



## **As They See It: Candidates for the Radnor Township School Board give their views**

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As Democratic candidates for Radnor Township's four open seats for school-board director, Brucie Rapoport, Rob Armstrong, Doug Blazey and Lydia Solomon are committed to fiscal discipline, accountability, integrity and transparency in governance. Our team, "Leaders for Radnor Excellence," has the skill set and knowledge to deliver a superior education for all students despite challenges from budgetary cutbacks and the financial uncertainty of the economy. As the school board faces an estimated \$3 million in budget cuts next year, we are committed to preserving the quality of a Radnor education and not to have these cuts affect class size. If all four of us are elected, we plan to make resources available where they can make the most impact and to find and eliminate wasteful expenditures wherever they may be. We will institute a much-needed curriculum audit of our schools to make sure students are ready for the future and at the same time ensure that we are not wasting tax dollars through redundancy. Finally, we are intent on making the school board culture one of openness and inclusion for all stakeholders. Radnor residents need to know how their tax dollars are being spent. The current practice of the school board to not entirely share information with the public has created an environment of misunderstanding of its decisions and waste of our limited resources.

In prior letters to the editor, we have called for several changes regarding public interaction with the school board. Currently taxpayer participation is stifled during public school-board meetings by the practice of limiting public comments and not permitting dialogue between the board and the public. None of us wants to return to the days when meetings ended at 1:30 a.m. after hours of circuitous discussion, but currently the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. We believe that it is possible to harness the creativity and positive contributions from so many intelligent and caring participants and still run orderly and respectful meetings. The best results for our educational system can only be reached by listening to many points of view. By stifling public participation, the school board is squelching the opportunity to hear contributions that would lead to the best ideas and solutions. Defenders of the status quo use the fear of litigation as reason for not having on-the-spot candor with residents at meetings. We believe this fear is unfounded. Many surrounding school districts are more open and transparent and able to share information with the public in a positive way that benefits all without incurring costly litigation from frank discussions.

Further, if all four of us are elected, we intend to televise the committee meetings where most of the business of the school board takes place. By doing so the public can really understand the underlying processes of how policies and decisions are being made. A simple review of the additional cost of filming committee meetings shows that these costs are nominal and would provide substantial benefit to the public in knowing how their money is being spent. Our slate of candidates believes that more transparency and more inclusiveness are vital for a healthy democracy. The result will be a better outcome for our students. Why is the practice of limited public engagement tolerated in Radnor? As taxpayers we deserve better treatment from the school board. We can no longer afford to elect school-board directors who tax and spend without answering to Radnor residents.

To learn more about our campaign and what we hope to accomplish for Radnor residents on the School Board please watch our YouTube campaign message posted on our Web site at [www.radnorexcellence.com](http://www.radnorexcellence.com).

*Rob Armstrong, Doug Blazey, Brucie Rapoport and Lydia Solomon are Democratic school-board candidates.*