

### Dear Neighbor:

Test scores are going down, enrollment is declining, veteran principals are leaving, and taxes are continuing to rise. There's an uncomfortable truth that more people in our town need to know: **all is not well in Evanston's public schools.**

We are a diverse group of Evanstonians—parents, teachers, longtime residents, and proud D65 & ETHS alumni—who are deeply concerned about the state of our public schools.

We've created this newsletter, which aggregates data about D65 & D202 and summarizes reporting on schools from our local papers, to help more Evanstonians get a picture of what is happening.

**With the school board elections less than a week away—and early voting already underway—this issue lists a number of issues of serious concern (some of them not yet covered by ESU), briefly introduces a slate of non-incumbent candidates, and reminds citizens of the logistics of voting.**

## In Election Cycle with Historically Low Turnout Expected, Every Vote Counts

In a well-functioning electoral system, every vote counts. That's especially true in the Evanston school board elections—because, to tell the truth, not that many people vote in them. This cycle, turnout is anticipated to be even lower than usual, because both D65 and D202 will be on Spring Break and because there are only two City Council races.

Our analysis of prior elections reveals that as few as **150 votes can swing a result.** This newsletter has more subscribers than that.

So, please, go cast your vote—through a mail-in ballot, via early voting at the Civic Center, or on Election Day (April 4) at your local polling place. The logistics of the voting process are explained below.

Your individual vote really does make a difference.

---

## Issues that Matter

Even if you don't have kids in the Evanston schools anymore, or never did, you know that the actions of our school boards have a profound effect on the community.

Nothing shows the level of dissatisfaction more clearly than **families leaving the community**, or, almost as concerning, staying in the community but **pulling their children out of the schools.** We know scores of parents who have left. Most say the same thing: we didn't want to, but we felt we had no choice.

Of the two Evanston school districts, it strikes us that District 65 is in many ways in greater jeopardy, which is why we have made it the focus of all of our issues to date.

Here is a quick listing of some of the most **concerning facts about District 65**, some of which we have featured and some of which we'll highlight in the future:

- The District is **losing students**—enrollment is down about 20% in the last five years.
- In response to steadily **declining test scores**, the district **"sharply reduced" the benchmark** for college readiness in reading from the 60th percentile to the 45th percentile.
- Fewer of the district's schools are earning the **state's top rating.**
- The number of teachers is staying flat while the number of **administrators is up nearly 30%.** Administrator salaries, meanwhile, are **exploding.** The superintendent received a 14% **pay increase** this year and the pay for the superintendent and his administrative team rose 16% overall.

- Many principals and assistant principals, by our count twelve in the last four years, have left the district.
- The district has eliminated [100% of its reading specialists](#).

## Challenger Candidates

In District 65, **three non-incumbent challengers** are competing with two incumbents for three seats.

**John Martin** ([johnmartin65.com](http://johnmartin65.com)) has pledged to reinstate academics as the top priority for D65, and to work with teachers, administrators and parents to re-build a culture of equity, transparency, and accountability. A father of two young children in D65, Martin is a finance professional and the former commissioner of AYSO.

**Ndona Muboyayi** ([ndona4d65.com](http://ndona4d65.com)) has pledged to prioritize the needs of Evanston's marginalized families, especially the lagging literacy of Black, Latino, and low-income students, as well as fiscal responsibility. A fifth-generation Evanstonian as well as a financial and business consultant whose two children have attended Evanston schools, Muboyayi leads a STEM-focused educational non-profit.

**Omar Salem** ([omarsalem.org](http://omarsalem.org)) has pledged to focus on the well-being of students and to push the District to be more responsive to the needs of its teachers. A teacher at Niles North High School, who is currently on leave working for the Illinois Federation of Teachers as a professional development facilitator, Salem is the father of two children, and has been an Evanston resident since 2012.

The Evanston RoundTable has published [Q&As](#) with all the candidates running for seats in District 65 and District 202 (as well as the City Council).



## Logistics of Voting

**Early voting** in Evanston takes place only at the Morton Civic Center, Room G-300 (Ground Floor), on the following schedule:

Monday through Friday	Saturdays	Sundays
<b>March 20 through 24</b> 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	<b>March 25 and April 1</b> 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	<b>March 26 and April 2</b> 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
<b>March 27 through 31</b> 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.	A government-issued photo ID is not required to vote early, but is helpful if there is a question about the voter's registration, address or signature. For further details, click <a href="#">here</a> .	
<b>April 3</b> 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.		

On **Election Day, Tuesday, April 4**, from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., residents should go to their usual polling place. If you don't know where it is, you can look it up [here](#).

Thank you to the many people who have already signed up online to receive this newsletter.

If you haven't yet signed up, please go to [www.evanston-schools-update.org](http://www.evanston-schools-update.org). And feel free to share this issue or the previous ones.

Scan Code  
to access online  
Schools Update

