



2019 Board of Directors Election Guide

This guide has been created to provide the Eagle Ridge Academy community with information regarding the Board of Directors election and about the candidates themselves. In addition to the information below, the following pages contain the candidates' responses to our standard board questions.

To learn more about the candidates, please attend the 2019 Candidate Forum on **Thursday, April 18, at 6:00 P.M.** in the **Eagle Ridge Academy Commons.**

The Overall Function of the Board

Board members have both a legal duty and an ethical obligation to ensure that Eagle Ridge Academy carries out its mission and vision.

The Needs of the Board

In order to ensure the continued success of Eagle Ridge Academy, please consider candidates that would fill the following needs:

- A Commitment to the Academy's Classical Mission and Vision
- Development/Fundraising
- Non-Profit Management
- Education
- Facilities Management
- Finance/Accounting
- Governance/Law
- Human Resources
- Marketing/Public Relations/Advertising
- Strategic Planning

The Election

The Board of Directors is made up of six teacher seats and five parent/community member seats. For the 2019 election, you will be voting for 6 candidates:

- Three teachers
- Three parent/community members

Thank you for giving this election your careful thought and attention. Participating in this cornerstone of our country's system of government is an excellent way to exercise, and model, true citizenship.

Ramesh Babu - Parent

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

As a parent, I feel deeply committed to my kids' character education, values, ethics, knowledge and overall well-being. These will form cornerstones of who they grow up to be and their success is intertwined with that of Eagle Ridge Academy. There is no better way to influence these than influencing the policies of ERA and serving on the Board of Directors. The Classical education curriculum of ERA resonates well with my roots and I want to preserve its integrity and at the same time strengthen it further making this not just a school but a temple of learning where kids learn life lessons and are not just prepared for a better career but for a better life.

What personal qualities, experience, and expertise would you bring to Board work?

As a person with Good academic background and top scorer at School, I understand the importance of School education. I will bring in 17 years of organizational leadership from Fortune 500 companies. I currently serve as Director in Digital Strategy and Innovation organization in BestBuy, a fortune 500 retailer. I have been part of the turnaround of BestBuy enterprise in this highly competent digital age. I hope to bring in those same competitiveness, grit and innovation to the board. I also understand as technology evolves and automation is ubiquitous everywhere, its highly important as a person to develop good organizational and collaborative skills to be successful. I hope to bring in those expertise as well.

What aspects of Eagle Ridge Academy do you think are most important to maintain?

We must stay true to our Vision and Mission which challenges every kid to give their best not only in their academics but also molds their overall character development. Next to home, school is the only place the kids look up to for life lessons and teaching the Pillars of Citizenship, Integrity, Perseverance, Honor, Respect and Excellence would produce well-rounded kids. The rigor in the academics and the grading system will instill value for hard work along with smart work.

What issues need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

As we have grown in our size, there have been our own set of challenges. I believe the greatest challenge facing the school at this point is student retention beyond School of Logic. We must find ways to improve our student retention without compromising on our Vision & Mission. Fostering external partnerships with institutions and organizations as a means to offer additional stimulation and strengthen the concepts learned in the class, tying up with universities to offer programs that can give the middle and high schoolers an edge in college admissions, developing a better parent student community, improving our fund raising programs are some of the issues and opportunities that we can work up on. Partnering with various local enterprises and organizing workshops and guest speaker sessions in the areas of technology is another area that we can work on.

How would you evaluate if Eagle Ridge Academy is delivering its intended mission?

The students are the ambassadors of ERA and there is no greater way to measure the success of ERA than studying the success of its alumni. Forming an alumni network and learning about their success in both their career and life will be a great testimony and measure of ERA's long term success.

The Minnesota standardized test scores are a great way of measuring our commitment to academic rigor and ensuring that we stay at the top of the charts will reflect that we are staying true to our mission.

How would you weigh the input from parents, students, teachers, and the Administration in making Board decisions?

It is important that everyone in the community feels valued and is listened to. Our growth and continued success depends on that of our student and parent community and ensuring they voice their opinion will keep a reality check on us. At the same time, all opinions cannot materialize in to outcome if it does not align with our Mission & Vision. Serving in the Board, I would strive to find a common path and strike a balance between these two.

In your own words, describe the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy:

ERA as a community of parents and teachers, has the greatest responsibility of sowing the right thoughts, values and morale in our kids so that they can grow up to be fruit bearing trees bearing the fruits of wisdom, knowledge, faith, virtue, tolerance, perseverance, respect and excellence. These trees will pave way for more such trees until the world is filled with goodness and beauty all around.

Angela Berger - Parent

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

My oldest child has been at Eagle Ridge Academy for eight years. I've seen the school's progression from becoming a full K-12 to the move to the new campus. I am very happy with the education my children are getting and want to help ensure the school is successful in the future. I have served on the Board of the Affiliated Building Company (ABC) for five years and feel that I have the time now to give back even more by moving onto the School Board.

What personal qualities, experience, and expertise would you bring to Board work?

I am naturally curious, so I put in the time to understand a topic and am not afraid to ask questions or challenge the status quo. I have served on other Board of Directors (BOD) and know the dedication it takes for good governance and oversight including:

- * Executive Committee representing the local political unit in Edina.
- * BOD for a non-profit organization that helps train women to participate in politics and public service.
- * BOD for the Affiliated Building Company (ABC) that owns the Eagle Ridge Academy property and facilities.

My 20 year career in banking has included roles in accounting, marketing, risk management and audit. My current role as an auditor with Wells Fargo requires problem solving skills and a high standard of ethics.

What aspects of Eagle Ridge Academy do you think are most important to maintain?

I believe there should continue to be a laser focus on the core curriculum that supports the classical education approach. The pillar approach to discipline and behavior helps enables our students to focus on learning. The advantage of being educated at Eagle Ridge is not only academic but our students also learn how to become good and active citizens.

What issues need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

I believe fulfilling the plan to grow the Upper School to full capacity is important to the future success of Eagle Ridge. This will help with finances, course offerings and additional extra-curricular activities. I would also like to ensure that there are succession plans in place for key administrative staff and that all staff are being trained and developed to their full potential.

How would you evaluate if Eagle Ridge Academy is delivering its intended mission?

I would use the increase in enrollment in the Upper School as one measurement, as this is an area that was planned to grow when moving to the new campus. I would want to see the Eagle Ridge standardized test scores keep us as one of the top three of schools in the state. Finally, I would try to gauge whether recruiters look favorably on Eagle Ridge and that graduates have the opportunity to attend the college of their choice.

How would you weigh the input from parents, students, teachers, and the Administration in making Board decisions?

I like the listening sessions that the Board undertakes and would use that as one way to get input from parents and students. I have one child in the Upper School and one child in the Lower School, so I believe that would help me gain perspectives of the varying needs of their curriculums. Parents, students, teachers and Administration are all stakeholders and want to see Eagle Ridge Academy flourish. I would be open to any feedback and would encourage a collaborative process.

In your own words, describe the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy:

Eagle Ridge Academy is a charter school that exists to provide a full K-12 classical education. This curriculum encourages student to challenge themselves academically and learn how to be good and active citizens.

Julia Demakis-Haustein - Teacher

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

I started here after taking a break from teaching and I have now taught here for four years. My last school wore me out and I was disillusioned with education, but Eagle Ridge Academy reignited my passion. I whole-heartedly identify with and care deeply about the classical mission and vision, and I see it improving our students everyday. I want to continue working on the Board so that I can continue to shape the future of this great school.

What personal qualities, experience, and expertise would you bring to Board work?

During my term spent on the Board, I have learned how to participate in the type of leadership that is required. I have had to grow and learn quite a bit, but now I believe that I have the understanding necessary for the Board. I also am a passionate employee of Eagle Ridge Academy and strive everyday to improve the school to the best of my ability. If there is something that I can do for the school, there is a high probability that I have already volunteered for it. For example, I asked to be able to work with Tier 3 Middle School Interventions when I had an unexpected gap in my schedule.

I also have a unique perspective because I have taught every grade at this school except 8th grade (but I have taught 8th grade at a different school). I feel that I am able to understand the different needs of all three schools: Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. It is rare that a teacher is able to give as many perspectives as I have available.

What aspects of Eagle Ridge Academy do you think are most important to maintain?

The classical mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy is the heart of the school. I know that it is tempting to modernize our education and to advertise high demand classes, but what sets us apart is our classical education. We cannot compete with other high schools that are able to offer a large variety of classes and extracurriculars, but we can shine through the quality of our academics and trivium. We need to embrace the Humanities department because that is what sets us apart from other schools. Our students' ability to think, process, and write are unique and beautiful and we should embrace that.

What issues need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

I believe that the board needs to acknowledge and address the middle school. The middle school has been the middle child for far too long. It needs its own threshold and space that is not a through-way. It also needs its own principal, or at the very least, to have an administrator physically present in the area. If we want to work on retention in the high school, it begins in the middle school, and we need to start there.

How would you evaluate if Eagle Ridge Academy is delivering its intended mission?

I think that we would have to look at multiple factors. We would have to survey the students, staff, and parents for feedback on how we are doing with our mission. I think we would also have to talk to our alumni about how prepared they felt for the world after graduation and if they felt that we lived up to our mission. We also need to sit down and define what it means to be classical so that we are better able to decide if we meet the criteria or not.

How would you weigh the input from parents, students, teachers, and the Administration in making Board decisions?

I think all input is valid, especially from those who are directly affected by the issue at hand. If someone in the community has educated themselves on the issue and/or has relevant personal experience, I would absolutely take what they have to say seriously. As a boardmember, I currently seek out as many different community members as possible to guide me in a decision. As board members we represent all factors of the school and should thus listen to all voices.

In your own words, describe the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy:

Eagle Ridge Academy is a classical school that pushes its students to perform at their very best, no matter who they are.

Jamie Nolan - Parent

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

ERA has made an incredible impact on the development of my children. I have been very grateful for the school and want to give back by contributing on the BOD and helping to continue its vision.

What personal qualities, experience, and expertise would you bring to Board work?

I have been a small business owner for over 20 years, working primarily with 501c6 tax exempt organizations and 501c3 nonprofits. I personally am a Certified Governance Training (CGT) by BoardSource (www.boardsource.org) and am a consultant for nonprofits all over the state on board governance and best practices. Additionally, I started a nonprofit foundation in 2004 that raised \$1m over the next 10 years for research in a pregnancy-related disease; so I have some experience in fundraising. The skill sets I believe I can bring to the Board include an entrepreneurial mindset, team development, culture/core values settings, nonprofit financial management, and strategic planning. I am also an action-oriented person and very happy to roll up my sleeves and pitch in wherever needed.

What aspects of Eagle Ridge Academy do you think are most important to maintain?

The things I appreciate the most about ERA is their focus on the pillars (core values), the strength in its curriculum and education focus, and its life skills development in their students.

What issues need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

Strategic growth that is scalable and sustainable.

How would you evaluate if Eagle Ridge Academy is delivering its intended mission?

I assume the Board has metrics developed that it follows, along with continuous feedback from parents and teachers. If not, I would be a champion of helping to get some ideas established.

How would you weigh the input from parents, students, teachers, and the Administration in making Board decisions?

All of them are important. In running my business for the past 20 years, we do 360 degree performance evaluations of all staff and management. I would draw from that experience to ensure that all perspectives were heard.

In your own words, describe the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy:

ERA's mission is to provide a classical education to students, preparing them for college. Additionally its focus is on instilling solid values and principles in its students, building confidence and helping each student to achieve their highest potential.

John Schwartz – Community Member

Why are you interested in serving on the Board of Directors?

The past two terms that I have served on the board have been challenging and deeply rewarding. Working with my colleagues on the board, the administration, and the Eagle Ridge community as a whole has been a personal and professional privilege and I'm excited to continue my service and bring what I believe is a unique perspective to the board's work.

What personal qualities, experience, and expertise would you bring to Board work?

First of all, I am a recipient of an Eagle Ridge Academy education. I attended this school on its very first day and graduated from the School of Rhetoric in 2010. My time as a student during and after my time at Eagle Ridge left me with a profound appreciation for Classical education and a commitment to providing a similar opportunity to more students. I have a unique historical and educational point of view on what Eagle Ridge Academy is and how far it has come. I hope to continue bringing that perspective to board meetings.

More concretely, my time in college and my professional experiences in the working world have given me a breadth of experience in leadership, negotiation, governance, and strategic planning. Also, after two terms on the Eagle Ridge Board, I believe I have a strong grasp on the nature and cadence of board work, as well as the situation and goals of the Academy from the perspective of finance and governance.

What aspects of Eagle Ridge Academy do you think are most important to maintain?

Most importantly, we must maintain our commitment to providing a high-quality Classical education. This is fundamental to our mission as an organization and to our legal relationship with our authorizer. Everything the Board does should be oriented towards that goal.

To that end, I believe one of the key aspects of the Academy that should be maintained and strengthened is our understanding of Classical education not only as a Board or a faculty, but as a whole community. We should continue to seek greater understanding of our tradition, its strengths and weaknesses, and how we can best provide a Classical liberal arts education in our unique circumstances. This is not a conversation only for teachers and students, but for all of our families, staff and interested neighbors.

This kind of communal inquiry is enabled by another key aspect we must maintain: a commitment to professional excellence in our communications, our operations, and our culture. A commitment to excellence does not mean we always do everything right, but that we treat our work and our community with intention and seriousness, so we can all enjoy the benefits of Eagle Ridge Academy when it's at its best.

What issues need to be addressed by the Board of Directors in the next few years?

After a period of growth these past several years, we are now at a phase of our development where we ought to be thinking strategically position as an organization in the charter landscape and the Classical education community. As a strategic, rather than tactical board, I believe we should continue our shift towards spending time discussing long-term financial and academic partnerships that will help secure our strengths and shore up gaps in knowledge or resources that we have. These conversations and initiatives can take years to play themselves out, but our next board iteration should be prepared to aim further in the future than we are used to.

How would you evaluate if Eagle Ridge Academy is delivering its intended mission?

Because our mission is about the education we provide students, I have always believed that talking to students and alumni is one of the best ways we can gauge our success. Are our students and alumni working hard with a good attitude in their studies and their work? Are they engaged in their communities as active and informed citizens? Do they reflect well on Eagle Ridge Academy when they walk outside the walls? Some of my favorite board experiences have been opportunities to meet current students and recent graduates because by and large, I believe the answers to these questions paint a very positive picture.

How would you weigh the input from parents, students, teachers, and the Administration in making Board decisions?

The beauty of the board governance structure at Eagle Ridge is that its composition automatically includes representatives of many of these constituencies. Additionally, I believe it's a great testament to our community that board decisions hardly ever come down to an issue of one constituency versus another. I believe by focusing on our mission, everybody on the board can take the input and the unique perspective from these various groups and make informed, wise decisions. The process is never about weighting one group's input as more valuable, but about trying to get a clear-eyed view of the situation and making the best decisions possible as part of a collaborative process. That's been the practice of the board in my experience and it's a practice I intend to continue if re-elected.

In your own words, describe the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy:

In my view, the mission and vision of Eagle Ridge Academy requires that the school be a place where personal and intellectual development are in the very fabric of everyday life. Eagle Ridge should be a place where excellent teachers and staff help students along in the process of owning their education for themselves. Students at Eagle Ridge should be excited about what they learn and why they learn it. As they progress into the schools of logic and rhetoric, students should be keenly aware of their own responsibility for their education and their personal growth. The classrooms at Eagle Ridge should buzz with curiosity and wonder.

Eagle Ridge should also be a school where civic engagement and social awareness are a natural byproduct of the educational environment. Eagle Ridge should prepare students to be knowledgeable, thoughtful, and active citizens, not just in the voting booth but also in their everyday lives. Eagle Ridge students, staff and alumni should actively engage with the wider

world as a natural expression of their zeal and curiosity in the classroom. Eagle Ridge should foster an environment where great personal and intellectual abilities are put to work in the world. While it was far from perfect, this is often how I experienced Eagle Ridge, and it is that experience that I want to ensure for future generations of students.