

Board Election Update – meet the staff!

The election is coming! Ready your ballots... read about your choices, and make sure to vote!

This week, we are posting the Staff Bios for applicants to the board.

Next week, we'll post the bios for the community and parent applicants to the board.

There are four staff applicants for the three board positions:

Brad Wildman: A2/A3 Special Education

Aaron Shackle: Physical Education and Special Education Support

Molly Keenan: A2 Social Studies

Nelson Inz: A3 Social Studies

In the upcoming elections, you will be able to vote for three of the four staff. All are fully qualified to hold the position and all come with unique strengths. Please take some time to read over their bios to help with your selection.

Each applicant was asked to write about their reasons for applying and their unique qualifications for the board position. Here is what they chose to share.

Nelson Inz

I am thrilled to have the opportunity to apply for a position on the Great River School Board.

I grew up in New York, the product of public schools. I received my undergraduate degree in Social Sciences from The Johns Hopkins University, and a Masters from Long Island University. I finished my Minnesota licensure at Hamline University. Several years ago, after the death of a loved one, I decided to pursue my lifelong dream to become a teacher. I currently work as a Social Studies Teacher here at Great River School. I have also worked as a coach, camp counselor, and teaching assistant in both public and private secondary schools and Universities. I have a social studies 5-12 license. My volunteer record is extensive.

I have many attributes that make me a good match for the Great River School Board. I bring a broad base of experience that would allow me to enhance already diverse, creative, and exciting school programming. I am persistent and tenacious in my pursuit of student success. I am extremely interested in educational pedagogy and the practical application thereof. As a social activist at the capital, and an active member of the DFL (Chair Mpls Ward 8 / Precinct 5 2006 – Present, GOTV Director 2008) I have gained a keen understanding of many of the issues prevalent in public schools in general, and charter schools in particular.

My Montessori training and exposure has been mostly limited to my own study and training through GRS. Nevertheless, I feel that my profound sense of social justice, when combined with my passion for the profession of teaching, color my interest in progressive educational philosophy. I enjoy the challenge of crafting a successful secondary program out of a modern philosophy in a post-modern world. My Montessori baptism over the last two years has been inspiring intellectually, emotionally, and professionally. It makes me feel good at the end of the day to know that I have spent much of my time working with others for a more peaceful world.

I hope that I can add to that work by becoming a member of the GRS school board.

Molly Keenan

I graduated from St. Paul Central High School, and then received my B.A. in Russian Eurasian Studies from Colorado College. I completed my social studies licensure at Hamline University in 2005 and my Masters Degree in Teaching there in 2008. I began my teaching career as a special education paraprofessional and drama teacher, and have taught grades 4-12 in both performing arts and social studies since 2002-03.

I have directed high school musicals and original student-written plays. I coached Knowledge Bowl. I served on several hiring committees for teachers, principals and assistant principals. I have taught for the past five years at STEPS Camp (Science, Technology, & Engineering Preview Camp for Girls) at St. Thomas during the summer. I have been a GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) advisor for several years. I have taught after-school credit recovery as a subcontractor through District 287, and taught adult education for Minneapolis Public Schools in a credit-based program for immigrants and high school dropouts seeking degrees, not GEDs. I currently serve as GSA's Diversity Committee Chair, Peer-Mediation A2 supervisor/liaison and Great River's burgeoning GSA's staff advisor.

I would like to be a part of the engine that makes decisions about how to develop GRS and make it the best school it can be. I believe in the mission of the school and would like to help us realize it.

I am a strong communicator and a good listener. I am interested in participating in consensus-style leadership. I am a skilled mediator with students and peers.

I have many years of experience with students who are demographically different from GRS's current majority population. I think that I have a useful perspective as a white teacher of primarily non-white students that will serve GRS as it begins to serve more students from its own neighborhood. Please describe your experience with or interest in Montessori education.

My experience with Montessori begins with my tenure at GRS. My interest in it is wide-ranging. I appreciate its dynamic intersection with IB, and the unique role our school is playing on the world stage of education. I believe in the principles of self-directed learning and intrinsic motivation, and I also think that teachers, parents, peers, and school leaders provide an array of motivations that often spark what may not begin intrinsically. I believe that adolescents are an especially challenging and wonderful group of people who, when seen through Montessori's lens, are indeed waiting for opportunities to learn, share, and contribute so much to their communities.

Please describe your experience with public school operations or other public sector experience.

I attended public schools grades K-12. I have taught in public schools and public charter schools since 2002 in St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Aaron Shackle

I was born in Northeast Minneapolis where I attended Minneapolis public schools for grades K-12. After graduating from Edison High School I attended Hamline University where I received my B.A. in 2005. I worked for the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation board for six years as a recreation specialist and interim director at Bottineau Park in 2008. While working at Bottineau Park I was a volunteer coach for baseball, basketball, and soccer. In 2007 I received the volunteer of the year award. At Great River I was the Jr. High soccer coach for fall 2009.

I am interested in serving on the board at Great River School because I would like to have a say in what goes on at the school and how it's run. I was active in the student government at Edison and enjoyed the atmosphere of working as a group to better the school and would like that opportunity as an educator. Growing up in Northeast Minneapolis I believe has given me experiences that separate me from others on the board. My experiences working with a diverse population makes me uniquely qualified to serve on the board at Great River School.

My experiences with Montessori education are limited to two years of teaching experience at Great River School . With my second year of Montessori teaching ending I am looking forward to enhancing and expanding my knowledge of Montessori education. I am interested in going to workshops and learning more about the approaches to being an effective Montessori guide.

Before coming to Great River, I spent the six years working with the Minneapolis Parks. I also spent two years working for the Minneapolis Public Schools as an after school teacher at Waite Park Elementary school and one year working as a substitute teacher for five different school districts.

Brad Wildman

In December 1993, I graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Secondary Education (Social Studies – All) and coaching. I continued my education and in December 1996, I graduated from the University of St. Thomas with a masters of Arts degree in Curriculum & Instruction. Between 2007-2008 I obtain licensures in Special Education – EBD and DCD. In the fall of 2008 I began course work on my Ed. Specialist Degree in Education Administration and will obtain my Ed.S. degree in the fall of 2010.

I am interested in serving on the Great River School Board because I believe in the mission and philosophy of Great River School. Great River School provides a tremendous education to its students and is a positive influence on the greater community. I believe my diverse background would be a great asset to the Great River School Board.

I am currently working as a Special Education teacher at Great River School in St. Paul I case manage students with EDB, DCD, LD and ASD. Through this work I have gained experience working with students planning for and transitioning to college. Prior to working at Great River School I worked at S. St. Paul High School, which gave me experience with the IB Curriculum, working with a diverse student population, curriculum modification, academic support, tutoring, study skills development, communication skills, group presentations, 1 to 1 laptop instruction with both MAC and Windows based operating systems, online course delivery and counseling students. I work part time at the University of St. Thomas as the assistant Men's Soccer Coach. I am a licensed Real Estate Agent working with Real Estate Masters in Little Canada. For 7 years I served on the Board for the Minnesota Amateur Soccer League. I have been involved in the local community serving as a soccer coach for several different clubs, Tournament Director for the Minnesota Youth Soccer Association, conducting clinics for both players and coaches.

During my undergraduate time at Concordia I participated in the study abroad program in Israel and over the past several years I have gained Archaeological experience at Caesarea Maritima, Israel. This experience helped me gain insight into other cultures, government agencies, archaeological techniques, mapping, photography, and recording. I have organized “study and play” trips for college soccer players to Brazil, Norway, Israel, and Iceland. Through this experience I have gained organizational skills, presentation skills, understanding of multicultural and international issues and knowledge of study abroad programs.

I am a founding partner of ISSE, LLC (International Soccer School of Excellence) and have worked as Manager and Trainer. Through this work I have gained valuable experience working with a diverse youth and adult population, marketing facility scheduling, conducting and organizing events, budgeting, purchasing, hiring, and supervising staff and presentation skills