

Biography Steven Ellis

Steve Ellis grew up in the Issaquah area on Cougar Mountain. He attended schools in the Bellevue School District, graduating from Newport High School. He attended the University of Washington earning a BA in Economics. A few years later he completed an MBA also from the UW. Mr Ellis has a passion for the outdoors and has lived for 15 years in Mirrormont on Tiger Mountain. He has been involved in the outdoor recreation industry for over 30 years, as a Ski Instructor, Scouting counselor/advisor, business manager and board member for the Samena Club. While leading the Samena Club board Mr. Ellis recently oversaw the development of a major new facility and worked closely with the City of Bellevue to ensure progress. He has worked for REI for 25 years as a retail store manager.

Mr. Ellis' role at REI over the years has included new store development, budgeting and analysis, and sales management. He worked for many years with high school students and recent high school graduates with the unique opportunity to observe the outcomes of our educational programs. Mr. Ellis recently was awarded special leadership recognition for achievements at the Redmond REI store.

Mr. Ellis was an active volunteer at Clark Elementary and also at Issaquah High School.

He was part of the business-school partnership program developed by Kateri Brow and partnered with Apollo Elementary to bring outdoor education to the students at that school. He currently oversees a community outreach program for REI that teaches outdoor ethics to elementary school students. Mr. Ellis was part of the City of Bellevue's partnership to develop positive after-school programs for students. The "Lifelink" program ultimately acquired a stand-alone facility, teen-help programs, and emergency assistance for youths

needing transportation. He has a strong interest in raising the academic standards of our schools so all of our students can compete effectively in the global economy.

Steve lives with his wife of 31 years on Tiger Mountain. His son is completing the Honors Economics Program at Simon Fraser University in Canada. They all enjoy skiing and cycling together and are accomplished sailors. Steve collects Northwest Native Art and has an extensive library of History and Economic literature.

Favorite local author Irving Petite. The Elderberry Tree and Mr. B. Because Mr. Petite lived on Tiger Mountain and made friends with the local animals of the forest.

Steven Ellis

Responses to Board Candidate Questions:

1. Public education is a fundamental mechanism which sustains our nation's unique position in the world. It is the process by which our society's next generation can hope to better themselves relative to their parents and previous generations. It is a key element which powers our cultures' drive to maintain a strong meritocracy which rewards achievement and hard work. Public education is an open, egalitarian method for achieving success in our free and open economy, without it we limit the growth and flexibility vital to our economy. It is essential that public education maintain its dominant role in the education of our nation's students. I believe we must not allow private education options to draw away the talent that keeps our public school students and teachers performing at the highest levels. Therefore, public schools need to continue to focus on high achievement expectations with rich and demanding curriculum.

2. As a major employer on the Eastside, I am well aware of the requirements and the performance levels expected of our graduates. My student employees compete with all others (adults of all ages and education levels) to obtain a position and to maintain high performance levels. Their work ethics, values, and consistent performance are developed in tandem by their parents and the school system. They must all have fundamental computing and writing skills. They must have sophisticated communication and team-work skills and they must have a desire for listening and learning. As responsible citizens our students need to reflect understanding, thoughtful investigation and development of their own unique set of values that include tolerance, respect, and personal achievement. In order for our students to lead successful lives they need to understand the key aspects of self-sufficiency and the criteria by which our economy and business community rewards citizens. With the complexity of our modern world our students need to know how to make adult choices by the time they reach graduation, how to stay fit after their high school sports are long past, even how to eat right and maintain a set of safe food-handling skills. A strong understanding of communication and basic human psychology are will also be key to successful relationships and strong families.

3. Yes. All students, excepting those seriously ill, should graduate on-time. This should be the established goal of our district. Slow tracking students should be identified and supported through tutoring and partnering as they build their skills to successful levels. The district should invest as necessary to achieve this. I have worked with many levels of students, some with learning disabilities and communication deficits. I have seen them flourish with the right assistance. If we fail students in high school they become, effectively, unable to support themselves in our community.

4. Yes. All students (special education students excepted) should be required to graduate with enough credits to qualify for admission to one of our state universities. They are putting in the time. I believe that we can help them achieve that level as a minimum.

5. For nearly 40 years I have worked with volunteer groups in our community. Sometimes as a simple participant, sometimes as a manager or board member. My most significant involvement has been to serve as a board member for the Samena Swim and Recreation Club. This is a large community organization in Bellevue with a 1600 family membership base. I have been on this board for over 10 years. I have been a Scouting volunteer since the 1970's. I work mainly with adult leadership in the stewardship of the larger Scouting facilities. For 2 years I served on the board of Lifelink, a City of Bellevue youth organization designed to fill the "gaps" between home, school, and activities for Bellevue students. Our group included youth, consultants, city officials, and recreation specialists, along with financial supporters. I was also active as a Clark Elementary parent volunteer during its "Learning Community" period. As my son finished his senior year at HIS, I was on the Senior Party committee for planning and also managed/chaperoned the all-night graduate party.

6. I am officially employed in a leadership position with REI , leading a large group of teams, sometimes with competing interests. I am generally focused on consensus building usually on a well-researched set of facts. I try to foster agreement and alignment by negotiating positions that are commonly understood through honest debate of the trade-offs and cost-benefit elements of the issues. Recently, morale issues were key as I rebuilt the store team after major changes in the management team and sales transfers to our new Issaquah store. I recently received an award for my accomplishments during this period. My board experience with the Samena organization often involved debate regarding finance and budget, personnel, and long-range planning. It was not uncommon to encounter well-entrenched opinion with reluctance to compromise. Through cost-benefit discussion and review of objectives and values I was able to often bring consensus. This type of leadership allowed the board to gain confidence with my decision-making and led to strong support during my terms as board leader.

7. In negotiating with fellow store managers in my district, I am often in position to make policy decisions. One such area often in debate is the investment in our rental services and

equipment. It has been my position that this is important for entrance into the sports we represent, a low-cost alternative for customers to equipment purchasing. Other management teams have questioned the value of this and strongly lobby for reduced investment in this area. I have agreed for consistency to reduce our offering and join the other stores in a simpler offering with reduced investment.

8. The "Policy Governance" model for boards is not unlike the format used during my tenure at Samena. I am in full agreement with its objectives and to the extent that it does not limit healthy dissent and eliminate minority positions, I accept it as the preferred model for focusing the board on leadership issues.

9. I would support "open topic" meetings with my district constituents through morning or evening "coffee hours". Held in convenient locations once or twice monthly, they would give a view to concerns and directions that our public have interest in. I would also advocate a high level of visibility through the district website and in the local press. I am also open to meetings after school at the various school sites.

Steven Ellis

Issaquah School Board

My first involvement with the Issaquah School District started years ago at a meeting called by Kateri Brow to bring business leaders in the community into a developmental partnership with schools in the district. This meeting was inspirational and led to my decision to build a multi-year partnership with Apollo Elementary. At the time I was a store manager for REI in Bellevue and lived in Redmond. I partnered with the school principal and developed a program to build outdoor awareness with the teachers and students of this school.

A few years later I moved to Issaquah (1994) and my son entered the district and I began deeper involvement with Clark Elementary and its unique program. My interest in the overall education and success of students within our public school system has grown and I now have the time to invest in support of our district and its public. Through my son, his friends and my neighbors in this end of the district, I have experienced the programs and successes of our educational programs. I have also seen the growing need for ever greater achievement levels based on the business demands of our community and our state's economy.

Here are some skills and experiences I can bring to the board to our continue efforts for improvement in the outcomes we have chosen for our students:

For the last 10 years I have served on the board of a large non-profit recreation and community organization, The Samena Swim and Recreation Club. As a board member and president for multiple terms I oversaw the growth and development of the organization into a \$7 Million organization with large infrastructure and staff of 120. The board governs over a management team which ultimately developed programs to serve the community in swimming instruction, team competition, adult fitness, cultural programming along with a pre-school and a large summer camp and daycare program. I oversaw the recruitment and develop of new management and served on a team to select a successful new General Manager. In addition, I led the board through the process of designing and constructing a new facility (just completed) to enclose the pools and fitness center (a \$3 Million project). I was recognized by the board and the management team for my leadership through the years of planning and construction. This was a complex project that involved wetlands issues and close work with planners in the City of Bellevue.

Professionally, I continue as a retail manager for REI in Redmond. I have been responsible for a \$20 Million budget including all aspects of the store's operations. I oversee a team of 150 staff and have handled all aspects of staffing, budgeting development, and leadership. Many of my young applicants and employees are recent high school graduates allowing me a view towards the outcomes of students from several of our eastside districts. I know that my interactions with these recent grads have value in identifying gaps in our educational curriculums, leading to opportunities for improvement and new targets and goals for our students.

My education began locally in Bellevue, with graduation from Newport High. I continued my education with a degree in Economics from the UW and an MBA also from the UW. I have a strong interest in budget analysis and our state tax system. I have met with Glenn Anderson, my state legislator to discuss education issues and I look forward to more communication with our legislative team to find more effective ways to fully fund our schools. Throughout my education and professional life I have been involved with youth programs, as a Ski School Director for the Bellevue Ski School (20 yrs.), Director for the UW Ski School and board member for the City of Bellevue Lifelink Youth Program.

In summary, the above mentioned skills, influences and involvements prepare me well for serving on a board with a youth focused mission and the critical task of governing the policies that direct our district administrators and teachers. My budgeting, communication and leadership skills would blend well with those of existing school board members but, also provide insights for fresh perspectives that would benefit the board and school community overall. My family is still very involved in education as my wife, Dr. Sandra Ellis, counsels and instructs interns for the UW and my son Graham, is finishing his honors year in Economics/Finance at Simon Fraser University in Canada.

I thank you for your consideration. Steven Ellis



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Date 10/9/08

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great pleasure that I recommend Steve Ellis for a position on the Issaquah School Board. As General Manager of the Samena Club I have worked closely with Steve for the past 4 years as he has been a member of the club's Board of Directors. During my tenure Steve has served in a variety of leadership positions including President and Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee. As President, Steve oversaw the design of a \$3 million construction project. His vision for the organization helped to shape a facility that is not only state of the art but also financially responsible.

During the permitting and construction phase of the project, Steve headed the Long Range Planning Committee. Steve was dedicated to the project and he played an integral role in maintaining the project's timeline. He met with city officials on multiple occasions to make sure that the best interest of the Samena Club had a voice. Steve's work with the city helped to bridge the gap between a bureaucratic process and the realities of a multimillion dollar construction project. His diplomacy and tact garnered him tremendous respect across all levels of the project.

I personally have had the opportunity to utilize Steve's business experience and savvy when making operational decisions for the Samena Club. He has been a sounding board, confidant, and visionary for me personally. I consider Steve a mentor and I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with him.

Steve's leadership and dedication have made an impact on the Samena Club today and on the Samena Club of the future. I truly believe that Steve would be an asset to the Issaquah School Board and I enthusiastically recommend him for a position.

Sincerely yours,

Tonya Swick

General Manager

October 12, 2008


To the Issaquah School Board:

We are writing on behalf of Steven Ellis. We've known Steven for many years and were really delighted when we heard he decided to apply for this position on the Issaquah School Board. We live on Tiger Mountain and have two small children who will soon join the ranks of the Issaquah Public Schools, so those who will be making decisions about the future of our and other children's education is of the utmost importance to us.

What Steven Ellis can bring to the board is more than a brief note can contain. In addition to being an engaging father of a now grown son who was educated in the Issaquah district public schools, he is extremely well informed on past and current local issues and politics. While many people may meet that description, few have the ability to listen to various sides of a problem and bring people together for decisive action. Without being confrontational, his thoughtful insights and willingness to dive in and learn more about new issues is most impressive.

We have watched Steven in action as he has faced challenging obstacles with conflicting information and come up with creative alternatives that impressed all concerned parties. Steven Ellis is exactly the kind of person we want and would trust to help make decisions for the children of Issaquah. A finer candidate you will not find.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Polly and Hershel Klein", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Polly and Hershel Klein

Dave and Ruth Fenn

October 11, 2008

To Whom it May Concern:

We have known Steve Ellis for more than 30 years. Steve, his wife Sandy and their son Graham have lived in Issaquah (Mirrormont) for 15 years. Their son Graham attended Clark Elementary, Issaquah Middle School, and Issaquah High School (2003).

Steve is an intelligent, dedicated and personable individual. He will make an excellent candidate for the Issaquah School Board.

We live in the High Valley neighborhood and our 4 children attend(ed) Apollo Elementary, Maywood Middle School, Liberty High. We have actively volunteered in all these schools.

Sincerely,

Dave and Ruth Fenn