

Chandrika Abhang NOTICE OF APPLICATION FORM

Office of Public School Trustee

APPLICANT INTEREST

Please explain why you feel you should be the successful candidate for the position of Trustee (maximum 1000 words). Outline your commitment to public education as reflected in your involvement in Greater Essex County District School Board public schools or its committees, including your background, qualifications, interests, and experience that support your candidacy.

I am applying for the Trustee position because I believe deeply in the transformative power of public education. I want to serve our community through thoughtful governance, ethical stewardship, and a commitment to ensuring that every student in the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) can succeed. My professional leadership experience, community involvement, and dedication to advancing equity, STEM, and future-ready learning, position me to contribute meaningfully to the Board's priorities.

As the current Director of Global Strategy & Partnerships and former Director of Research & Development in the automotive industry, I bring over a decade of experience leading complex initiatives that align closely with Trusteeship: governance, budget accountability, long-term planning, and system level decision making. I have led global cross-functional teams, built multi-year strategic technology roadmaps, and overseen multimillion dollar product portfolios across North America, Europe, and Asia. I have also championed efficiency improvement initiatives that ensured resources delivered measurable impact - an experience that's directly relevant to GECDSB.

My technical foundation, a Master's degree in Mechanical Engineering from Michigan Technological University and executive training in Product Management from Northwestern University, strengthens my ability to assess long term plans, program investments, and student achievement strategies with analytical rigor. I ground my decisions in evidence based measurable outcomes and transparent processes. This disciplined approach enables me to ask the right questions, evaluate options objectively, and support decisions that advance our students' learning goals and long-term organizational health.

I also hold a personal stake in the future of public education in our region. As a parent with a young child in a GECDSB school in the Amherstburg/LaSalle area, I see firsthand the dedication of our educators and opportunities for continued growth in the programs. Having navigated the education system as a newcomer myself, I understand the challenges families face when adapting to new environments, which strengthens my empathy and ability to represent diverse voices. I also serve as a Secretary for the Anderdon School's Student Advisory Council which has further embedded me in Amherstburg/Lasalle's educational community. This has given me a direct understanding of what parents, students, and schools need and which initiatives have the greatest impact on students' well-being and success. This perspective deepens my appreciation for the impact of board decisions. It drives me to ensure that my son and his peers benefit from high-quality programs, safe and modern learning environments, and pathways that prepare them for the world ahead.

Beyond my school involvement, I served as a board member at WEtech Alliance in Windsor-Essex in 2023-24, where I helped promote entrepreneurship and community involvement in the region. I also bring prior board experience from the Sheboygan Theatre Company of Wisconsin, where I was responsible for community theatre governance and programming. Through my experience in these roles, I have found that effective Trustees should be deeply connected to their communities, approachable, and guided by a commitment to public trust. Their decisions must accurately represent the perspectives and lived experiences of those they serve.

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Name of Applicant **Chandrika Abhang**

I am also passionate about fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments. Having lived in India, Canada, and United States, and having worked extensively with colleagues and partners across Germany, China, Italy, Spain, Netherlands, and Mexico, I bring strong cross-cultural experiences, an appreciation for diverse perspectives, and a deep respect for unique needs of multilingual, multicultural communities like ours. I hope to bring global perspectives and innovative ideas to our local education board; ensuring that students benefit from the best practices, emerging trends, and forward-thinking approaches.

As a STEM Coach for high-school students at Michigan Tech and Kohler Foundation, I have worked hands-on with youth to spark curiosity, confidence, and problem-solving skills. I have mentored students who did not initially see themselves in STEM, helping them build belief in their abilities and recognize pathways into engineering, technology, and innovation. I also bring a future-focused perspective on post-secondary readiness and workforce preparation. Having studied and taught advanced STEM subjects and now working at the intersection of engineering, robotics, AI, and digital transformation, I understand the competencies students need for post-secondary education and career success. As a frequent public speaker on technology and the future of work, I see how quickly skill demands are evolving. Students need, not just digital fluency but also analytical thinking, creativity, and resilience, and I want to help ensure our students gain these skills.

In addition, my volunteer work with the United Nations and my involvement in sustainability focused projects with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have strengthened my belief in global citizenship and responsible stewardship. These experiences inspire me to bring greater awareness of science-for-good pathways to GECDSD students, such as Model UN, sustainability research, international volunteering, and community impact projects. I want to help promote initiatives like these to our region so students can engage directly in meaningful, purpose driven global work.

I am seeking this Trustee position because I am deeply committed to public service and to strengthening the future of public education in our region. I want to support a Board that listens to its community, values diversity, embraces innovation, and places student well-being at the heart of every decision. My aim is to foster stronger connections among families, school boards, and educational institutions. I support evidence-based approaches to narrowing achievement gaps, advocate for STEM opportunities, and promote responsible and transparent management of public resources. I bring a rare blend of strategic leadership, technical proficiency, community engagement, board service, and personal experience as an immigrant, parent, educator, and an international leader. If given the opportunity to serve, I will dedicate myself to ensuring that every student in our region regardless of background, identity, or socioeconomic circumstances feels supported, represented, and equipped for success.

Thank you for considering my application.