

Meet the Candidates for the Carmel Central School District Board of Education

Paul A. Collazo • Tara-Elena DeTurris • Debra Heitman-Cayea • Matthew Morello • Evelyn Perrault • Gregory R. Purdy, Jr.

On June 9, 2020, registered voters will select two candidates. Here is a brief introduction of candidates

(NOTE: As of May 20, 2020, no information was received from Gregory R. Purdy, Jr. This will be updated should that change)

Paul A. Collazo

My name is Paul Collazo. I am running for a seat on the Board of Education because I believe we are in desperate need of change and that I am in a unique position to deliver on that goal. I believe our school board should be reflective of our community and not be a rubber stamp board. I believe in the freedom to express opposing opinions in government without vilifying one another. I believe in the majesty of the democratic process without conspiring to overturn the expressed mandates of the people. I believe our school board members should be role models for our students instead of engaging in antics unbecoming of the office they hold. I will also strive to once and for all reign in wasteful spending to bring our oppressive taxes under control. We simply cannot continue to shrink the tax base by driving away our neighbors to lower tax areas and continue to offer a quality education in Carmel. It is simply an unworkable situation.

I am a lifelong member of our community, having grown up in Lake Carmel and graduated from the Carmel school system. I am invested in our community and want nothing more than for the future generations to be afforded every tool in order to succeed in whatever they may wish to do. In order for that to happen, we need a Board of Education who will support that vision and with your vote I hope to be part of that vision.



Tara-Elena DeTurris

In seeking a new term on the Board of Education, I will again work collaboratively with Parents, Students, Teachers, Staff members, Administrators, and Taxpayers to create equitable solutions that will benefit ALL students to be college and career ready. I will advocate for teachers and staff who are educating our students by giving them the tools they need to support our children in this ever-changing world.

I do not have a personal agenda or make any promises, as I know an individual board member has no power or authority; only as a whole board we can make policies and decisions that consider what is best for all students.

I joined the Carmel community in 2002. I am a parent of three students in the district and a taxpayer. As such, the decisions I make as a Board Member must live up to the high standards I have. I do not take that lightly.

I am actively involved in the community through volunteer work as well as coaching girls' sports. This past February my children and I worked with the Carmel Rotary Basketball Challenge to successfully raise enough money to end the outstanding lunch debt for our Carmel students.

I recognize that the primary focus of all Board Members decisions must focus on our students and those that support them. I believe in the Culture, the Compassion, and Collaborations within the district, but most of all Communication, as that is what makes Carmel and our schools a great place for students to thrive.



Debra Heitman-Cayea

There is an old saying, "Home is where the heart is!" It's the exact reason I chose to remain in Carmel and raise my family here. I have lived in the town of Kent for most of my life (almost 50 years). My k-12 experience was in the CCSD and I graduated from CHS in 1988. I returned after college because, "There's no place like home." My husband, Todd, and I have three children together. Our oldest son Peyton, graduated from CHS in 2019 and is a Freshman at Bryant University. Our other two, Trevor and Breleigh are currently students in the District.

I have been an educator for the past 25 years. Currently, I am an administrator in the Byram Hills School District in Armonk, NY and have been for 12 years.

I have served as a community volunteer in many capacities. I was the Homecoming Committee Coordinator for many years, served on the board for the Pied Piper Youth Theater Group and was a founding leader for Carmel Rams Youth Football, Cheer & Lacrosse Programs.

There are many challenges facing schools; such as the tax cap and a growing number of unfunded mandates. I believe that transparency, efficient systems and effective communication are key aspects in building an environment of trust. I am committed to using facts as a basis for decision-making and will work tirelessly to keep the primary focus on the most important group within the school system - the students.



Matthew Morello

Hello, neighbor. I'm Matt Morello and I'm a lead nurse at a top-rated skilled nursing and post-op rehabilitation facility in the Hudson Valley. I oversee patient care, ensuring the health care needs of patients and their families are met consistently. In recent weeks, I've been serving on the front lines of the global pandemic, committed to providing superior care during critical moments in patients' lives, placing their imminent needs first.

Prior to my career in health care, I worked alongside global investment banks and financial institutions, focusing in the areas of talent acquisition and new business development.

At home, I'm a dedicated husband and father of two children, both of whom attend Matthew Patterson Elementary School. The common thread running through my diverse professional and life experiences is my commitment to helping people. I'm a compassionate and empathetic person who will strive to meet the needs of local families and help ensure a successful educational experience for our youth. As a Carmel resident and father of school-aged children, I'm just as vested as you are in providing the best possible education for our children and the future of our community. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you, in service of the community we call home



Evelyn Perrault

My name is Evelyn Woolley-Perrault. After working in the school busing business for many years, I am now a retired senior citizen. I like giving back to my community and now have the desire and time to devote to the education of children in the Carmel Central School District.

This year with the pandemic, I understand it has been a very difficult year for school districts. Possible loss of funding, keeping taxes under the mandated cap, and ensuring an excellent education are the biggest challenges the district will face this year. In addition, unemployment will be a major factor in homeowners being able to pay their school taxes.

I would work with other board members to keep quality education for the students, keeping a watchful eye on district spending, and represent district residents fairly and honestly.