

# **ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT 411**

**School Board Candidate**

**Application Materials**

**For**

**Carla C. Wigen**

**October 13, 2008**

**Issaquah School District 411**

**School Board Director District #4**

**1. Verification of Residency within Director District #4**

I verified my residence at the Administration Building the date of October 2, 2008 and was confirmed with Lorraine Morton again on October 6, 2008 via telephone.

**2. Three Short Letters of Reference:**

Letters attached or sent separately to Lorraine Morton from:  
Peter Bentley, Current Bellevue School Board President  
Suzanne Hittman, Former Seattle School Board Member  
Steve Wessel, Issaquah Teacher

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### **3. Why I Want to Serve on the School Board; Summary of Experience, Training and Interest Contributing to Effective District Governance**

My initial interest in serving on the school board came approximately five years ago when I was speaking with a former Seattle School Board member. We were discussing the challenges that our public schools face. Not only does a school district face issues that can be more easily identified, such as funding and budgeting, but also less quantifiable issues such as how best to impact children from diverse backgrounds, and how to prioritize student, teacher and community goals. She told me it was the most difficult thing she had ever done, but also the most rewarding.

As a member of the Issaquah School Board, I can use my career experience, my other leadership roles, as well as my training as a CPA and as an attorney. This experience, combined with my interest and history of working with people to accomplish goals, well prepares me to fill this important role on the Board. My own personal commitment to education makes me very passionate about helping our District's children develop into adults ready to experience all this world has to offer.

I graduated from the University of Washington in 1987 and began working as a CPA. I returned to school to pursue my law degree in 1993 and started practicing law in 1995. I now manage the Western Washington Wealth Management Department for Washington Trust Bank. Every day, I work with people young and old, rich and poor, well educated and less.

Each day brings different challenges and situations. I may work as an intermediary between family members that no longer speak directly. I have the opportunity to work with a family where the parents have their own challenges and are supporting their children through school, each child having their own IEP. I work with college students as they put together budgets for their school years. I work with the elderly who have recently lost a dear spouse. I negotiate the purchase and sale of businesses, residences, and commercial buildings, or other types of real estate. I interpret legal documents and negotiate contracts on a day-to-day basis.

Through all of these situations, I am required to use my financial background and/or legal background, or I may be required to call upon my own sense of compassion and empathy. I enjoy consistently applying my skills as an attorney and a CPA, but also my ability to listen to people and formulate common sense, practical solutions.

When I read about the Board opening in my residential area, it seemed to call to me. I ended 9 years on a nonprofit board (Residence XII) just over a year ago. It is time to get back to serving my community in a more active way.

My experience on the Board of Residence XII was not only personally rewarding, but also a great learning experience. Residence XII is a 24-bed residential facility for women with drug and alcohol addiction. As we treated women and their addiction, we were also helping their families and looking to end the terrible cycle of abuse that families can face when drugs and alcohol are present.

During my time as a Board member, we built the multi-million dollar building that Residence XII owns, allowing expansion of the programs. In addition, during my Presidency we acquired additional adjacent land to continue the expansion of the programs. On the Board of Residence XII, we had a diverse mix of people and personalities. We had members who were “no-nonsense, to the point” people and members who more enjoyed the process of discussion and analysis. As President, I had to run the Board so that all the varied personalities were able to bring their different working styles together for productive organizational governance.

I have volunteered in the Issaquah schools in various ways, such as Eagle Reader, PTA financial audit, walk about parent, chaperoning field trips, and the book fair. I want to expand my participation in the Issaquah School District to use my education, my experience and my energy.

I want to see the Issaquah School District continue and grow as a leader among districts in the State of Washington. My husband and I have personal interest in seeing the District thrive as we have two children in Issaquah schools and want them to benefit from this wonderful District. To say that I am eager and excited about the possibility of joining the Issaquah School Board is an understatement. I know I will bring dedication, fair mindedness and enthusiasm to this position.

## 4. Biographical Statement



**Carla C. Wigen**  
**J.D., C.P.A.**  
Vice President  
Sr. Trust Officer

**BA, University of Washington**

**JD, Seattle University School of Law**

**Masters of Law, Taxation, University of Washington**

**Certified Public Accountant**

Carla Wigen is Vice President and Senior Trust Officer for Washington Trust Bank's Wealth Management & Advisory Services in Seattle, Washington. She brings significant experience in trust and estate planning, financial planning, and investment management to her clients.

Carla counsels prospective and existing customers of Washington Trust Bank and enhances their financial picture by analyzing their overall financial situation, and, in close coordination with clients' existing legal and tax advisors, advises them on appropriate wealth planning strategies. She works as part of a closely-knit team of professional advisors to help clients achieve their financial and estate planning goals.

Carla has 18 years of experience in the legal and accounting professions. Prior to entering the financial services industry, Carla worked as an attorney specializing in estate planning, corporate, partnership and limited liability company taxation, business planning and real estate law at a large Northwest firm.

Carla's previous early professional experience includes serving as Auditor for the Defense Contract Audit Agency at the Department of Defense and working with the United States Department of State in Cairo, Egypt.

Recently named 2008 Seattle Magazine: FIVE STAR: Best in Client Satisfaction Wealth Manager

### **Professional and Community Affiliations**

- ◆ Washington State Bar Association
- ◆ Oregon State Bar Association
- ◆ Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants
- ◆ Seattle Estate Planning Council
- ◆ Washington Women in Tax
- ◆ Residence XII – formerly on Board of Directors (9 years) and Past President
- ◆ Formerly with Kiwanis Club of Seattle (served as President and Treasurer during membership)

### **School Volunteer Activities**

- ◆ Family PTA Member (Maple Hills & Maywood)
- ◆ Eagle Reader Tallying
- ◆ PTA Financial Audit
- ◆ "Walk About Parent"
- ◆ Chaperone
- ◆ Scholastic Book Fair

### **Personal Interests**

- ◆ Watching the kids' events: soccer, football, cross-country, basketball, etc.
- ◆ Mountain biking, running, reading and horseback riding

## 5. Questions for School Board Candidates

### 1. What is your view of the role of public education in our society?

The role of public education is to provide consistent, broad based quality education with equal opportunity to all students. Public education is the foundation for allowing every student to reach their potential, a springboard to launch the next generation's "dive" into the world with optimism and creativity.

### 2. What skills and abilities will students need in the future:

- a. To be successful in the world of work?  
They will need study and organizational skills; the ability to adapt, the acceptance that they must never stop learning, and the willingness to change with circumstances. They will need the ability to apply their experiences and knowledge to solve problems; the ability to understand and accept different viewpoints.
- b. To be responsible citizens?  
Students first need a strong sense of "self", an awareness of their own personal value in who they are and what they can accomplish. Empathy for others can follow as students feel good about themselves. From there, a sense of community builds, especially as involvement in the community is fostered and rewarded.
- c. To lead satisfying and productive lives?  
When students have self-confidence, they can access their own personal "passions" and with the skills to embrace learning, (and not view it as a means to an end), they can ignite their own personal growth to lead them in a fulfilling and productive directions. Human interaction is critical to leading a "satisfying and productive" life. The ability to view others empathetically, as real people, will become increasingly difficult as society grows, and the world at large is impersonalized through media snippets (ex., UTube). Students will have the opportunity to live more satisfying lives if they can learn to connect with others, to understand them, to appreciate the differences among people. From local community interaction to tolerance of nations and ideologies, the human element will become a more valued individual trait than ever before.

### 3. Do you think that a public school district can have all of its students graduate on time? Why or why not?

The school district should offer as much training and as many programs as possible to give students every opportunity to graduate on time. The challenge of funding, student commitment, family issues and many more play a part in the end result, but we should strive for the best for our students.

4. Do you think that high school graduation requirements should be such that all students graduate with sufficient credits to attend an in-state four-year college, if they so choose?

I would like to answer this question with a yes. I would like to see every one of our students graduate with sufficient credit to continue on to a state four-year college. However, we do need to be mindful that all students do not wish to continue on no matter how many of us think it would be in their best interest. As a school district, we certainly want our children to be challenged to realize their full potential.

5. What experiences have you had working in groups, particularly community or school groups?

I have been involved with Kiwanis Club of Seattle, as Secretary, and later President. In addition, I served for 9 years on the Board of Directors of Residence XII. During my tenure on the Res XII Board, we built a new \$4,000,000 building and changed our location. Also during my tenure, we purchased additional land to continue expansion.

6. Give examples of how you have shown leadership within those groups.

With Kiwanis, as President there were many community programs that were in need of our help. Understandably coalescing varied viewpoints on how best to serve the community required patience and skill in making sure everyone's opinions are considered, but that in the end action is taken and the group is focused in a positive direction. At Residence XII, I was on the Board during a time of vast expansion, which required efficient fundraising, accurate budgeting, and adherence to budgets in order to come out on the other side stronger and more valuable to the community. The reputation of Residence XII is nationally renowned and I take great pride in its accomplishments and my role in making sure its legacy continues.

7. Give an example of time when you had to enlarge or set aside your own personal view to serve the interests of the larger group.

On the Board of Res XII, one of my roles I served in was to lead and move forward all Board meetings. We had many different types of personalities, some no-nonsense, some process oriented, others simply more reserved. My goal at every meeting was to make sure everyone was not only heard, but actually listened to. I had to recognize "agendas" quickly, and help to make sure those that were set in their opinions understood every position. Therefore it was very important that I set the example of tolerance, and so there were many times I set aside my own personal view and facilitated discussion about a topic. There were times when my view changed as I opened my mind to hear the varied perspectives in the room. And while my view was always important (as is every persons'), it was never more so than that of the entire Board as a collective group.

8. What is your view of the Policy Governance model? Do you have any concerns about your role as an individual board member working with Policy Governance?

It is good to see that our Issaquah School District and the Board have such well-defined Governance Policies. I have witnessed situations where new Board members had different views of the role of governing boards. The District Governance Policies give the Board and our community a definition of the role of the Board. I am especially fond of the mission statement:

**Our students will be prepared for and eager to accept the academic, occupational, personal and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment.**

As a Board Member, I would not be concerned about my role in working with these Policies. I would welcome the opportunity to serve as a part of the link between our Issaquah community and our District administration.

9. How would you reach out to members of our community that do not ordinarily come to public meetings?

The internet grows everyday and with it people's acceptance in it as a communication tool grows as well. It allows those who are either time restricted or fearful of involvement (or both) to stay in connection. And I think with ideas like webinars/WebEx (with conference call), along with solicitation for interaction and feedback via websites we can reach more people. Even enticements for involvement (drawings, incentives, etc.) can work to bring some fun and enthusiasm. Of course, as School Board Members nothing replaces our own involvement in the community, talking to everyone we know, expanding our "circle" and reaching out to those that we do not know with the goal of educating those that currently choose to remain uninvolved. I view the role of Member of the School Board as one that requires my "getting out" and educating people on a daily basis the public issues that we face.

## Suzanne Hittman

October 10, 2008

RE: Carla Wigen

Candidate for position on Issaquah School Board

I am pleased to recommend Carla Wigen as an appointee to the Issaquah School Board to fulfill an unexpired term. We have known each other for approximately ten years, meeting through business.

Her knowledge of both financial and legal matters have always impressed me. She is able to review detailed reports and then provide a clear summary of the data easily understood by all. This ability will be of utmost importance in dealing with the school district's many publics.

As a former Seattle School Board member, I have personal knowledge of the importance of interacting with education professionals, legislators, civic leaders, students, parents and the community at large. Carla is a clear presenter with excellent speaking skills.

In the business setting where we initially met, I had the opportunity to observe her speaking, leadership, and other skills essential for operating in a difficult situation. There were persons present at each meeting with not only a diversity of opinions but also behaviors that could potentially prevent any decisions being made. Acting as chair of this group, Carla would listen carefully, synopsize opinions, point out similarities, bring the discussion back to the issue at hand (removing all extraneous thoughts), and then bring the group to some conclusion. This is an art form...almost more than skill. I call it "on the job" training which Carla has already had. Recalling my days as a school board member I would say this is the most essential skill of all.

As a former school board member, with continuing interest in issues of public education, I know Carla is as well prepared as any potential candidate you will be considering for this position.

Dear Issaquah School Board Members,

I have gotten to know Carla Wigen over the past four years through our work together at Washington Trust Bank. I feel very comfortable recommending her for your open school board position for the following reasons:

1. She is a high energy success driven individual who cares deeply about public education
2. She has a positive attitude, is very intelligent and a quick study
3. She has a law degree and is a certified public accountant
4. She would come to the Issaquah School Board without an agenda.
5. She has board experience through her work with Residence XII
6. Her children are in your schools at the elementary and middle school level.

I have spent several hours with Carla educating her about the challenges of being a good school board member. She is coming to the Board with her eyes open and committed to being an active and productive participant. While she does not come through the traditional pathway to the board, I think you will find that she is very committed to public education.

If she were applying for a similar position on the Bellevue School Board I would have no hesitation appointing her to our Board.

Please feel free to call me directly if I can answer any questions or provide you with any other insights

Sincerely,

Peter Bentley

October 13, 2008

Dr. Steve Rasmussen  
Superintendent of Schools - Issaquah School District  
565 NW Holly Street  
Issaquah, WA 98027

Dear Dr. Rasmussen,

It gives me great pleasure to write a letter of recommendation for Carla Wigen. Recently Carla informed me of her decision to submit an application for the vacant school board position, and I believe she is the perfect candidate for the position. Carla can always be counted on to use her personal creativity and initiative to formulate solutions whenever challenges are presented.

Prior to becoming a teacher in Issaquah, I was the Director of Technology for the Dieringer School District for 9 years. While I was employed at Dieringer, I had the opportunity to work intimately with Superintendent and the School Board on many issues including Strategic Planning, contract negotiating and budget formulation. These experiences give me insight to comment on Carla's qualifications and how they relate to working in a Public School environment.

I have been very close friends with Carla and her family for the past 6 years. In that time I have seen her in many different situations that require leadership, problem solving and thoughtful deliberation. She is someone who is always willing to recognize and listen to all sides of an issue, and once a consensus is reached, she is always the one to step forward and put the plan in motion. In short, she is a woman of action, and she will be able to carry forward a shared vision and represent the District well if she is selected. It is without hesitation that I highly recommend Carla Wigen to fill the vacated school board position.

Sincerely,

Steve Wessel  
Maywood Middle School – Technology Educator