



TOGETHER WE CAN Give Our Children a **COMPETITIVE EDUCATION**® **MARK ROBERTSON**

Re-elect Mark to the West Orange Board of Education!

REDUCE TAXES & INCREASE EDUCATION FUNDING

With great excitement, I will share with you my vision for how **West Orange Public Schools** can **FUND INNOVATION**, engineer **REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION**, and **PROGRAM GROWTH** while delivering **TAX RELIEF!** Diversifying revenue will allow us to **FREEZE THE TAX LEVY**, and then, gradually, **scale back on the Tax Levy**.

By committing to **Five Steps to Success**, we can **enhance academics and career readiness**, while **reducing taxes**:

- 1. Focus on "Fund Development": Generate \$2-\$3 million in annual revenue and eliminate the Tax Cap** through **corporate and foundation grants** (STEAM/Science - Technology - Engineering - Arts (Design) - Math, Special Education, Teacher Professional Development), **strategic partnerships** for academic program innovation, and career development (internships, mentorship, training and tech certifications), **donations**, and **sponsorships** (sports, building/construction of lab classrooms replacing trailers for Redwood/Gregory/Washington).
- 2. Expand University Partnerships - Creating a WOPS/NJ University Partnership Network:**
 - Partnerships reduce financial burden and expand capabilities for academic and career development programs in STEAM, business, and accounting programs
 - Tutoring services can be developed by tapping university commitments to giveback/servant leadership, student FAS grant/Federal Work-Study community service requirements, and through teachers colleges/education departments, from which we recruit.
- 3. WOPS "Special Education Center for Excellence": We are proud of our reputation in Special Education!. Yet, we can provide higher quality services, and be more effective and efficient.** WOSD invests over \$40 million on Special Services, for 1,200 kids, but receives less than \$275,000 in tuition revenue. We send many kids out of District at a cost of \$30,000 to \$80,000+ per child. Internally, we suspect that we may have too many 1:1 aide-child assignments, and need to evaluate how much we payout in unnecessary settlements. In Fall of 2014, Special Services had 117 corrective actions to address NJDOE audit violations. As a result, evaluating Special Services is a 2016-17 District Goal. **We can be a thought-leader brand, and grow revenue and savings by becoming:**
 - Receiving District:** Earning millions of dollars in tuition revenue and keeping kids in the district
 - Vocational Training Career Workshop to ensure kids who are not college-bound have careers**
 - Partner with employers, apprentice, certification programs, vocational education institutions, Essex County and non-profits. Fill actual job orders/contracts and provide career training placement
 - For math and science students on the autism spectrum (Asperger's, etc.), offer **computer science certifications and internships, digital design and 3-D printing**
 - Note:** As a social worker, I worked for an organization with a workshop for schizophrenic clients
 - Research and Training Facility:** Revenue from training, publishing and licensing
 - Strategic Partners:** Formalize university and vocational partnerships, pharmaceutical company sponsorships and research partnerships (they produce the neuroleptics and other classes of drugs), hospital research partnerships/internships and an Essex County partnership.
- 4. Alumni Network:** Develop an Alumni database, LinkedIn group, and WOPS Alumni Advisory Board
 - Have "Alums" chair mini **fundraising events** and form an **"Annual Campaign": 20% of 18,000 Alumni in 35 years of WO grads can give \$300K - \$1 MILLION in annual donations**
 - Leverage Alumni for internships, college admissions advocacy, recommendations and tours**
- 5. Edison Inventions WOSD Science Center:** Tap the market of over 200,000 children within a 10-mile, trading area radius of WO! In alliance with Edison National Historic Park, The Smithsonian Institution, universities, US Air Force, and NJ technology, engineering, communications and retail companies as sponsors, partners and grantors, create our own version of Liberty Science Center, that drives retail revenue to fund our schools, while also providing an ongoing experiential scientific adventure for WOPS kid and brand prominence for WOPS.

Focus on Fund Development

We can generate \$2-\$3 million in annual revenue through Corporate and Foundation **grants** (for elementary school CODE, Engineering, Teacher training, etc.), **sponsorships** (fields, gyms, labs, sidewalks, building extensions to remove trailers), **donations** (supplies, equipment, college scholarships), **strategic partnerships** (STEAM, tutors...), and **career development** (internships, mentors, project management and technology certification).

Situation:

WOPS only brings in \$60,000 annually on a renewal grant for West Orange High School's (WOHS) Cisco IT certification program, a Cisco-CTE (Association for Career & Technical Education) and NJDOE alliance

- For years, New Jersey School Board Association (NJSBA) and the National School Board Association have encouraged districts to pursue corporate and foundation grants and partnerships, as tax-payer tolerance and government funding decline, while corporate investment in STEM education grows
- Teachers, administrators and parents are squeezed for time and cannot sustain grant initiatives.

Opportunity:

Hundreds of schools districts in NJ and thousands of districts across the country secure \$100K to hundreds-of-millions of dollars each, annually, from corporate and foundation grants, and support programs through partnerships with technology, telecom, healthcare, automotive, financial services, and retail companies. One private grant for Jersey City was \$83,000 and cost them only \$4,000 to write.

- **West Orange Public Schools are attractive to corporations and foundations: Diversity** (special needs, ethnic, racial, religious, gender); **cutting edge Engineering Department** and curricula written for K-12; **IMS** science program, **business** and **accounting**; **students with economic needs** (44% on free or reduced lunch); and **Affirmative Action** segments (African American and Hispanic); and **first-generation college**.
- *Fortune 500 Companies* seek the opportunity to fund public education for
 - Workforce development: Train tomorrow's workforce today - Promote STEAM, career development...
 - Meet Diversity and Affirmative Action Goals
 - Community outreach and giveback that drives brand relationships
 - Public relations (PR) and media relations/brand awareness and marketing merchandising
 - Fulfill corporate social responsibility commitments
- Over 50 major corporations with headquarters or operations in NJ, support public education through grants, sponsorships, donations and technology education partnerships (mobile app development, etc.) including: Audible, AT&T, Avis, BMS, Citibank, Ernst & Young, GSK, Honeywell, MetLife, PNC Bank, PSE&G, Pfizer, Prudential, Wakefern, Verizon, and more
- Regional and national foundations support regional public school education. For example, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided grants of \$10,000 to \$235,000, regionally and single grants of \$25M nationally

Status & Next Steps:

My advocacy won a WOBOE budget allocation for \$50,00 investment-spending to hire the NJSBA and their partner, **The Grant Office, which has a 50% closing rate on grants**. They can research an unlimited number of available grants for \$7K per year, and write grants for \$3K to \$5K per grant, on average. This can fund 8 to 14 grant submissions, yielding \$100K to \$500K net, in year-1. By year-5, we should be raising \$1-\$3 million. Some grants would contract directly with WOPS, and some would be processed through non-profit partners like the WO Education Foundation or WO Scholarship Fund. Internally, we would form a **grant oversight committee** of supervisors/directors, principals, and teachers who have written the curricula or whose buildings and departments benefit from the grants. Our **Superintendent, the Chief School Administrator/CSA, our CEO**, has partnership experience (BMS, Pfizer...), and can **help form direct, corporate partnerships. Also, I can provide referrals to C-suite executives, and a list of qualified leads.**

I am the only BOE Member or candidate who has worked in the education industry on fund development, sponsorships, fundraising, corporate partnerships, scholarships, career development and internships, strategic planning, diversity, and alumni relations, as well as client management 15 categories including: Banking, pharmaceutical, retail, automotive, and technology. **Vote for TAX RELIEF, increased school funding and innovation.**

VOTE "SCHOOL ELECTION" ROW K - #1 ON NOVEMBER 8

(The opinions expressed are solely that of Mark A. Robertson and do not necessarily represent that of the West Orange Board of Education.)