

NEWS

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Warsaw Community Schools Welcomes Tom Westerhof and Denny Duncan to the School Board

WARSAW, IN - In January, 2023, Warsaw Community Schools welcomed Tom Westerhof and Denny Duncan as school board members representing districts one and five.

Dr. Hoffert, WCS Superintendent, stated, "We are very excited and grateful to welcome our new school board members Tom Westerhof and Denny Duncan. Both individuals have portrayed a great love for our schools and community through past service and now joining the 2023 Board of School Trustees. Mr. Westerhof has been an active parent involved with Washington STEM Academy and the Warsaw Education Foundation. Mr. Duncan had a longstanding career as an educator and many years as principal within Warsaw Community Schools."

Heather Reichenbach, WCS Board President, added, "We are excited for the new energy that Tom and Denny bring to the board. Beyond their interest and commitment to board service, their resumes are evidence of their care for our community, which positions them well to be excellent stewards of our WCS mission. As a board we wish to extend a warm welcome and commit to learning and working together as a team, to inspire and equip for generations to come."

Denny and his wife Glenda have been married for forty-three years and have five daughters, who all attended and graduated from Warsaw Community Schools. He is also the proud grandpa of nine grandchildren and one on the way; four of his grandchildren also attend WCS.

Denny came to the Warsaw area as a Grace College undergraduate student and has since stayed in the area. He has an extensive background as an educator and school leader, which includes teaching at Washington Elementary, serving as assistant principal at Warsaw Community High School, and principal at Atwood Elementary. He eventually retired from WCS after serving as Jefferson Elementary principal for 18 years.

After retiring, he worked for several years as the Alumni Director and women's golf coach at Grace College; he is currently working as a real estate agent with the Brian Peterson Real Estate Group. In his free time, Denny enjoys golfing, traveling, and mountain biking, along with spending time with his children and grandchildren.

Denny has experience serving on several boards within the community. These include United Way of Kosciusko County, Grace Village, Indiana Lakes Federal Credit Union, and the Winona Lake Town Board.

Denny shared, "I'm excited for the opportunity to be a part of the Warsaw School Board. I invested my entire career in the field of education, my children attended Warsaw Schools, and I have grandchildren currently in the school system. There is nothing I'm more passionate about than the well-being of the children in our community. I truly believe our school system is among the best in the state, and it's a privilege for me to contribute in this way."

Tom Westerhof has been in the Warsaw area for most of his life. His parents, Bob and Luyen, settled in the Warsaw area shortly before he turned two. He attended elementary school at Madison, went to Warsaw Middle School, and graduated from Warsaw Community High School. Tom then attended Grace College where he graduated with a double major in criminal justice and psychology.

In 1998, Tom married his wife Nicole (Hanna) whose family ties to the area go back to before Kosciusko County was officially a county. Those generations of Hannas that came before them are part of the strong connection Tom feels to the local community. "Nicole's family has been here for close to two centuries, something we are very proud of. When we tell people we love raising our family here, it's something her family has been doing for generations. This county has always been home and always will be."

Tom and Nicole are the proud parents of their two children Harper and Hayes. In his free time, he loves spending time with his family, especially going to the kids' activities and being involved with their lives as much as possible. He also enjoys traveling, working out at CrossFit Haymaker, hanging out with friends, eating at his favorite local restaurants and serving on the boards at two of his favorite non-profits – CASA of Kosciusko County and the Warsaw Education Foundation.

Tom decided to run for school board after recognizing the many important decisions that take place that affect his children's education, the teachers, and the community. Tom stated, "I have two kids currently in the Warsaw school system. I wanted to do more than attend meetings and post on Facebook."

Having spent the last 20 years working in purchasing at Indiana University, Tom believes that experience will help him ensure the corporation's funds are spent as efficiently as possible, especially on larger projects. His time working for a university also reinforced the importance of keeping a focus on the students. Tom shared, "One thing that we've been told at IU is that we are here for the students. That same principle can be applied at Warsaw Schools. If we continue keeping the best interests of the students in mind when making decisions, we can be confident we are continuing down the right path for the school system."

Dr. David Hoffert, WCS Superintendent, added, "The role of a board member goes much further than the traditional meetings. Members serve as a liaison and community ambassador to our schools. They spend hours understanding the many operational facets of public education and then use that knowledge to help shape the future of our schools. Warsaw Community Schools is grateful for their commitment on behalf of the future generations of Warsaw students."