

Candidates for position 3 on Baker 5J School Board

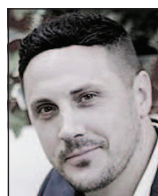
Biographical Information

Koby Myer

42 years of age
MBA-Master of Business Administration, Fitchburg State University
BAA-Business Management, Mayville State University.
*Certified Management Account-Completed in 2021

Was born and raised in Eastern Oregon and spent the last 5 years in Baker City. My wife and I have 4 children currently enrolled in the Baker School District.

15 years in the Financial Service Industry, serving currently as Chief Financial Officer at New Directions Northwest.



Previous experience as an elected official or in a public service capacity.

I have served in Board positions for the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA organizations. Experience in working with

Community Action Agency as a Housing Developer in a public service capacity.

How do you think the current school board, and the Baker 5J District, has done in dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Given the difficult and ever changing world of the COVID-19 pandemic I think the overall response from the current school is satisfactory and has improved over time. It is not easy to predict or plan for an environment we now live in that has changes by the day and hour. I believe moving forward transparency is vital in how we work together with our community and up to date

information is what is expected from the Board and Baker 5J District.

I have seen over the last year creative approaches to build safe environments for our kids and staff and protocols are set in place to ensure this happens. I am very pleased right now our kids are back in school, involved in activities, and our faculty/staff members are being taken care of.

Discuss two issues that you believe will be vital for the school board to address over the next two to three years.

One of the major issues the school board will need to keep on the table is getting funds to meet the demands of improving our schools. We need to provide safe and efficient buildings and there are many improvements that need to be made. As a bond measure is up for vote the board has to be prepared to move forward regardless of whether it passes or not. These improvements need to be made and continual changes over the next few years. The community needs to know and see full transparency of how the board will make this happen.

Another issue or "goal" of the school board over the next few years I would like to see happen is community and parental engagement. Our community needs to feel trust and collaboration with the School Board and District. Transparency is crucial for this. Our community should be highly engaged in helping provide the best education possible for our children. The board needs to have a cooperative approach. After spending many hours talking and visiting with other parents, staff, and or faculty there is opportunity for this.

Discuss ways you think the school district could improve, and how you would approach trying to make those improvements?

As stated previously, my goals are to provide a more collaborative approach on how we work together with our community. A more improved communication system so that information can be shared more efficiently and effectively. We need to make sure everyone is on the same page and communication is clear. The school district must include the community early and willing to make a more collaborative process. My goal would be also to look at how we can keep smaller class sizes and how financially can we plan for this.

With my 15 years of financial experience in the public and private sector and almost 5 years as a CFO I hope to bring a new perspective on providing a more efficient budget and partnership in become more fiscally responsible. Providing more transparency among the District and Community with our financial goals, expenses, and areas of improvement. I want to bring leadership to the Board and a team effort in holding the Administration accountable and responsible in keep the mission and vision clear to those in our community.

Jessica Dougherty

Hi, my name is Jessica Dougherty. You might not believe it but I'm very shy. I cover it by being bubbly, smiley, and nice. I am a mother of two boys, a substitute teacher, Literacy Specialist, an artist, and an archaeologist. I have been lucky to live in Baker for seven wonderful years. I received a BA from Sonoma State University. When I was a kid I was a struggling student, I disliked reading, I was dyslexic and stumbled over words — so I understand how hard school can be. I feel that everyone deserves an education that is equal, equitable, and balanced.



While I have not previously held a publicly elected position, I have worked in government in varying capacities including career positions with National Park Service, Sonoma State University, and the University of Hawaii. I currently serve as Director for the Baker County Community Literacy Coalition and have consistently participated in multiple Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO) including elected roles of Vice President and President. Through these combined experiences I

It's clear that 2020 was a crazy year, and 2021 is essentially not much different. Given the tumultuous year, I believe the Baker 5J District has done an outstanding job of providing our kids with exceptional educational opportunities through adversity. For one, the District was able to successfully engage the students through distance learning and invested in the right technologies to meet the demands of virtual classrooms. And they accomplished this without applying undo pressure on our kids and their families. Secondly, as the district transitioned back to in-person learning, they emphasized keeping our kids and communities safe by following established health standards. The Baker 5J District staff members also provided support and concern for students' overall well-being in addition to promoting academic growth.

The District staff has been mindful and considerate of the challenges we all faced

The school board will face many challenges over the next few years. Of these many challenges, aging facilities and staff recruitment and retention will likely be some of the more critical issues the District will need to address in the coming years. One of these issues is currently being evaluated by Baker County citizens through ballot Measure 1-108. Whether or not the measure passes, school facility maintenance within the District needs to be addressed on an annual basis through the budget process.

The District also needs to focus on its educational delivery mission, including hiring and retaining qualified teaching and paraprofessional staff. These positions are integral to delivering quality education

Similar to the number of challenges that face our school district, there are also many ways in which we can improve. These improvements include actions that can happen in the near-term and offer immediate improvements, and other longer-term strategic improvements that may take years to implement. Improving the traffic circulation for our neighborhood schools is one example of a short-term improvement. The school district has already begun some of these improvements by developing the additional staff parking area at Brooklyn. The district is also in the planning phases and evaluating traffic conditions at South Baker. These ongoing and planned improvements offer the opportunity to improve traffic conditions in the nestled neighborhoods that surround our school campuses.

Technology in our schools (both a mid-range and long-term improvement) offers both solutions and some continued barriers for our Baker community. Communication between the district and the community is not always effective and user-friendly. The district is using newer technologies to

became proficient in interpreting and applying policy requirements and gained a thorough understanding of broader regulatory frameworks and overall governance structures. I continue applying these skills in my professional capacity and I look forward to the opportunity of working with local elected officials and to working Baker 5J District staffs, the broader Baker County communities, and our Baker County kids in providing outstanding educational experiences.

over the last year (and more). Families in Baker County have been affected by these challenges differently and many continue struggling for relief from the overwhelming events and unprecedented conditions of the past year. Baker 5J District has been committed to supporting these families, to ensure there is equity for all Baker County families and that no one "falls through the cracks." These challenges will likely persist, and because of the district staff's continued support we will prevail.

And lastly, I appreciate and am personally thankful for all the District's sustained efforts: they have engaged families and students to keep us all updated and safe; they have proven resilient to changing needs, demands, and uncertainty; and they have continually adapted to these strenuous conditions so that we not just survive, but can thrive and ensure brighter days and years ahead.

and overall student well-being. In order to recruit and retain these essential positions — including substitutes — the District should consider overall compensation to these professionals.

Taken together, these issues also offer tremendous opportunity. The school district can provide a safe and effective learning environment that is responsive to the changing technologies of our times. It can also continue delivering quality education by retaining our valued teaching professionals and by incentivizing recruitment approaches. Combined, these strategies will provide a challenging and rewarding academic learning experience for our Baker County kids.

communicate with parents. However, it's not always effective and many community members are not as proficient with these communication channels, and more traditional ways of communicating are not always available. The district can improve its overall communication and messaging with the community by increasing transparency. This would apply to all the many issues, concerns, and developments that happen on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.

The way to approach these improvements for me, personally, is by being on the Baker District 5J School Board. I look forward to exploring solutions for the many challenges in our district and to working on the many ongoing and proposed improvements. I would approach communicating with district staff and community members openly, sincerely, and with compassion.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Baker City Herald for offering candidates this opportunity to provide some personal background information and to offer responses to these thoughtful questions on the pressing issues in our district. Thank you!

COUNCIL

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A 1.9% increase was also proposed for commercial accounts.

Councilor Lynette Perry expressed concerns about raising the water and wastewater rates during the pandemic and its associated economic effects.

"I'd just like for us to hold off a year

on any personal, residential, business increases if we could," Perry said.

Mayor Kerry McQuisten and Councilor Joanna Dixon agreed with Perry about avoiding a rate hike.

Baker School District bond measure

Councilors voted 6-1 to support the \$4 million measure on the May 18 ballot.

The school district would add the \$4 million in additional property taxes with a \$4 million state grant and \$4 million from the district's budget to replace the heating, cooling and ventilation systems in all schools, build a cafeteria/kitchen at Baker Middle School, replace the roof at South Baker Intermediate and upgrade security at all schools.

"Our schools are appalling; they

are falling apart," Perry said. "This is so important. I support that we should support getting this bond passed."

McQuisten voted against the motion to support the bond measure.

Fire station vehicle exhaust system

Councilors voted unanimously to award a bid to Weidner Fire of Salt

Lake City for \$89,856.71 to install equipment that vents vehicle exhaust fumes from engine bays at the fire station.

The city received a \$139,000 grant in 2020, and spent almost \$51,000 for three new CPR machines that are in service.

The city will use the remaining grant money for the contract with Weidner Fire.

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