

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

My name is Megan Cole. My husband of 11 years, Jim, and I moved to Merton in 2018 and are so happy to call Merton home. We have a daughter in Kindergarten at Merton and son who will attend Merton 5K the Fall of 2025. I was born and raised in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, attended the University of Minnesota, lived in Chicago for many years, tried Florida for a few but Midwest is home and came back to Wisconsin in 2018. Jim is from Maine and we both feel at home where we have space, can experience nature and the four seasons.

I am running for the Merton Community school board to show commitment to our kids and community. Merton, and all our schools, deserve our collective focus and investment that is objective, informed and representative of the values of our community. That starts with a foundation of collaboration, transparency and trust. I believe that as a parent, member of the school board, and resident of this community I can help pull together the building blocks to strengthen that foundation. As a “new” family in the district, I have many years to invest and look forward to continue building on the education and development Merton offers.



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 this issue?

A rank as #6 in the State is amazing but there are things we can work on in- and outside the classroom to ensure our kids have a solid foundation for the future. Top priority is to gain, or re-gain, trust of the community, staff and administration. The stability of our district is dependent on how we as parents, community members, board members, administration and staff work together. That has to start with respect and trust.

I think the best way to build that trust is clarity and communication. Let’s be clear on roles and responsibilities of the board and administration; even more important as open roles are filled. This provides clarity and stability with our teachers and staff and establishes the right source or authority for our parents and broader community.

Let’s also continue to communicate the facts in a way that is clear and accessible. As decisions are made, the board and administration must be clear in communicating the “why”. Whether there is complete agreement on a decision or not, I find that understanding the process can help build a bridge to understand if not agree.

Building trust will require all of us – parents, board members, community members, administration, teachers and 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?

I have a longstanding career in Information Technology (IT). For seven years and counting, I have worked at Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits, the largest wine and spirits distributor in the United States and also one of the largest privately held companies in the country. As a leader of a team, role as chief of staff and responsibility as an IT liaison across the company, I recognize the importance of transparent and factual communication as a foundation in building trust. I have extensive experience in managing multimillion-dollar efforts, developing roadmaps and objectives, as well as creating and executing on plans to achieve them. In my professional role it is critical that I make timely and informed decisions, coach and provide feedback to my team members as well as seek feedback and opportunities to extend my knowledge and perspective.

Personally, and professionally, I find joy in being a steward for my team, stakeholders, community, and self. Watching others shine and knowing I may have had at least a small part in that gives me a great sense of accomplishment. I want Merton to shine! As a board member I see myself as a steward leader and would bring an open mind and transparent communication to the table. True collaboration will be imperative to moving forward as an effective team and I can be part of the puzzle to help improve on that principle.

- 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?**

When it comes to providing quality education no one wants spending cuts but I understand we will have to balance where the district spends funding it does have and not overburden the community to make up for decreased state aid. The Merton Community School District is in a somewhat unique situation having strong financials. However, we will likely have increased spend in the coming years as we address space for the needs of a growing district, ensure we are able to retain and attract top talent and maintain comfortable class sizes. Addressing these needs will require a strong strategic plan and prioritization with input from parents, community members, staff, administration and the school board. We could also explore partnerships with local districts to pool resources where it makes sense from a logistical and efficiency standpoint.

There will be no simple answer to the funding question. It will take strategic and out-of-the-box thinking supported by financial models and feedback from the community.



I look forward to being your voice on the Merton Community School Board. Let's build tomorrow together!