

RACHEL BERNHARDT

Candidate for Region 20 Board of Education · Litchfield, Connecticut

Litchfield resident · Small business owner · Region 20 parent

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CANDIDATE STATEMENT

A school board's most important job is not instruction, it is governance: setting policy, protecting taxpayer dollars, holding leadership accountable, and ensuring every family in the community has a voice. I bring 25 years of exactly that. As the owner and operator of Rachel's Quality Consignment, I have managed budgets, payroll, vendor contracts, and daily operations and I have done it in Litchfield, serving our neighbors, for over two decades. I am not coming to learn what fiscal responsibility means. I live it every day. As the mother of three students who have been deeply involved in Region 20, I have deep personal stakes in the decisions this board makes. I will bring an independent, community-grounded perspective that is accountable to families, not institutions.

WHAT I OFFER THE BOARD

Real-World Fiscal Oversight

- Managed a self-sustaining business for 25 years — accountable to no grant, no institution, and no employer. Every dollar in had to justify every dollar out.
- Hands-on experience with purchasing, pricing, vendor negotiation, and cash flow — skills directly applicable to scrutinizing school budgets and contracts.
- Understands the cost of poor decisions because had to absorb them personally. That is a perspective taxpayers deserve on their board.

Independent Community Voice

- Deep, unmediated ties to Litchfield families — not to professional education networks, unions, or district administrations.
- Twenty-five years building trust with the public, one customer at a time. That relational credibility is what community governance requires.
- As a Region 20 parent of three teenagers, she has a lived, current stake in board decisions — not a professional or theoretical one.

Operational Leadership Under Pressure

- Successfully managed personnel, customer relations, inventory, and compliance across a 25-year business lifecycle — without an HR department or institutional support.
- Skilled at communicating across differences, resolving disputes, and making decisions with incomplete information — exactly what board governance demands.
- Proven track record of building something durable in a community that has watched many businesses come and go.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Owner & Operator | *Rachel's Quality Consignment · Litchfield, CT* | 2001–Present

- Founded and grew a community-anchored retail business serving Litchfield residents for over two decades.
- Managed all business operations: budgeting, purchasing, pricing, inventory, merchandising, staffing, and customer service.
- Built and maintained an extensive network of repeat clients through trustworthy, personalized service — demonstrating the relationship and communication skills central to board leadership.
- Navigated economic downturns, shifting retail markets, and operational challenges — making sound, pragmatic decisions under real financial pressure.
- Maintained financial accountability with no external safety net: every operational decision had direct consequences for the business and family.

COMMUNITY TIES & PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- Mother of three teenagers who have been deeply involved in our local schools — with firsthand, ongoing knowledge of the student experience and school culture.
- 25 years as an active Litchfield community member and small business contributor, serving thousands of local families.
- Engaged participant in local school and community activities; familiar with the concerns of Litchfield families across socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Motivated by a genuine commitment to children and community — not by professional advancement or institutional affiliation.

CORE COMPETENCIES

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| † Fiscal Oversight & Budget Scrutiny | † Community Representation |
| † Business Operations & Administration | † Policy Judgment & Accountability |
| † Conflict Resolution & Communication | † Stakeholder Engagement |
| † Personnel & Vendor Management | † Long-Term Strategic Thinking |
| † Public Trust & Relationship Building | † Independent Decision-Making |

EDUCATION

Northwestern Connecticut Community College --- Coursework in Early Childhood Development and Photography

Wamogo Regional High School --- Class of 1996

"Fiscal responsibility, community accountability, and a parent's perspective — brought together in one candidate who has called Litchfield home for over 25 years."