

Trail candidates worried about state funding cuts

BY ERIN L. NISSLEY
STAFF WRITER

The three candidates running for two Region 1 seats on the Lackawanna Trail School Board have at least one thing in common: They are all worried about proposed state funding cuts that could cost the district \$1 million or more.

Democrat incumbent Jane Richards, 78, of Factoryville, a retired assistant school nurse who is serving her second term on the school board, faces challengers David Thorne, 44, of Factoryville, a former Abington Heights School Board member and an equipment operator for Clarks Summit, and Joseph Strauch, 64, of Factoryville, a retired senior systems analyst for Met Life and an adjunct instructor at Keystone College.

Both Mr. Thorne and Mr. Strauch are running on Democratic and Republican tickets in the May 17 primaries.

All three candidates agree the state budget cuts proposed last month by Gov. Tom Corbett will wreak havoc on the school district's budget.

Mrs. Richards said she is not sure yet how to address the cuts and said the school board and district administrators are going over options.

"Until we know exactly what (the) legislators will do, we can't finalize anything," she said, adding that she is hesitant to talk about specific proposals to address shortfalls at this time. "I can't tell you what I support because I don't know what all the options are."

Both Mr. Strauch and Mr. Thorne said they do not support cutting extracurricular activities to save money in the district, though Mr. Strauch said he would like to explore ways to make after-school clubs and sports self-funded.

"I'm all for sports. My kids

About the candidates



RICHARDS

JANE RICHARDS

Age: 78

Family: Husband, Bill. Children: Wendy, Scott, Kim and Kurt

Education: Graduated from Dalton High School, class of 1950. Educated as a registered nurse at Presbyterian Hospital in Philadelphia.

Employment: Retired. Worked as an assistant school nurse at Lackawanna Trail

Elementary Center for 27 years

Address: Factoryville

Experience: Lackawanna Trail School Board member for the past eight years



STRAUCH

JOSEPH STRAUCH

Age: 64

Family: Wife, Cathy. Children: Ken, Cecilia, Janine and Allison

Education: Bachelor's degree from Baruch College in New York

Employment: Adjunct instructor at Keystone College. Retired senior systems analyst from Met Life, where he worked for 45 years

Address: Factoryville

Experience: None



THORNE

DAVID THORNE

Age: 44

Family: Wife, Kathleen. Children: Robert, Amanda, Nicholas and Kevin

Education: Graduate of Abington Heights High School, class of 1984. Earned an associate degree from Keystone College and a bachelor's degree from West Chester University

Employment: Equipment operator for Clarks

Summit borough since 1989

Address: Factoryville

Experience: Abington Heights School Board member from 2000 to 2004

play sports," Mr. Strauch said. "But should my neighbor pay for that?"

Mr. Strauch also said he did not believe in cutting staff to cope with budget shortfalls.

Mr. Thorne said he would need to know more about the budget before he could make any recommendations on how best to cope with budget cuts. He said he would like to examine union contracts and busing as possible ways to save money.

"The only way to solve the school budget crisis is to get everyone working together," Mr. Thorne said. "If we say, 'This is what we're facing,' I think people will come together."

Meanwhile, there are two

"Until we know exactly what (the) legislators will do, we can't finalize anything."

Jane Richards
School board candidate

uncontested races for Lackawanna Trail School Board. Michael Mould of Factoryville and Carol Vail Selwood of Dalton are running on both the Democratic and Republican tickets for two Region 2 seats. Mark Lombardi of Dalton is running on both the Democratic and Republican tickets for one Region 3 seat.

All the seats are four-year terms and unpaid.

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