

**League of Women Voters® of New Castle  
2019 Voters Guide for the Chappaqua Central School District Board of  
Education and Chappaqua Library Board**

*Note: The candidates themselves supply candidate information in this Voters Guide. The League takes no responsibility for the content or accuracy of the responses. School Board and Library Board responsibilities are included at the end of this Voters Guide.*

**Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education**

Two seats up for election

**Term:** 3 years; volunteer position

**Election:** Tuesday, May 21, 2019 from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Horace Greeley High School

**Candidates (in ballot order):** Cailee Hwang, Hilary Grasso, Warren Messner\*, Jeffrey Mester\*, Leah Heiss

\* Warren Messner and Jeffrey Mester are incumbents. Their submissions reflect their individual views and not the views of the Chappaqua Central School District and School Board.

<b>Cailee Hwang</b>	<b>Hilary Grasso</b>	<b>Warren Messner</b>
<p><b>Current Office:</b></p> <p><b>Education:</b> Nyack College-Elementary Education Math/Science Concentration Teachers College, Columbia University-Literacy Specialist Program</p> <p><b>Residence:</b> New Castle, Chappaqua resident since August, 2013</p> <p><b>Occupation:</b> Literacy Specialist</p>	<p><b>Current Office:</b> None.</p> <p><b>Education:</b> I have a B.A. from the University of Pennsylvania (Class of 2000) and a J.D. from Columbia Law School (Class of 2003). I also completed several graduate level courses in Education at Manhattanville College.</p> <p><b>Residence:</b> Chappaqua, 12 years</p> <p><b>Occupation:</b> Education Attorney, currently in solo-practice and Adjunct Professor of Education Law &amp; Special Education Law at St. John’s University School of Law</p>	<p><b>Current Office:</b> I am currently the President of the Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education and completing my 6th year as a member of the school board</p> <p><b>Education:</b> Marietta College - BA; Polytechnic University (NYU) – MSM</p> <p><b>Residence:</b> I have lived in Chappaqua for 17 years</p> <p><b>Occupation:</b> I am currently retired. I held various sales, finance and management positions at IBM for over 31 years</p>

<p><b>Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:</b>  Chair for various committees for RBS PTA  Chappaqua Garden Club member</p>	<p><b>Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:</b>  Co-Chair of Grafflin ASE Committee (2018-present);  Chair of the Temple Beth El Inclusion Committee (2018-present, previous committee member);  Active PTA volunteer (ongoing);  Volunteer at the Pleasantville Cottage School and Benefit Committee Member (ongoing);  Volunteer with the Chappaqua Children’s Book Festival (ongoing).</p>	<p><b>Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:</b>  I served as a member of my church council in various positions including President of the Council. I served as a member of the Executive Board of AHome.</p>
<p><b>1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the School Board?</b>  I am an educator and teacher by training but it is not these titles that make me able. I put my confidence in the experiences and insights I have gained in living life as a mother of 3, a wife, a friend, neighbor, and community member. The many hats that I wear each day as an ordinary person will enable me to be an effective board member. My desire is to serve the community by extending my passion for excellence in education in pursuit of becoming life-long learners.</p>	<p><b>1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the School Board?</b>  I have represented the NYC Department of Education, Westchester school districts, charter schools, and parents, providing insight into most areas of education law. I’ve trained Committees on Special Education, written public school regulations, and represented both public schools and parents in disputes. My experience representing both sides uniquely positions me to understand the nuanced expectations and realities parties face when addressing education issues. My work on behalf of schools has included: vendor disputes, discipline matters, board recruitment and governance trainings, employment and discrimination lawsuits, review of RFPs, development of English Language Learner programming, and adjudicating appeals for New York State.</p>	<p><b>1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the School Board?</b>  I have served the community as a member of the Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education for the past six years, am currently Board President (my second year as President) and chairman of the audit committee. I also served as a member of the wellness and facilities committees, and liaison to the Horace Greeley Scholarship Fund and Chappaqua for Youth.</p> <p>I worked for the IBM Corporation for 31 years in management, sales, marketing, and finance, retiring seven years ago. I use creativity and consensus building gained through my business leadership experience to solve complex problems in a thoughtful way.</p>

<p><b>2. Why do you want to serve/continue to serve on the School Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing Chappaqua schools and how you would address it (them).</b></p> <p>My commitment to serve as a public servant is to listen, collaborate, represent and be a bridge of communication to the people and for the people. I am dedicated to represent the diversity of this community in the various facets of life. We all chose to be here and stay here because we care, we recognize the importance of great education. We aspire for knowledge and creativity, we seek independent thinking. I am devoted to be attentive and thoughtful, listen and engage. To be a sagacious citizen to the tasks at hand and the great endeavors that lie before us.</p>	<p><b>2. Why do you want to serve/continue to serve on the School Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing Chappaqua schools and how you would address it (them).</b></p> <p>I am closing my law practice and hope to use my experience to give back to the community we love. Through speaking with parents, I believe one challenge facing the district is balancing the benefits and challenges of inclusion and differentiation. Innovation, resilience, compassion – all are goals, but they’re just words until we have classrooms that challenge all learners to push themselves academically and artistically, while working collaboratively with their peers to problem-solve. We also need to prepare our children for a technology-dependent future, without overreliance on technology for teaching and learning today, while fostering creative and interpersonal skills.</p>	<p><b>2. Why do you want to serve/continue to serve on the School Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing Chappaqua schools and how you would address it (them).</b></p> <p>I look forward to continuing to serve on the Board of Education on behalf of our community and students of our district to complete the projects that I have been involved with.</p> <p>The main issues that our school district faces are -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being fiscally responsible, maintaining and improving the programs offered, having a long-term fiscal plan that protects the district against unforeseen changes, providing a great educational foundation for our students and value for the property owners.</li> <li>• A balanced education with a strong focus on social and emotional health.</li> <li>• Improving the safety and security of all of our facilities.</li> </ul>
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<b>Jeffrey Mester</b>	<b>Leah Heiss</b>
<p><b>Current Office:</b> 12 year, 4-term, Member, Chappaqua Central School District Board of Education</p> <p><b>Education:</b> Kellogg Graduate School of Management, Northwestern University: MBA, Finance and Real Estate University of Virginia: BA, Major: Economics. Minor: History</p>	<p><b>Current Office:</b> N/A</p> <p><b>Education:</b> MS, Applied Mathematics, University of Washington BS, Engineering &amp; Applied Science, Caltech Phillips Academy</p> <p><b>Residence:</b> Chappaqua, 8 years</p>

<p><b>Residence:</b> New Castle, 20-year resident. I have lived in all three elementary school boundaries</p> <p><b>Occupation:</b> Self-Employed equities and derivatives trader</p> <p><b>Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12-year School Board Member, Chappaqua Central School District.</li> <li>• Volunteer Coach for over 20 teams, Chappaqua AYSO, NCYBBA, NCBSA, etc.</li> <li>• Participant in various New Castle Forums as panelist.</li> <li>• CCSD representative to the PNW BOCES.</li> <li>• Served as BoE Representative to the Horace Greeley Scholarship fund.</li> <li>• Serve(d) on various Board community committees including both the S-T and L-T Security task forces as well as the RFP Committee</li> <li>• Worked extensively with the BoE and with various outside groups to get two turf fields at the high school.</li> <li>• Father of two Chappaqua Fire Department Firefighter/Volunteers</li> <li>• Commissioner, Billy’s Basement Boys</li> </ul>	<p><b>Occupation:</b> Homemaker</p> <p><b>Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:</b> PTA volunteer at RBS 2012-present RBS PTA Special Ed Committee Chair 2017-present Bell PTA Special Ed Committee Chair 2017-present CCSD Special Ed Advisory Committee 2017-present Girl Scout Leader 2017-present Cub Scout Leader 2018-present Executive Committee (Treasurer) at Briarcliff Nursery School 2012-2016 Board of Directors of the Obstruction Island Club 2003-2006</p>
<p><b>1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the School Board?</b></p> <p>Experience matters. For the last twelve years as a Board Member, I have worked tirelessly on behalf of the community. It requires an extensive knowledge of the district, a passion for education, a complete understanding of the budget and its structural issues, a person who can make practical and reasoned decisions, who can build consensus, who can balance competing community interests, and vision and conviction. It is recognizing we have a fiduciary obligation to all the tax payers, not just ones with students in the schools. There is no substitute for experience and a track record. I stand on mine.</p>	<p><b>1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the School Board?</b></p> <p>I learned from my past board and committee experiences that effective governance comes from excellent communication, a strong commitment to teamwork, the ability to “agree to disagree”, and a willingness to compromise for the greater good. Each person on a board has a different perspective, insight, background, and approach. An effective board respects each others differences, is strengthened by them, and capitalizes on each member’s talents.</p>

**2. Why do you want to serve/continue to serve on the School Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing Chappaqua schools and how you would address it (them).**

Experience matters. We must ensure the quality of the education remains at a superior level while maintaining fiscal discipline and responsibility. We must continue to support the outstanding new administrative team. We need to continue to invest in teacher professional development including, but not limited to, integrating our new/upgraded facilities with the curriculum. We need to advocate for and challenge all of our students, Special Ed, gifted, and all those students in the middle of the bell curve. We must represent the entire community, those with students and those without. We need to be transparent and responsive to the community.

**2. Why do you want to serve/continue to serve on the School Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing Chappaqua schools and how you would address it (them).**

With four young children in the district (grades 6, 5, 2, 2), I have a long-term vested interest in CCSD. My experience as a parent has shown me that a “one size fits all” education is inadequate for many children. Our district can do better. I will bring thoughtful, fact and data-driven decision making to the board. Our school district is doing well. We have excellent facilities, teachers, staff, and administrators. Our finances are well managed. We are making progress on our goals to provide for our students’ social and emotional wellbeing. Yet, there is still room for improvement.

## **Chappaqua Central School District Ballot Propositions**

### **PROPOSITION - BELL SCHOOL CAFETERIA IMPROVEMENTS**

"Shall the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, Westchester County, New York be authorized to perform certain alteration, reconstruction and renovation work, including replacement of equipment at the cafeteria at the Robert E. Bell Middle School, including incidental expenses, at a maximum expenditure of \$390,000, with the amount of up to \$190,000 to be transferred from the Fund Balance in the School District Lunch Fund as of June 30, 2019 to the capital fund to pay for the costs of such project. (The remaining amount will be paid through interfund transfers to the capital fund in the general fund budgets for the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 school years.) No budget increase is called for in this proposition."

### **PROPOSITION - SAFETY AND SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

"Shall the Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District, Westchester County, New York be authorized to perform certain safety and security alteration, reconstruction and improvements at the Robert E. Bell and Seven Bridges Middle Schools and Douglas Grafflin, Roaring Brook and Westorchar Elementary Schools, including but not limited to building access/entrance renovations and reconstruction, installation, repair and upgrades of building access controls and security measures, including incidental expenses, at a maximum expenditure of \$1,350,000, with the amount of up to \$1,350,000 to be transferred from the Unassigned Fund Balance for the 2018-2019 school year to the capital fund to pay for the costs of such project. No budget increase is called for in this proposition."

## Chappaqua Library Board

One seat up for election

**Term:** 5 years; volunteer position

**Election:** Tuesday, May, 21, 2019 from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm at Horace Greeley High School

**Candidates:** Lane Elizabeth Shea is running uncontested.

### Lane Elizabeth Shea

**Current Office:** N/A

**Education:** B.S.B.A., American University, 1997

**Residence:** Chappaqua, New York since January 2015

**Occupation:**

Managing Director with Harbor Group International, a real estate investment and management firm

**Prior Civic and Volunteer Service:**

Prior Board Member for Tom and Ann Hunnicutt Family YMCA, Newport New, Virginia; prior Parish Council Member of Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, New York City, New York; prior volunteer with Overnight Women's Shelter at Church of Holy Family, New York City, New York

**1. What experiences and skills do you have that will enable you to be an effective member of the Library Board?**

As a mother, a business person, and a mentor, the most important skill I can contribute to the library board is enthusiasm to move forward. My experience making executive decisions and pushing through difficult situations are skills that have enabled me bring success to other business organizations. I look forward to using those same skills to benefit the Chappaqua Library.

**2. Why do you want to serve on the Library Board? Please include what you consider is/are the main issue(s) currently facing the Library and how you would address it (them).**

My children utilize the Chappaqua Library for reading enjoyment, entertainment, tutoring and studying. The Library is a wonderful resource to this hamlet and I look to serve on the board to ensure that it remains a vibrant resource for other children in the community.

## School Board and Library Board Responsibilities

### School Board

#### Role of the Board

The Board of Education of the Chappaqua Central School District is legally responsible for the education of children residing in the District and the operation of the District's public schools and facilities. The Board shall establish policies and practices that ensure a high-quality education for every student and proper governance of all aspects of District operations. The Board shall exercise oversight of and responsibility for the effective financial management, control and reporting. The Board shall seek to interpret community need and formulate short- and long-range plans to meet such need. The Board shall be responsible for presenting to the community a proposed annual operating budget, bond proposals and other matters that require public vote.

The Board shall evaluate the performance and progress of the District versus identified goals and objectives. The Board shall prepare an annual written performance evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools. It shall also evaluate its own performance and progress as a Board.

The Board shall observe all federal, state and local laws and regulations pertaining to education and public agencies.

*From <https://www.ccsd.ws/board-of-ed/policies-and-regulations/policies-and-regulations-2000-governance/policy-2000-board-of-education-principles-and-organization>*

### Library Board

#### Responsibilities of a Board Member

The responsibilities of trustees are few in number but broad in scope. They are:

- Create and develop the mission of the library;
- Regularly plan and evaluate the library's service program based on community needs;
- Select, hire and regularly evaluate a qualified library director;
- Secure adequate funding for the library's service program;
- Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the use of public and private funds;
- Adopt policies and rules regarding library governance and use;
- Maintain a facility that meets the library's and community's needs;
- Promote the library in the local community and in society in general;
- Conduct the business of the library in an open and ethical manner in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and with respect for the institution, staff and public.

*From HANDBOOK FOR LIBRARY TRUSTEES OF NEW YORK STATE, 2018 Edition*