

# BRIAN KAMMERS



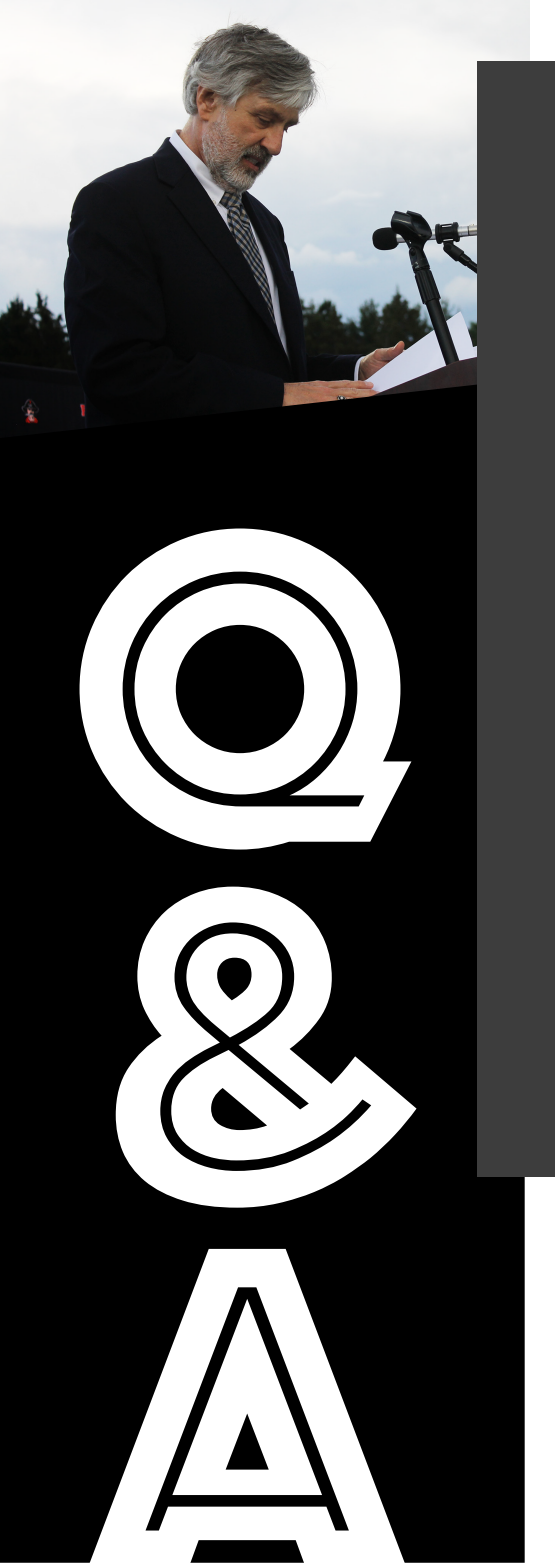
## CELEBRATING 27 YEARS

PEWAUKEE BOARD OF EDUCATION: 1996 - 2023




# PEWAUKEE


## SCHOOL DISTRICT





# REFLECTING ON 27 YEARS OF SERVICE

BRIAN K. KAMMERS | PEWAUKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER | MARCH 2023

 **You have served on the board since 1996. What motivated you to join the board?**

 That's always an easy question for me. I'm a big believer in giving back to the community. And I think that, you know, if everybody just gave two hours every month, back to the community, we would live in a wonderful place. And it doesn't have to be anything fancy. Whether it's volunteering reading to little kids or being a math tutor or volunteering at the food pantry. Two hours a month isn't that big of a commitment, but everything would be so nice if everybody did that.

 **When you first were on the board, what were some of your goals for the District?**


 I wanted to be the Nicolet School District out on the west side which, at the time, was a top producing school. We were a bit dysfunctional ourselves.


We had one superintendent that was about to leave, and we knew we had replaced him. We didn't have any scope or sequence of the district at all. Buildings operated independently and didn't coordinate with each other. It was kind of embarrassing.

*I think a lot of people were just content to be a backwater School*

*District, which we were back in those days. Asa Clark had just opened up and filled up right away and then we were starting to build PLE at the time...*

*I also wanted to create a place where I would be more likely to work myself. You know, an environment that nurtures the professionalism... that the review of a staff member was meant to help them get better at their job.*

 **Over the course of the 27 years you have served, 210,274 square feet were added to the Pewaukee campus. What was one of your favorite construction projects to be a part of?**

 Well, I gotta tell you for the longest time, our fine arts programs, music and choir, they were kind of in the dungeon area of the high school. When we opened up the new auditorium in 2012, I got choked up. It was a big moment. It was the last remaining thing that we hadn't touched for years. We had a science wing over at the high school and stuff like that, but the fine arts really, really fell behind and that was a big, meaningful moment for me.



**Q What is something you are the most proud of during your time serving on the Board?**

**A** That would be hard to say. I mean, I think there are things like the random drug testing program for kids in extracurriculars. We were the first to do that. We're pretty much on the leading edge of having the computer one to one laptop initiative. That was big. I think right now, it'd be the personalized learning.

Probably the crowning achievement was to win a national award for our continuous improvement process. I remember being in the old district office with Larry [Dux] talking about how we needed to have some kind of quality program here. And we stumbled around and finally came upon Baldrige. That took a lot of work to get that rolling and to get people to think about continuous improvement, but rolling we did. That was probably a crowning achievement at that point, to really institutionalize that into our culture... that whole idea of continuing to improve in every aspect of the operation. It was kind of a moment when I realized just how important the work I was doing on the board was with a wonderful administrative team.

**Q Is there anyone you would like to highlight or thank?**

**A** I think it's pretty important for any school district to have a core group of people that sustain for a longer period of time, their investment into it, you know. We had that stability, like Larry and I. We had JoAnn Sternke here for 16 years... Marty VanHulle... I think you need people that stick around that long to get things done. They understand the operation, understand where we're going.

So I would have to say, people like Mike Barry, who was our business manager back then, and John Gahan. Without those two, we wouldn't be as financially sound as

we are. Certainly JoAnn Sternke, who was a good friend of mine for all those years, Marty VanHulle... Bob Butler, Mike Cady, Larry... I'm gonna leave somebody out.

**Q What topic would get you the most excited? What were some of your own passions when serving on the board?**

**A** Well, I gotta tell you, I mean, putting the mental health program together. That was really a big deal. I think having those services on the district grounds really helps with that challenge of mental health with our kids. So that was one of the most exciting things I think I was involved with because it really focused on the kids and their well being. That's really why you are on a school board.

**Q What do you hope the Pewaukee School District will be like in the next 10 years?**

**A** Well, I hope they maintain their leadership position in being innovative in their approach to education following best practices and continue to get better. I mean, you just have to keep working on it. And I hope we don't get tangled up in some of the culture war aspects that are out there right now. Those detract from the attention that needs to be focused on schools. You don't need people complaining about the way you teach history. Or, you know, making kids not feel welcome. Because if a kid doesn't feel welcome, they can't learn. I don't really care how they identify or what their interests are, as long as they have interests in school and feel comfortable here. That's the critical thing, because it's every kid every day that walks through that doorway. We have to educate.

**Q What makes Pewaukee School District unique to you?**

**A** I have to say that our staff is just amazing. I mean, the Superintendent down from Mike Cady all the way to building managers. But it's not just that

side... you've got great buildings and grounds that just does a wonderful job with the safety and campus. Even food services... we have a wonderful director there. So just all the staff across the board and when you have that... it's people that really make the difference, right? Like I said earlier, I wanted to be a part of creating a place I would have liked to work myself. We get good people and we continue to invest in them to get better. Why wouldn't you want to work here?

**Q What advice would you give future board members with the knowledge you have gained over the past 27 years serving?**

**A** I think you always have to go back to focus on the students. Start with that for any decision. Focus on the students. Now it's important to understand the finance which is super complicated in school district, but just always focus on the student... what's best for the students. I think you're going to make the right decisions with that.

It is an industry that most people don't understand; education. You really have to spend a lot of time to learn it. My recommendation to every board member is that you shouldn't expect to be really a big producer for at least two years because you are just getting your feet underneath you. Learn as much as you can because it is a different industry and again, the most critical thing is to always focus on the students and their needs.

**Q Anything final thoughts and reflection?**

**A** I've enjoyed my time here. I walk away proud of what this district is. Because back in the day, when I started, it wasn't very functional. And now we're known in the state and across the country for just being a really good district... operationally, academically, sports wise. So yeah, I'm pretty proud to leave where we are right now. Pretty proud.

# THANK YOU

"**Brian Kammers** has always emphasized how important it is to give back to your community. For 27 years, Brian has generously given of his time and energy in service to the students, families, staff, and citizens of the Pewaukee School District as a member of our Board of Education. During Brian's years on the Board, the Pewaukee School District has transformed into one of the highest performing school districts in Wisconsin and has become a magnet for families seeking a great education for their children and a destination for educators looking for a great place to work. From outstanding fiscal management and continuous improvement practices, to amazing upgrades in campus facilities and the implementation of rigorous and innovative curricula, Brian has left an impressive legacy that will positively impact our kids and community for years to come.

Thank you Brian for the thousands of hours you have freely given to our community during your tenure on the Board."

**-DR. MIKE CADY**

PSD SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

"I had the honor and privilege of working with Brian for almost the entirety of my career in the PSD. Brian was actively engaged in the lives of his three children as they progressed through the school system and he was a pleasure to partner with in the educational process. As a Board member, Brian always saw the big picture and he relentlessly advocated for programs and processes which provided the greatest benefit to students and staff. Brian always made sure that the BOE "stayed in its lane" and allowed his administrative team to do their jobs without excessive interference. In sum, **Brian was an ideal Board member and his servant leadership should serve as a model for others holding similar positions.** I'm incredibly grateful for the support Brian provided over the years to me as both a person and professional.

If there was a Mount Rushmore of PSD School Board members, Brian would be prominently displayed. Thank you Brian and best of luck in all that lies ahead!"

**-MARTY VAN HULLE**

PHS PRINCIPAL 1987 - 2017

"Brian's support of the students of the Pewaukee School District has been **unwavering** during his years on the Board of Education. He has helped lead the District through many changes that have helped lead to the success of the District as both a regional, state, and national example of a great place to learn and work. Thank you Brian for your support over the years!"

**-DR. DANIELLE BOSANEC**

PSD CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER

"Brian has been a tremendous board member for the Pewaukee School District and has been instrumental in making it the high quality school district it is today. I appreciate that he has vision and allowed us as school district administrators to lead and innovate. His pride in the students of the district is something that truly amazes me. People just don't know the work it takes to be a good board member - reading board packet information and generating questions & analyzing administrative recommendations so you are prepared to vote at the board table; attending student events; participating in strategic planning; representing the school district in civic, local and national conferences; advocating for public school needs. This is time consuming, and Brian, did this all with care and finesse. I am lucky Brian was on the Board for the entire 16 years I served as Superintendent. His support meant the world to me and our team of leaders. We did such good work together."

**-DR. JOANN STERNKE**

PSD SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS 2001-2017

"Brian Kammers dedicated 27 years of his life to the Pewaukee School District (PSD) Board of Education for one reason. Brian firmly believes in the PSD mission of: "Opening the Door to Each Child's Future". **Brian was integral in developing the strategic plans and creating the referendum projects to be able to address the growth in the enrollment and was always on the front lines presenting and supporting the referendum projects to the Pewaukee School District Community.** The Pewaukee School District Community can be proud of the work he oversaw during his 27 years and the different recognitions the PSD has achieved during his tenure such as: the Journal Sentinel Top Workplace for 11 of the past 12 years and the National Malcolm Baldrige Award recipient in 2013.

While Brian's three children Nick, Michelle, Kristine all graduated from Pewaukee High School and benefited from his work; this tribute can never make up for the countless hours he spent away from his wife, Susan and his children. They allowed him to serve the greater good! Thank you to the Kammers family."

**-LARRY DUX**

PSD BOARD OF EDUCATION CLERK 2002-PRESENT

"Over the nearly 20 years that I have worked with Brian Kammers he has diligently held to a vision of making decisions that put students first. He has been an instrumental player in bringing the district to where it is today."

**-JOHN GAHAN**

PSD ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER