

Election seen as test for integration

By David Stoeffler Education reporter

For the six challengers, it has provided a chance to make a statement and to try to prove a point. For the two incumbents, it has been the proverbial time to try women's souls. Come Tuesday, the eight candidates for the Madison School Board will put their names on the line in what is being painted as a test for the school board's desegregation plan. While other issues have not been as heavily discussed, some key differences

between the candidates have emerged in forums and interviews. Voters throughout the city, as well as in some adjoining areas that are part of the school district, may cast votes for any two of the eight. The top four vote-getters will survive for the six-week run to the April 3 general election, where voters again may pick two from the field. The two winners will likely take their official seats on the board April 23. The job comes with a \$1,000 annual salary, plus \$300 for expenses. In the order of appearance on the

voting machine, the eight are: Hermine Davidson, Peter Steinberg, Richard Berg, Albert Bryan, Karen Prager, Charles Matthews, Barbara Arnold and Ann Fleischli. The incumbents, Mrs. Arnold and Mrs. Davidson, voted with a 5-2 majority on Dec. 19 to desegregate two predominantly minority schools on the South Side by pairing them with two predominantly white schools on the West Side. In addition, some Lincoln and Franklin areas will be reassigned to Allis and Glendale schools on the East Side. That

part of the plan has not drawn major objections. Near-West Siders, though, have screamed long and hard about the involvement of their schools. All but one of the challengers — Peter Steinberg — comes from the West Side. Franklin will be paired with Randall Elementary, while Lincoln is paired with Midvale Elementary. Children in kindergarten, first and second grades from each pair will attend one building (Franklin and Midvale), while children in third, fourth and fifth grades will attend the other (Randall and Lincoln).

Candidate	Educational quality	Desegregation	School budget	Other issues
 <p>Barbara Arnold Mrs. Arnold, 41, of 1242 Meadowlark Drive, is seeking election after being appointed to the board in November 1982. The former English teacher and member of the Peace Corps has sons at La Follette, Sennett and Elvehjem schools.</p>	<p>Better academic use of current school time, including eliminating early Monday dismissal for elementary schools, would be better than lengthening school days or years, Mrs. Arnold says. Higher expectations from students, including more homework, would be better than raising graduation requirements, she says, although adding she would require a half-credit of computer education and four credits, rather than the current 3½, of English. Supports merit pay with objective, consistent means of evaluation.</p>	<p>Mrs. Arnold voted for desegregation using school pairings because it keeps students with others in their current neighborhood school and allows more opportunity for team teaching and joint planning because of the larger number of sections at each grade level in a school. She would also support putting an alternative middle-school program into the Lincoln School in 1985-86 as part of the pairing, as long as attendance was voluntary and that the school would be no more than 30 percent minority.</p>	<p>Higher expectations for public schools will lead to more costs, Mrs. Arnold says. The state should pay a larger share, she says, noting about 7.5 percent of Madison's budget is paid by state aids, compared to the state average of 39 percent. The district might use an administrative intern as principal in a low-enrollment school. In high schools, the number of assistant principals could be cut and some courses, such as Latin, could be offered every other semester, every other year or not at all four high schools.</p>	<p>Mrs. Arnold: ✓ Could see phasing increases in programs for talented and gifted. ✓ Favors election of school board members by designated, at-large seats, but opposes having the state require such elections. ✓ Wants higher fees for high-school athletics, possibly based on the cost of each sport. ✓ Would start school after Labor Day, cutting days off during the year. ✓ Would eventually cut from three to two the number of assistant principals in high schools.</p>
 <p>Richard Berg A college journalism graduate in his fifth year as a personnel specialist with the state Department of Health and Social Services, Berg, 33, of 4134 Hiawatha Drive, has a 2-year-old son aiming to attend Thoreau Elementary School.</p>	<p>Increasing the amount of time teachers spend with students is key to quality education, Berg says. He would eliminate early Monday dismissals in elementary schools and consider longer school days. Chances for longer school years and higher salaries for teachers are hamstrung by budget problems. Merit pay should be considered, but fair evaluation will be key, he says. While many efforts are better directed at lower grades, requiring 24 credits for a high-school diploma (currently 22) would be reasonable.</p>	<p>The board ignored the public and chose an unstable plan in pairings, Berg says. If elected, he would work for reversal, but would not sacrifice the quality of education for children while in paired schools. He supports a middle school for South Madison, possibly putting kindergarten through eighth grades at Lincoln; elementary access is needed and, given declining enrollments, a new middle school might result in closing an existing one. Magnet schools could be studied for the future, he says.</p>	<p>The board must hold the budget to no increases in areas it controls, but some items — such as increases in teacher salaries and losses in state aids — can only be handled by pressuring state government, Berg says. He says he would not want to hurt educational programs, but could see some consolidation of courses at the high-school level, such as having vocational-education in just one or two high schools. Berg says the board should reverse borrowing money for maintenance and energy conservation.</p>	<p>Berg says the district's middle schools are more attuned to social needs than educational needs and don't demand enough academically. He also: ✓ Favors increases, but not a recommended tripling, in the budget for talented-and-gifted programs. ✓ Would start school after Labor Day and extend it further into June. ✓ Could see some formula for athletic fees based on different sports and ability to pay. ✓ Sees merit in varying means of board elections; has no preference.</p>
 <p>Albert Bryan Bryan, 50, of 4302 Hillcrest Drive, is a doctor specializing in pulmonary medicine. He also has a degree in Russian from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has three children, two at West High, and a 4-year-old.</p>	<p>Bryan says he would rather have 22 good credits required for graduation than raise the standard to 24. He says he would favor requiring four credits of English and four of math (the district currently requires 3½ English and two math). He says higher pay and merit pay for teachers are desirable, but can't be plugged in without union agreement or extra state aid. He does not favor a longer school year, but would like uniform school days in the district schools.</p>	<p>The board's decision for school pairings will lead to a further withering of central-city neighborhoods, Bryan says. Young families will always choose to live near a school their children can walk to, he says. Instead, the district should put a middle school or a kindergarten-through eighth-grade program at Lincoln, magnet programs at Lincoln and Franklin and consider re-opening Longfellow, Hoyt and Lapham schools to encourage development of integrated inner-city housing.</p>	<p>Bryan says the board should aim for no increase in the budget. He suggests eliminating one level of administration or automatically cutting 10 percent in each area and requiring department heads to find the savings. He says he would reverse a board decision to borrow for maintenance and energy conservation. The board needs help from state government to increase state aids and change legislation on collective bargaining to avoid major teacher pay raises when the rest of the community is seeing pay freezes or cuts.</p>	<p>Bryan would like to see the school board use referenda from time to time to get the public input on issues, such as borrowing. He says he would like to see a push in computer literacy and would establish specialty programs or magnet schools in every area of the city. He has no strong opinion about the method of election of school board members or whether school should start after Labor Day. He opposes increased fees for athletics on the basis that some may not be able to participate because of lack of money.</p>
 <p>Hermine Davidson Mrs. Davidson, 73, of 2210 Waunona Way, is seeking her third term. The former assistant director in physical education and recreation in the Madison School District, has two children who are graduates of La Follette High School.</p>	<p>Rather than merit pay for teachers, Mrs. Davidson would increase recognition, such as offering more teachers leaves of absence or other chances to study part-time. She believes the achievement level required in current courses should be increased, not the number of credits to graduate. Before lengthening school days or school years, the district should standardize current length of day in elementary grades and end early Monday dismissals. She also would have middle-school students take a foreign language.</p>	<p>A supporter of the school pairings and boundary changes, Mrs. Davidson says the move offers the best chance for integration and good education. She says an April reversal would be very disruptive and confusing. She says she hopes integration of city housing — by race, income level and occupation — will eventually dispose of the need for pairing. She says she would support a program for students in sixth through eighth grades being added to the Lincoln School in 1985-86, if the program is voluntary and integrated.</p>	<p>While not seeing areas for major cuts in the budget, Mrs. Davidson sees possible savings by not borrowing for maintenance, cutting operations in surplus buildings and increasing class sizes in middle schools. Changes in state law regarding negotiations with employee unions may also give the district more leverage in controlling pay increases, she says. The district's emphasis must be on seeking a "more respectable" formula for state aids so that Madison receives amounts similar to other districts, she says.</p>	<p>Mrs. Davidson also: ✓ Favors changes in the talented-and-gifted program, but not budget increases this year. ✓ Opposes school board elections being based on geographical districts or designation of specific seats. ✓ Opposes starting school after Labor Day; likes current breaks and ending in early June. ✓ Opposes additional fees for high-school athletics, but could see higher one-time fee for each student. ✓ Wants to see more training for use of computers by staff and students.</p>
 <p>Ann Fleischli A practicing attorney with bachelor's and law degrees from the University of Illinois, Ms. Fleischli, 40, of 15 Hiawatha Circle, is seeking her first political office. She has a fifth-grader at Thoreau and an eighth-grader at Cherokee.</p>	<p>Key proposals of national and state reports on the quality of education are laudable, but no one is volunteering the resources to lengthen school days and years or pay teachers better, Ms. Fleischli says. Merit pay and higher salaries for teachers are good ideas, but must be bargained with the union. As for raising high-school graduation requirements, Ms. Fleischli says she doubts two more credits for Madison students is the magic solution. She would rather see increased emphasis on current course work.</p>	<p>Pairings are a disaster for neighborhoods, education, and the school budget, Ms. Fleischli says. She has been the major proponent of desegregating by use of magnet schools, putting, for instance, a special program in fine arts at Franklin with a kindergarten-through eighth-grade program at Lincoln with emphasis on basics or whatever the community desires. Her plan would involve boundary changes in addition to needing as few as 15 whites to volunteer to go to Franklin and Lincoln in order to meet desired percentages.</p>	<p>Ms. Fleischli would make her biggest budget savings by not implementing school pairings. She was the first candidate to complain about the board's decision to borrow money for energy conservation and maintenance. Budget increases are going to be difficult to avoid, she says, due to loss of state aid and negotiations with teachers. She says she would like to see teacher raises kept in the lowest range of comparable districts and notes that city of Madison employees are getting little or no pay increases.</p>	<p>Ms. Fleischli has noted what she sees as a 20-year pattern of poor planning by the school board and administration. She would work with neighborhood groups and parents in developing a plan from the ground level to get adopted by the school board. She also says she would spend her \$1,000 salary as a board member to pay some staff costs to keep her informed on a variety of issues. She favors board elections by districts or at least by designated seats and would start school after Labor Day in the fall.</p>
 <p>Charles Matthews Matthews, 39, of 4801 South Hill Drive, is Dane County's affirmative action officer. He served in Vietnam, winning a Silver Star, and received a bachelor's degree in education at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is single.</p>	<p>Under ideal conditions, requiring 24 credits to graduate sounds good, but at this point it would just "be asking for a higher dropout rate," Matthews says. He sees some value in extending the school year into the summer, perhaps emphasizing remedial and exceptional educational opportunities not possible during the regular school year. Merit pay for teachers would be fine, given proper assessment and evaluation procedures, he says.</p>	<p>Matthews says school pairings are expensive, unresponsive to the community and set busing up as another barrier for prejudice by whites towards blacks. He says racism is an educational process that begins in the home. He would put a pre-high school program for students in grades six through eight at Lincoln and consider use of magnet schools later. Meeting statistical balances could be achieved through boundary changes, he says.</p>	<p>While opposed to outright school closings, Matthews says there could be some temporary consolidation of programs during enrollment lulls. Half-empty schools could be better used for other purposes, he says. New sources of income should be explored, including renting space in existing schools to compatible tenants, such as day-care centers or community organizations. Better pay for teachers is needed, but these economic times do not present a good opportunity to begin raising salaries.</p>	<p>While not wanting to hold back on specialized education for talented or gifted children, Matthews says he is concerned that the district looks closely at core subjects to be sure all students are getting good courses. He also wonders why more minority students are not identified for the talented-and-gifted program. He would favor starting school after Labor Day and extending school into summer, and opposes higher fees for athletics because they would tend to eliminate low-income students from a vital part of education.</p>
 <p>Karen Prager A former New York City school teacher, Ms. Prager, 35, of 1418 Drake St., lives in the Vilas neighborhood and has three sons, ages 7, 4 and 7 months. She has been a member of the district's parent curriculum-advisory committee.</p>	<p>Ms. Prager favors a mandatory, statewide requirement for the equivalent of 24 credits to graduate from high school, compared to Madison's current 22-credit requirement. She thinks the school year is long enough ("kids have to be kids, too") but would work on increasing contact time between teachers and students. Ms. Prager likes the idea of merit pay, but believes too much needs to be worked out. The district could find other means of recognizing teachers, such as releasing them from classes and rotating special assignments.</p>	<p>While originally a supporter of pairings, Ms. Prager has come to believe the desegregation structure is unfair, particularly to minorities, and not well thought-out. She says the central-city neighborhoods are in danger of collapse because families will not want to live there. She would put a middle school back in South Madison and make boundary changes as necessary to meet statistical balances. Magnet schools should be considered in the second year of the plan.</p>	<p>Stopping pairings would save money and would allow for increases in other areas, particularly in programs for talented and gifted students, Ms. Prager says. She says teacher salaries are reasonable, pointing to higher starting salaries and lower cost of living in Madison than elsewhere. More revenue sources should be sought, she says, particularly emphasizing that open space in schools could be rented to compatible users, such as day-care centers and community groups.</p>	<p>Ms. Prager says the district should conduct more surveys in order to determine community views on issues. She would: ✓ Elect board members by districts to increase responsiveness. ✓ Raise athletic fees, as long as options for kids who can't pay exist. ✓ Take a look at middle schools to see how much time students are spending with teachers and in study hall. ✓ Start school after Labor Day.</p>
 <p>Peter Steinberg Steinberg, 30, of 1321 E. Wilson St., is an attorney practicing criminal and civil law. He received a psychology degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a law degree from the University of California-Berkeley. He is single.</p>	<p>Steinberg says schools are educating students as minimally as they can and not expecting to teach children to their fullest capacities. He says emphasis should be given to requiring ability to read and write in grade school, not at high-school graduation. Requiring 24 credits for a diploma is not the answer. Stopping early Monday dismissals is one way of increasing time between teachers and students, he says. He says the nation needs to re-order its priorities, spending less on military and more on education.</p>	<p>The school pairing decision by the board is another in the long line of misdirected policies in the district, Steinberg says. He cites the building of mostly white Memorial High School on the far edge of the district and the resulting closing of mostly integrated Central High as an example. Putting a middle school at Lincoln would be the simplest integration solution, he says. Boundaries can be redrawn to meet statistical balances with whites being bused in if needed.</p>	<p>The budget should be kept from getting higher so as not to stimulate taxpayer revolt, Steinberg says. He adds that if people have confidence in the schools, they won't feel like they are throwing their money away. Some savings could be achieved by reducing the number of high-school assistant principals and extra money could be found by renting surplus space. He says teachers are underpaid, but won't see much change unless more money is directed from the national or state level.</p>	<p>Steinberg says the quality of schools affects city life beyond effects on children: It is important for all to care for good schools and what is being taught. He says the district is too narrow in dealing with sexism, racism, homophobia and censorship. He would start school after Labor Day and cut vacations so school ends at about the same time. He says the idea of cumulative voting for board members — in a which a voter could cast any part of his total votes to any candidate — would be most worth studying.</p>