

Nick Lenhardt

nrl003@yahoo.com

March 11, 2024

DMPS (Des Moines Public Schools) Board of Directors Vacancy

ATTN: Rosie Rios

2100 Fleur Drive

Des Moines, IA 50321

rosa.rios@dmschools.org

Dear school board members,

I am writing to express my interest in the district 4 Board Position at Des Moines Public Schools. With my passion for advocating for the successful outcomes of all students at Des Moines Public Schools I am confident in my ability to contribute effectively towards the community's vision and values. Specifically, I will describe how I will advocate and represent the community in the following draft Board goals and guardrails:

- **Goal 1 – Literacy and Goal 2 – Career and College Ready: –Due to challenges at home,** I was raised by my grandparents. Despite not completing high school themselves, they instilled in me the belief that every child deserves a chance to excel through education. As the first college graduate in my family, I understand the transformative power of education. I came from very modest means and from a community where many did not even graduate high school. Education allowed me to see a path forward in my life and I am committed to ensuring all students have the same opportunities via public education.. I believe the only way to rise from the circumstances a child is born into is to excel in education. This starts with literacy. I believe the investment in literacy is crucial for closing educational gaps and setting students up for long term success. As the literacy outcomes for our students at DMPS rise, students will begin to thrive which is why these two goals are so intertwined. Our students succeed in literacy they will become more career and college ready. Literacy is more than fundamental it is critical to ensuring our students are ready for the next phase of their lives. I have three boys of my own currently going through their DMPS journey and I will do everything in my ability to ensure not only my own boys are successful at DMPS, but all their peers will be as well.
- **Guardrail 1 – Equity:** Equity, in essence, is about fairness and ensuring everyone has access to the same opportunities and resources, regardless of their background or circumstances. It's not just about treating everyone the same, but rather acknowledging and addressing the unique barriers and challenges individuals face to level the playing field. I could not be more passionate about this topic. I have two brief stories that I'd like to share. First of all, I have observed first hand in my parents-in-law, who are both blind, how certain groups are underserved and face significant obstacles in their daily lives. From things that are significant like lack of transportation to inconveniences like

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inaccessible menus at a restaurant, these experiences highlight the importance of advocating for equity to address these unmet needs and ensure that everyone can fully participate in society. Unfortunately, many blind children and even some adults are illiterate. They are provided audiobooks over being taught braille. Their needs are not being addressed due to their disability. And they are not given access to the same opportunities or resources to address their unique needs.

I have also experienced challenges with equity first hand in my own child's experience at DMPS. My oldest son is an advanced learner. With so much emphasis on the underachieving student within the school day, it has become increasingly apparent to me that the advanced learner can easily be left behind, especially in the middle school years. My son was so bored during his school day that he would plead to not go to school each day of 6th and 7th grade. He was experiencing boreout also known as chronic boredom. He carried that exhaustion from boredom home with him every day. You see, boreout has the same impact as burnout. He was fatigued, lacked interest in activities that usually cause him joy and was generally disgruntled. He would complete his assignments in class each day and be left to fill his time on his own. His teachers acknowledged this issue but indicated their lack of ability to differentiate learning for him while they are struggling to get the rest of the class to the mean. Half way through the first semester of 7th grade, my son started to check out. That is when I had to intervene. We were able to work with the math teacher, APL consultant and other administrators to successfully assess our son and advance his math class a grade mid-semester. We continue to work with him and the school to identify ways for him to fill his free time throughout the day. He is doing well in 8th grade math and feeling more challenged. Unfortunately, I feel like we would have had a different outcome without advocating for this change.

My personal connection to inequities through both my parents-in-law and my son underscores the importance of empathy and understanding diverse situations. By recognizing and actively working towards equity, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where everyone has opportunities to thrive.

- **Guardrail 2 – Social and Emotional Learning:** Social-emotional learning is just as crucial as literacy in equipping individuals with essential life skills. SEL prepares individuals to cope with challenges, communicate effectively and contribute positively to society. SEL helps students develop skills as goal setting, perseverance and cooperation which are all important to academic success and ultimately contribute to an individual's executive function long-term. Again, learning through my own personal experiences in raising children, there is so much connectivity between SEL and academic learning. The connectivity is not dissimilar to the connection of mental health to physical health – both are important.
- **Guardrail 3 – DEI:** My wife is a graduate of Lincoln High School and went on to attend Simpson College. Simpson College draws many of its students from in and around Iowa.

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With much of Iowa being rural, much of the student population is from a small town in Iowa. My wife became very aware of how her public school education at DMPS prepared her for college once she realized the limited exposure and perception of differences in individuals that her new peers shared. She often speaks of the exposure that she had as a child to different socioeconomic factors, race and religion as the corner stone for her being able to deal with different situations. For that reason, we chose to move from Ankeny to Des Moines and to place our kids in the DMPS district. We acknowledged that there would be equivalent academic opportunities. I would even suggest superior opportunities at DMPS with Central Academy and Central Campus offerings. More than anything, we knew that DMPS would provide exposure to diversity in race, socioeconomic status, language, ethnicity and culture. Through such exposure, our children would gain an understanding of differences. They would approach such differences with curiosity and free of bias. Most of all, they would gain appreciation and even empathy for such unique differences and related challenges that are present. I have already seen the benefits of this exposure.

I'd like to share a few examples of experiences my sons have had in this area. My oldest son, Kingston, sat next to an African boy in 6th grade. He had just arrived in Iowa from Kenya and spoke Swahili. He would speak Swahili to those sitting next to him when he needed help. Kingston told me a lot of kids would just laugh at him. Kingston attempted to talk to him and overtime created a friendship with this other boy. He would come home and look up words in Swahili in an attempt to talk to the kid each day. I admired his willingness to help and the deep empathy he showed by considering this boy's challenges and coming up with ways to help. That same year in 6th grade, Kingston let me know that one of his friends texted him that he didn't have any groceries over Christmas break and asked if we could send him some groceries. We were in Florida but Kingston reminded me that we can have Walmart deliver it to them while we were away. We sent groceries and his friend sent pictures showing the excitement on this families faces as they saw things such as bananas and Cheerios. This was another exposure that I couldn't have thought of a way to teach on my own. The final example that I will share is a unique friendship of my youngest son, Colton, and Natalia. Colton is in first grade. Natalia is a refugee from Ukraine that came to Iowa only speaking Russia. When Colton first spoke of Natalia, she was the girl that sits by him but doesn't ever talk. Natalia and Colton bonded over their love for math. Colton would try his best to speak to Natalia as they worked on projects together. Overtime, Natalia was speaking to Colton and then to the entire class. Colton's teacher attributes Colton for making Natalia feel comfortable and helping her realize that her barriers could be overcome. These are the kind of human experience that I want for my children that DMPS provides and should continue to focus on.

- **Guardrail 4 – Safety:** We need to have school buildings and facilities that are innovative and present a warm and welcoming environment for our students and our staff. I do believe our buildings need to have safety top of mind, but I have also observed that safety can create fear that can be limiting. For example, it has come to my attention that some middle schools do not allow kids to go outside during the school day because they do not feel as though they have adequate safety measures in their outdoor space. I have been

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advocating for solutions but the fear seems to prohibit the staff from taking steps forward to make this change a reality. I believe secure facilities are important and safety plans need to be in place and practiced. I do not, however, believe that we need solutions to address ongoing fear that prohibits us from allowing students to have experiences that support their growth and overall health.

- **Guardrail 5 – Engagement:** I have personally been very engaged in the path of Des Moines Public Schools through my role as PTA president, leading many Jefferson community events, a member of the reimaging education work, a coach of several youth sports in Des Moines. It is pivotal that you have a strong group of parents, students, and community members continuously engaged on the path of DMPS. By doing so, you build feedback loops to ensure we are still moving forward in the direction the community supports. I have built these loops in various roles and would love the opportunity to do so with DMPS.

I have attached my resume for your review. I am eager to discuss how my skills and experiences align with the needs of DMPS and how I can contribute to its continued success.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing this exciting opportunity with you further.

Warm regards,

Nick Lenhardt

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Managing Co. Polk

Issue Date 02/20/2024
Tonnage 0

Or Lenhardt, Amber Melody
Lenhardt, Nicholas Ryan
3500 SW 29TH ST
DES MOINES IA 503212037



Line	Model Explorer Sport	Type Multi-purpose	Style 4W
	Weight		GWR
	LP		Sq Ft

Plate Type Blackout
Designation
Cumulative Damage
Annual Fee \$50

JTol
Audit No. 8309190

Mary L Wells
County Treasurer

DO NOT DETACH

If the vehicle being sold is a regular or semi trailer weighing 2,000 lbs. or less and not issued a title, complete the information below and give to the buyer.

Date of Sale/Transfer _____ Sale or Gift Purchase Price, if Sold _____

Buyer(s)/Transferee(s) Name(s) _____

Buyer(s)/Transferee(s) Address _____

Seller(s)/Transferor(s) Signature(s) _____

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Nick Lenhardt, CPA

Des Moines, IA [REDACTED] | Nrl003@yahoo.com

FINANCE & OPERATIONS LEADER

Strategic financial and operational leader with progressive experience in for profit, education, asset management, and non-profit entities with strong information processing, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Enthusiastic about the transformation of an organization to realize maximum potential. Extensive and specialized experience and knowledge in understanding and applying strategies to enable long term success. Proven versatility as demonstrated by the wide range of industry experience and related achievements requiring deep knowledge of industry specific policies and procedures to support the strategic business goals.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Wellmark

Director of Financial Planning and Analysis

Des Moines, IA

2023 - Present

Serves as the Director of Financial Planning and Analysis for Wellmark with revenues over \$5B and ~2,000 employees. The Director Financial Planning & Analysis is responsible for recommendations and development concerning short and long term strategic financial visions by leading a team of professionals that conducts budgeting, financial planning, analysis, modeling, forecasting, reporting, development of business financial metrics and continuous improvement to ensure Wellmark remains financially sound and generates cash and surplus to reinvest in its core business functions to ensure its on-going operations.

- Led the implementation of a new financial planning tool for the organization.
- Create new dashboards and reporting framework to optimize transparency and self-service capabilities.
- Implemented zero based budgeting with a strong focus on return on investment (ROI).
- Developed Return on Investment methodologies for the organization.
- Led the change in our staffing model from a transactional focus to more strategic.

National Pork Board

Vice President Finance

Des Moines, IA

2020 - 2023

Served as the Vice President of Finance which manages a budget over \$100M with over 80 FTEs who serve approximately 62,000 hog producers. Lead the strategic financial direction of the organization with direct oversight of the finance, treasury, and accounting functions. Lead the Board and Finance Committee through all financial related matters including contingency and growth planning

- Served as the executive sponsor and led the implementation of a new enterprise resource planning system for the organization.
- Implemented zero based budgeting with a strong focus on return on investment (ROI). This improved operational effectiveness, provided a more strategic focus for the organization, and reduced costs while increasing positive outcomes for the industry. =
- Developed Return on Investment methodologies for the organization to evidence to the industry a 72:1 ROI.
- Consolidated the audit process from 24 separate state audits to one combined audit which saved the organization over \$100K in audit fees and increased relationships with the state associations while decreasing the time it took to file the audit by 90 days.

Des Moines Independent Community School District

Interim CFO, Controller, Executive Director of Integration, Board Secretary, Board Treasurer

Des Moines, IA

2012-2020

Served as the Controller, Board Secretary, and Board Treasurer for the District which managed an all-funds budget of over \$520M with over 4,800 FTEs, as well as maintained the day-to-day oversight over the business and finance department. During my tenure, I have centralized the accounting, employee information, accounts receivable, payroll, accounts payable and budget functions. This drove operational effectiveness and reduced costs. Served as the interim CFO from December 2017 to September 2019 to cover a medical leave.

- Implemented the Community Eligibility Program providing more than 18,000 students free lunch in over 40 schools, saving families over \$11M annually.

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- Led the efforts to reduce \$14M from the District's general fund budget. Accomplished this through minimal staff reductions but instead through progressive alternative finance solutions. Currently working to implement a 3-year plan to put the District back in good financial health in future years.
- Implemented continuous improvement throughout the District including the Business and Finance Department saving the district over \$1M.
- Collaborated with several legislators to highlight the need for the funding formula reform in Iowa. This has led to increased focus on funding tied to the Consumer Price Index and additional funding for English language learners.
- Served as a key member of the district's negotiations team.
- Reorganized the District's scholarship disbursement process to ensure more children had access to additional opportunities.
- Developed an award-winning comprehensive budget and comprehensive annual financial reporting process.
- Increased systematic utilization of the District ERP by over 60% through various system implementations, enabling the district to reduce expenditures by \$500K annually.

Marsh and McLennan Companies
Assistant Controller/Financial Reporting Manager

Urbandale, IA
2011-2012

Served as the Assistant Controller for the Parent Company as well as maintained the day-to-day oversight over the financial reporting function for various operating companies. During my tenure I have centralized the financial reporting function for several business units into one location which drove operational effectiveness and reduced costs.

- Determined prior period accounting was incorrectly stated which led to a material expense credit to the bottom line.
- Served in the role as Interim Assistant Controller after the unexpected departure of the predecessor.
- Reviewed financial statements and communicated results to the various business leaders in the organization.
- Managed the external audit for the parent company and numerous operating companies.
- Managed the transition of several hundred employees to the parent company.
- Developed a business case for the long-term position and direction of the finance and accounting function in the organization.

American Red Cross
Chief Financial Officer/Center of Expertise Leader

Des Moines, IA
2010-2011

Served as a finance and change leader as the organization looked to move toward a more centralized accounting and finance function to gain efficiencies and appropriately redirect dedicated resources to the core mission of serving their communities.

- Consolidated nine separate standalone audits into one audit, leading to 55% cost savings annually.
- Led several key initiative projects for the national organization in the treasury, finance, shared service, internal audit, and development segments of the organization including several system implementations.
- Served on several national thought leadership panels and groups to drive strategic change throughout the organization.
- Consolidated the back-office functions of 12 separate decentralized locations to one finance center of expertise reducing the cost of finance by 40%.
- Reported financial results on a regular basis to nine separate Finance Committees and Board of Directors.

PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP
Audit Senior Associate

Kansas City, MO
2007 - 2010

Develop analytical and substantive audit programs in accordance with U.S. GAAP and U.S. GAAS, evaluate accounting operations and coordinate all field work from start to finish. Assist clients in solving complex business and accounting issues through performance of technical research and conveying the solutions using written reports and presentations. Supervise, coach, and mentor associates and assess performance through written evaluations.

- My audit client base varied from a large, multinational SEC registrant to a private subsidiary audit. I have also assisted two separate clients with various stages of an Initial Public Offering, performed three municipal bond debt offerings and a Chapter 11 reorganization.
- Identified cost reduction opportunities for an existing client and won additional work that reduced the number of service providers used for their accounting needs.
- Served on a select team that effectively led the national implementation of new auditing software.

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Audit Associate

2005 - 2007

Performed a full spectrum of accounting functions including audit testing for numerous financial accounts, tests of controls, and evaluation and documentation of accounting systems. Effectively managed deadlines, worked on multiple assignments and prioritized each assignment, as necessary. Worked with the audit team to identify and resolve client issues discovered during audit process.

Kansas City Public Library

Accountant

Kansas City, MO

2003 - 2005

Prepared, analyzed, and interpreted financial data pertaining to the Non-Profit and Governmental reporting standards. Ensured revenue recognition was appropriate. Performed detailed analysis and trending of financial data.

- Directly involved with obtaining federal and state funding for the Kansas City Public Library parking garage project (~\$8M) located in Kansas City, Missouri.

Education:

University of Missouri - Kansas City

Master of Science in Accounting, 2005

Emphasis: Accounting and Auditing

Bachelor of Science in Accounting, 2003

Certified Public Account (CPA): Missouri License Number – 2007015145

Kansas City, MO

Past Community Involvement:

High Performance Leadership Certificate – Cornell University – November 2019

Finance Committee Chair and Board Member for the Life Serve Blood Center for six years

Volunteer auditor for annual financial statements for the Des Moines Valley Golf Club for two years

Regional Director for Iowa Association of School Business Officials for three years

Served on Every Student Succeeds Act implementation team for the state of Iowa for two years

Performed financial reviews of other Districts through the Council of Great City Schools for five years

School Business Official for five years

Instructor for Iowa Association of School Officials and Iowa School Business Management Academy

Current Community Involvement:

Serving on the Reimaging education committee for Des Moines Public Schools

Soccer coach for Des Moines Soccer Club (twelve seasons and counting)

President of Jefferson Jets PTA (four years and counting)

Basketball coach for YMCA (four seasons and counting)

Finance Committee member of the Iowa Food Bank Board of Directors

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