I grew up in Clinton and graduated from CCS in 2001. I went on to get my Bachelors of Arts in History at Ithaca College in 2005 and recently completed my Masters degree in Education with a specializing in secondary social studies at Utica College in 2016. I spent almost all of my adult life working in public schools in both Colorado and New York, including working for five years as a Campus Supervisor for a high school of 1100 students in Colorado. I was in charge of the safety and security of that school as well as enforcing the student conduct code. It required me to work closely with both our school administration as well as law enforcement to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for our students. In 2016 I was hired by Utica College to serve as Associate Head Coach for Cross Country and Track and Field, a dream job for me that also gives me the time and opportunity to continue to support the Clinton school district as a volunteer. I have been married to my wife Meghan (Danyew) Catterson for eight years, and when we moved back to upstate New York, Clinton was the only school district we considered living in. CCS is the only school we wanted our children to attend. We have two wonderful children, Quinn who has had an amazing year as a kindergartner at Clinton Elementary and Ryder who is three and is very excited to follow his sister through CCS. I have worked in the Clinton School District as a Coach. I had the opportunity to do both observations and my student teaching at Clinton while completing my masters degree. These experiences have motivated me to find any way I can to support our district, and my experiences working in other schools have given me a tremendous amount of knowledge and ideas that we can use to improve CCS.

Questions

1) I believe the most pressing issue facing CCS next year and every year is how we can continue to improve the educational experience while responding to changes in both funding and educational guidelines from the state of New York. We know that the financial support we receive from the state will change year to year. When state funding is reduced we need to step up as a board and as a community to make sure that our students and teachers have the resources they need to be successful. When we receive more funding from the state we need to find the most efficient and practical ways to use the money to improve our school and the education our students are receiving. One way that we can ensure we have the resources we need is to eliminate waste from our budget through responsible oversight. Recently I addressed our school board about the use of tax payer money to pay for students who do not live in our district to play sports, this is an obvious and ridiculous use our districts money and needs to be addressed. Our priority needs to our students first. In recent years we have seen innumerable changes in educational guidelines from the state department of education(Common Core for example). These changes are often designed to help failing schools succeed. Clinton is not a failing school, as a school board we need to support and empower our highly qualified teachers to not only utilize the best practices outlined by the state, but also to use their knowledge and years of experience to teach students the best way they know how.

2) I am heavily invested in our community. My Grandmother graduated from CCS in 1943, My mom in 1968, I graduated in 2001, and my daughter should graduate in 2030. My family believes in CCS, and we all were provided a great education here. I want to be in a position to help ensure that our district continues to be a great place to get an education. Working at CCS

reminded me of all the amazing teachers I had(some of them are still there) and the amazing students we have in our district. You will not find someone more motivated to make our district great. Like the T-shirt Coach Palladino gave me my senior year in high school said " I Bleed Maroon"

3) We have an excellent school district, but there are always many ways that we can improve. Having worked in school districts in Colorado and spending time locally at Sauquoit, Waterville, Utica City Schools, and Oriskany I realize that we must be constantly working to ensure our kids have the most educational opportunities possible, we must see other districts as competition and strive to be better than them. I also believe our district can improve the physical appearance of our schools and outdoor facilities. I recent capital project spent a huge amount of money to install a grass football field, that looks identical the the field that we had before, it is also expensive and difficult to maintain and not ideal for the sports we are using it for. Our grounds and sports field are often not as well maintain as the districts around us, we have signage that is outdated and inaccurate. These are small problems, but when visitors come to our school, this is what they see. A few simple solutions will drastically improve the "face" of our district. Anyone who has coached or played sports at CCS in the past 10 years knows that our athletic department is desperately in need of leadership and oversight, as a school board member I will take an active role in providing this.

4) Our school board should never be trying to maintain the level of quality of education at CCS. We should be working constantly to improve the quality education at CCS. The board can accomplish this by working to ensure we have the best teachers in the state, and that those teachers feel valued and supported by both administration and Board. We have amazing teachers and ultimately they will determine the quality of the education at CCS. It is our job as a board to support and empower them, and to make our district and attractive place to work so we can continue to attract and retain highly qualified and dedicated teachers

5) First and foremost I bring a passion for our community to this board. It's the relationships I have built with students and teachers that motivated me to run for school board. My previous work experience has made me an expert in both school safety and student discipline. As a Campus Supervisor I oversaw school lockdowns and evacuations, I participated in expulsion hearings, and created safety plans for students with serious behavior issues. I was also trained in federal emergency management protocol as well as non violent crisis prevention and intervention. I oversaw the use of my building as a FEMA shelter during Colorado wildfires and flooding. The school I worked at in Colorado had an International Baccalaureate program, a large number of AP course option for students, A program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder that pushed inclusion and support for those students, and a massive ESL program for many students who were not native English speakers. The time I have spent in districts outside of Clinton and outside of New York have given me a tremendous amount of knowledge that I can bring to our district, but also understand our community and our culture so I know how we can integrate new ideas into our already excellent school district.

-Sam Catterson