

School board election: Looking into a controversial year

By Caroline Sierk

The highly anticipated election for three available seats on the PV school board was held Nov. 2, 2021.

Since spring of 2020, the active school board has been bombarded by the responsibility of making various unprecedented decisions to protect Spartans' safety and well-being. Pertinent conversations on mask mandates and Critical Race Theory have been at the forefront of the board's responsibilities and have generated substantial attention from the PV community.

As election season approached, most

candidates adopted campaigns that reflected the current climate and wants of voters. For instance, one ubiquitous promise this cycle was an active opposition to the aforementioned mask mandate.

Senior and National Merit Semifinalist Lauren Anderson attended the Oct. 11 meeting. She recalled mask mandates as the primary point of discussion and shared, "I hope that the school board prioritizes the complete well-being of students and their health over the opinions of parents. Students' health, both mental and physical, should always be the top priority."

This issue is very prevalent at the moment, but as the pandemic resolves over the next few years, masks will no longer be at campaign forefronts.

This has created conflict for voters in balancing their short-term and long-term hopes for the district.

Anderson furthered her point: "I would hate to see student safety pushed to the

back-burner so the school board doesn't face as much disagreement from parents or for other external reasons."

Seven individual members compose the PV school board, and each serves a four-year term. Five candidates ran for the first, second and seventh districts.

After contender Sara Bennion announced her resignation from the race, incumbent Kathryn Kunkle ran unchallenged in District #1. With 87% of votes, Kunkle will continue to serve on the board.

Incumbent Brent Ayers took the District #2 seat over Jon Kundert with 80% of votes and will also extend his term.

Instead of running for re-election, District #7 sitting board member Jean Dickson ran for alderman at large on the Bettendorf City Council. She trailed Council incumbent Lisa Brown with 42%.

Without an incumbent, the District #7 rookie candidates Doug Kanwischer and Aaron Hawk came in close with Kanwischer at 55% and Hawk at 45%.

These three elected victors will serve the community alongside President Nikhil Wagle of District #3, Molly Brockmann of District #4, Jodi Hoskins of District #5 and Christina Anderson of District #6.

Anderson

reiterated,

"With a Blue Ribbon award-winning high school and Iowa Teacher of the Year on faculty, the PVCS D sets an example nationwide that is only made possible with a dedicated school board. Together, they pledge their commitment to excellence and will work to continue PV's success as a leading school district."

