



Dear Aspen Parents and Employees,

Aspen Academy's annual School Board election will be held between May 1st and May 11th. The Aspen community will be voting for up to 2 parent Board members. Parent member terms are 3 years each. Terms begin on July 1, 2023.

Candidate Information

Who are the candidates?

In the following pages, you will find a Candidate Information Guide showing the completed applications of each board candidate.

How do I learn more about the candidates?

If you have questions after reading the Candidate Information Guide, you may contact the Election Committee by emailing them at Board.Of.Directors@aspenacademymn.org and your question will be forwarded to all candidates for response.

Voting Information

Who may vote in the election?

There are three categories of eligible voters and each individual gets only one vote:

- 1) Each parent or legal guardian of an Aspen student.
- 2) Each employee of the school.
- 3) Each Board member

How do I vote in the election?

Aspen's eligible voters are asked to do one of the following:

- Mail in the absentee ballot included in this packet and follow all instructions described on that ballot. (Ballots should NOT be sent with students to ensure proper delivery).

Or

- Drop your ballot in person during regular office hours. Ballots must be in a sealed envelope with your return address of each voter on the outside of the envelope.

Or

- Participate in any in person opportunity that may be provided with or without notice.

How do teachers and staff vote in the election?

Teachers and staff may vote in any of the above ways, or they may drop their ballot in the ballot box without an envelope as long as their name appears on the back of the ballot in some manner.

Aspen Academy depends on the School Board to govern and help shape the future of the school. It is up to the school community to choose the Board members that will help Aspen achieve and maintain its success. Please take a few minutes to participate in this important part of Aspen Academy and cast your vote!

Sincerely,

Aspen Academy Board of Directors

Attachments: Absentee Ballot and Instructions
Candidate Information Guide



Absentee Ballot Election for Board of Directors

Voting Starts on May 1st, 2023

Ballots must be received no later than the regular mail delivery on Thursday, May 11th, 2023. Please plan accordingly to ensure your ballot is received by the deadline. Please read each category carefully. A ballot with more votes than each category allows or with votes not clearly marked will be considered invalid and will not be counted.

**Vote for up to 2 Parent Member candidates
from the following:**

Chris DiCapo

Michael Faulise

Please note that all candidates are approved for membership only after receipt of a background check and completed conflict of interest form.

In the event of a tie between candidates an additional election will be held for just those individuals and may delay the start of their term.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A BALLOT (NON-STAFF INSTRUCTIONS)

- For parents and legal guardians mailing in or dropping off a ballot, please write your FIRST and LAST names as they appear on Aspen's records clearly in the return address section of the envelope. If the name on the return address does not match Aspen's records, the ballot will not be counted. **Multiple ballots coming from one household may be mailed in the same envelope; however, both names must appear in the return address. This ballot may be photocopied.**
- Upon receipt, all ballots will be held until the voting period is complete. After voting closes, we will go through the ballots and cross your name off the master list as having voted. Your ballot will be separated from the envelope and added to all other ballots for counting. If you would like additional anonymity, you may place your ballot in a second, blank envelope or seal it with tape.
- All Ballots must be received in the Aspen Office by the time of mail delivery on or before Thursday, May 11th, 2023.

Ballots should be mailed to:
Aspen Academy
ATTN: ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
14825 Zinran Avenue, Savage, MN 55378

Parent Candidate Information Guide

Name [Chris DiCapo](#)

Email Chris.Dicapo@aspenacademymn.org

What is your connection to Aspen Academy? My wife and I have two children who attend Aspen Academy. I also currently serve on the Aspen School Board.

Why do you want to join the Board of Aspen Academy? I want to ensure that parents have a voice in making educational and administrative decisions and bridge the gap between the Board and parents of Aspen Academy students. It is also important that we are being socially and fiscally responsible.

What is it about a charter school that appeals to you? Charter schools offer flexibility within the curriculum to cater to students educationally as well as their personal needs. This provides students a unique experience and atmosphere that is challenging and promotes positivity and growth.

What do you believe is the Board's role regarding school governance? The School Board role is to ensure the students, staff and parents are informed. The Board also upholds policies and procedures, ensures compliance according to law, and checks to make sure of fiscal responsibility while providing an exceptional education and experience for students.

How would you help Aspen meet its strategic goals set forth by the mission and vision statement and annual report? Reviewing current policies and procedures as well as financial statements making sure Aspen is meeting its goals. Engaging more with parents with open communication is a key to meeting such goals.

What professional, leadership, or other board experience can you bring to the Board? Professionally, I have a good understanding of financial statements from my career experience. As a team leader with my company, I work with different teams daily to help meet needs of our organization and customers. One thing I have learned is communication is the key. Board members need to have more interaction with parents and encourage attendance at board meetings and general question and answer sessions.

What do you see as the most significant issue(s) facing charter schools today? Charter schools are faced with several challenges from enrollment, retaining and hiring qualified staff, and ensuring the quality of education and experience for the students. Aspen has consistently done an excellent job with these challenges and our goal as a board is to continue to do so. We need parents to get more involved with the Board, we want to hear from you!

Name Michael Faulise

Email Address michael.faulise@aspenacademymn.org

What is your connection to Aspen Academy? My daughter is in 2nd grade and my son is currently in 5th grade and I have currently served as a board member for the past 3-4 years. I have also participated in several parent volunteer opportunities in the last 6 years.

Why do you want to join the Board of Aspen Academy? I am very interested in the long-term success of Aspen Academy as both my children will have several years of Aspen (currently ages 10 & 8). I would like to better understand the challenges that are presented to Aspen and try to utilize my twenty years of business experience to help. I have currently served for 3 years and I am currently the Chair of the Board. I believe that we are far more mature as a board living through COVID and understanding how critical it is to be transparent in all our decisions.

What is it about a charter school that appeals to you? Aspen's commitment to education and ability to successfully teach Core knowledge has been very appealing to me as a parent. I believe in what the school's founding principles are and in the years my son and daughter have been students at Aspen I have seen them demonstrate those principles.

What do you believe is the Board's role regarding school governance? I believe that the Board's role is to expand the fundamental mission and vision into governing policies and procedures that the staff and students can follow. I believe the Board's role is to help with solutions when needed and/or enlisting those who have creative ideas for the new challenges each school year will bring.

How would you help Aspen meet its strategic goals set forth by the mission and vision statement and annual report? As a parent and small business owner I believe my input would be to continue shaping the missions and vision as the world around us changes. With a global community and constant technology changes, I would help Aspen evolve to meet the growing demands of what our children will need for future success in both education and as community members.

What professional, leadership, or other board experience can you bring to the Board? I have been a business owner for over 25 years. My company has evolved from a small startup to currently over 175 employees. Over that time, I have had to play several roles in which I believe I can assist the Aspen Board. Those experiences include Marketing strategies that have enabled my organization to grow, evolution in our branding both locally and nationally and continually evolving as a leader to the changes needs of my company. I believe in a more servant leadership style which emphasizes empowering the team to make decisions having both autonomy and accountability. I have been CFO for the organization and understand the nuances of asset management, cash flow and budgets. We have seen our strategy need to change in how we Market, Sell and engage our customers and our employees. I believe these qualities have served my organization well and will continue to serve Boards through my experiences. I have also served on local Twin Cities Quality Assurance board re-shaping the strategy direction for that non-profit. Helping that organization better understand how to define its community and how to evolve its membership for new upcoming members.

What do you see as the most significant issue(s) facing charter schools today? My understanding is that the largest challenge facing Aspen will continue to be financial which has created other challenges regarding funding. Funding has created challenges with teacher salaries, infrastructure, student activities and equipment. The ability for us to continue to keep our experienced teachers and also allow for expanding student activities and opportunities presents a challenge. In order to follow our mission, which I believe is critical to student success, to limit class and provide Core knowledge curriculum will require continued creativity from our board, faculty, parents and community members.