

Mang sees room for improvement, marketing

Editor's note: This is the second of three profiles of candidates for two seats on the Livonia Public Schools Board of Education.

BY REBECCA JONES
OBSERVER STAFF WRITER

Livonia Public Schools should improve what it has and market itself better, said Patrice Mang, a candidate for the school board. For years, Livonia stood as a pillar in Western Wayne County. People wanted to move here, she said. But other communities, like Novi and Plymouth, Canton, Northville and Farmington, have raised the bar.

LPS should focus on partnerships and initiate programs to draw young families, she said. "I think we have good programs in place, but there's always room for improvement," Mang said.

One of her ideas is a grade school for first- through eighth-grades, such as with the academically talented programs at



Mang



Webster and Frost.

Mang also wants to open more upper elementary schools. Although she has not crunched the numbers, she thinks it's possible.

"Would it cost more to run two smaller schools than one (bigger) school?" she said.

"Would it bring more people back? Would it bring people to Livonia?"

Mang, 42, a teacher in Allen Park schools, ran for a one-year seat on the LPS board last year.

"I still believe I could provide the leadership, and responsibility that's necessary to be a productive board member," Mang said, adding that the board is lacking in "leadership and ini-

tiative to improve what we have right now."

Mang, a Livonia resident for nine and a half years, has bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Eastern Michigan University and a counseling endorsement from the University of Detroit Mercy.

She served on the board of Citizens for Livonia's Future, which fought the Legacy Initiative school closings and restructuring and led a recall effort against the school board.

The Legacy Initiative scared people away, she said. The issue now is, "How do we move forward and make it better?"

As the mother of two elementary students, including a third-grader often frustrated with his math homework, Mang said Everyday Math offers exposure, but no learning and should be enriched. "They call it a spiraling curriculum. Well, it's spiraling all right."

The central administration's focus has to be "getting in control of the finances."

Borrowing from the "rainy day" fund must stop, she said. "They have got to focus on tightening the belt."

"I think the energy consultant was a huge mistake," she said. People on staff could have done the same job, Mang said. "If we had that money to spend to invest on an energy saving plan, that would be phenomenal. They're crying poor and spending more. That really concerns me."

She's also concerned with "ballooning" class sizes and is against privatization.

"I have a huge problem with outsourcing jobs," she said. Even though some districts are moving to private custodial and bus services to save money, Mang said evidence "would have to be pretty compelling to change my mind."

"I'd rather save \$3 million cutting some other things," she added.

The election is May 6.