

## School board, Part 2: All candidates for Positions 3-4 would be newcomers to elected office

All six candidates running for positions 3 and 4 interviewed in this article have never served on the board, and none have held elected office.

### Position 3

Jill Cummings said she is familiar with both the financial world — she's an administrator with Summit Bank — and, as a mother of two Redmond students, the education world.

"I think we're dealing with the two most important things to most people: their kids and money," said Cummings, 41. "I feel uniquely qualified with both."

Two of Cummings' main concerns about Redmond schools deal with the ripple effects of COVID-19: learning loss and falling enrollment. The student population fell by 400 this school year, and the district is only planning for about 250 of those students to return in September. State funding is tied to student population.

"For budgets, that's going to wreak havoc," Cummings said of the enrollment drop.

Lavon Medlock, a health care administrator for St. Charles Health Services and a mother of two Elton Gregory Middle School students, said her passion for education started early.

Growing up in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, her parents told her that education could provide opportunity, and encouraged her to attend college in the United States.

"It opened doors to me that otherwise wouldn't have been opened, and I want to create that same opportunity for students locally," Medlock, 43, said.

Medlock is a member of Redmond School District's equity task force, which was formed in September 2020 to address inequities in local education. Celebrating diversity — whether it's diversity of race, gender or thought — is important for helping local students succeed in the modern world,



Cummings



Gonzalez



Lawson



Lopez



Medlock



Osmundson

she said.

Ron Osmundson, a day-care co-owner and former assistant football coach at Ridgeview High School, said he was prompted to run for school board after being dismayed from seeing online school first-hand. If elected, he hopes to make some curriculum changes that are easier for younger students and have a heavier emphasis on post-school adult life, he said.

"A lot of the curriculum was tough on students, like they didn't understand," said Osmundson, 40. "Sometimes the teacher was a little too strict and was starting to get unnerved with students."

Osmundson has three children, with the oldest expected to start kindergarten at Sage Elementary School in the fall. He ran for Redmond City Council in November 2020, landing in fifth place out of nine candidates with about 11.5% of the vote. He is currently an appointed member of the city's budget committee.

One of Osmundson's top issues with Redmond schools are

high schools hosting vaccine clinics without requiring parental consent, he said.

"What scares me is that these kids are able to make these decisions without getting any kind of guidance or any kind of thought into it by their parents," he said. "They'll just do it by themselves or be pressed under peer pressure to get them."

### Position 4

Oscar Gonzalez, currently a staffer with Bend nonprofit Latino Community Association, was an administrator for the KIPP Academy charter school in Houston in the '90s and '00s. That school had students attend class during summer to keep them from losing knowledge — and that's something he'd like to implement in Redmond.

"It's just a radical, revolutionary concept that worked, especially for our kids, who were already two or three years behind," said Gonzalez, 60. "I really feel strongly that kids taking summer off is so antiquated."

Gonzalez's children are

grown adults, he said.

Gonzalez also believes the Redmond School Board — which is entirely white — needs Latino representation. As of October 2019, 18% of Redmond students identified as Latino or Hispanic.

"A lot of kids that typically fall through the cracks ... I don't think they really had much of a voice at the table," said Gonzalez, who identifies as Latino. "I felt compelled to be that voice."

Carmen Lawson is the only teacher running for a Redmond board seat — she teaches

kindergarten at Madras Elementary School. She believes that experience gives her an advantage in figuring out how to best help students and keep Redmond teachers happy.

"I can collaborate well with staff and teachers and administrators, and understand the stressors they're in, because it's the job I do every day," said Lawson, 42. "Whatever decisions (the board) is making, it affects the workplace of a teacher, and the workplace of students' learning."

Lawson has three sons in Redmond schools: one each at Redmond High School, Elton Gregory Middle School and John Tuck Elementary.

Keri Lopez, an administrative assistant for Bend contractor Rogue Builders, said her top priority is keeping students

learning in-person next fall. She's worried about all students being forced back to distance learning, she said.

"It should be something people need to think about," Lopez, 41, said. "I'm concerned about it."

However, part- or fully-online school programs should be made available for students and teachers who prefer it, she said.

Lopez is the mother of a fifth grader at Tumalo Community School and a sixth grader at Obsidian Middle School.

"That really is important for teachers, to feel supported," Lopez said. "They have the opportunity to say (to parents), 'Hey, can you run and make copies of this, so I can eat my lunch?'"

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