

## **1. Please introduce yourself and why you are interested in running for School Board**

My name is Dean Dobbertin. I am 66 years old and I have lived in the district my whole life. I was a fifth-generation dairy farmer until 2005. I am currently involved in property management which is a family-owned business.

I have been a Merton School Board member for over 20 years. Being a school board member has been my way of giving back to the community. The most gratifying thing about being a school board member is the opportunity to see what great things the children are doing in school.

## **2. From your perspective, what is the top issue presently facing the district? What is your position on this issue and what would you recommend the district do differently or approach on this issue?**

The most pressing issue facing our district is being able to hire and retain qualified personnel. The employment market for schools is being impacted by the same reasons that the private sector is facing. The employee pool for schools to draw from is being limited by less people choosing a career in education.

To help this issue, I feel we have to make our salaries and benefit packages complete with other schools. The greatest way we can impact change, is to restore trust and respect between our board and our staff.

## **3. How do you see your professional or personal experiences contribute to impacting the district as a school board member? What opportunities exist in the district for you as a member of the school board to make the greatest impact?**

My life experiences, being a lifelong resident of the Merton Community, a business owner that has created a payroll and being a father and grandfather, gives me a well-rounded vision.

Over the many years of being on the Merton School Board, my involvement has been in facility management and personnel negotiations. Most of my time on the board, I have been the board president and worked closely with the superintendents.

**4. With schools across the state being hit with decreased state aid and budgets being tightened, how would you go about deciding what to continue funding, keep doing, stop funding, doing, or look to expand funding? What are some of those ideas/programs/areas the district should continue to fund, stop funding or look to expand funding in?**

The Merton School District is facing decreased State aid because of the increased values of properties in the district. Because of the drop in State aid, resident's property taxes will have to pay a greater portion of the school's budget than in the past. Unlike many districts in the State, our enrollment has increased. This allows the district to increase our revenue limit for paying for our budget needs. These two scenarios create an increased tax burden on our residents, making board decisions very difficult.

As a school board, we should not be looking to cut programs but be willing to work with other school districts to share costs in order to maintain programs. Examples would be; sharing advanced subject instructors, fine arts programs, and possibly even administrative staff.

In the past, the Merton School District worked well with the PTO, community businesses and individuals to help fund special projects.

Dean Dobbertin