

March 2007

Dear Voter,

*I'm Shirley Pietrucha, a candidate for the Franklin Township school board, and I'm asking for your vote on April 17th.*



This year's election of the members of the Board of Education is one of the most important in many years. The people you elect on **April 17th** will select the **new Superintendent of Schools** who will provide the leadership for our school district for many years to come. In addition, some administrative contracts will be negotiated and important policy decisions will be made that affect the education of our children and the cost that you pay through your tax dollars.

**Tax revenues** going to the school system are in excess of 60% of the taxes we now pay and taxes are increasing year after year. The financial report for the Franklin Township Public Schools for the year ended 6/30/06 shows that the **Property Tax Levy for schools increased over \$12.5 million, or 16%, between 2005 and 2006.** The other main sources of funds also increased, bringing the **total increase to \$14.7 million.**

**Spending** plans must be carefully developed and monitored to insure that these dollars are spent wisely. **As a Certified Public Accountant and a Public School Accountant,** I will request reports that disclose expenses by category and line item. We should look closely at internal controls throughout the system. Possibilities for shared services should be carefully explored.

**Volunteerism** must be encouraged. Many of our residents are well educated with college and graduate school degrees and some have many years of management experience. We have concerned parents and other citizens who wish to volunteer their services and help to improve the academic and social excellence of our schools. Volunteers can enhance our children's classroom experience and also help to control personnel costs. Unfortunately, the perception is that the current administration does not want them to be involved. **This must change.** The schools belong to the community and local leadership must be responsive to the expectations of the citizens who pay the bills.

**Safety** in our schools must be a top priority. The current situation with juvenile delinquency and gangs in Franklin Township is a topic of public concern and we must give it the attention it deserves. A "fear-free" school zone is a basic right for students and teachers.

**Communication** without fear of retaliation must be encouraged. Our school district faces many challenges, but I believe many of the answers lie with the teachers, administrators and other employees of the school system. We have highly compensated professionals who can solve problems if we let them. The current organizational structure stifles communication. We need a system for open communications where suggestions, even anonymous ones, are welcomed and encouraged.

***Term limits*** is an idea whose time has come for our school board members. The current school board leadership has controlled the process for far too long. I believe two terms is enough for any elected position. New school board members bring new ideas and a new perspective to the issues facing our school district. ***It's time for fresh voices.***

***Open and honest dialogue*** must be encouraged and the administration should have a cooperative attitude in making information available. The courts have held that very little information is private. The perception of many people that the Board operates in secret will change only when the people are able to hear open and honest discussion. The local school board has been a tradition from the beginning of free public education and we must exercise our rights as citizens and support this system. Board members are elected by the people to represent the community and to educate the children in accordance with the wishes of their parents. Parents spend money paying private school tuitions because the children are not receiving what they need in our public schools. Let us be honest about the problems and solve them together.

***I am not affiliated with any political party.*** The code of ethics stresses that decisions must be made without regard to partisan politics and most of you know how strong a role the political parties have played in our schools. I promise that local political leaders will not influence decisions I will make.

***Once again, I'm asking for your vote on April 17 - # 3 on your ballot.***

Thank you.

## ***Shirley Pietrucha***

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### **Shirley Y. Pietrucha, CPA**

- Married 32 years to Robert E. Pietrucha, Franklin Township resident 23 years
- Bachelor of Science in Management Science, Summa Cum Laude, Kean University, NJ
- Master of Business Administration, Fairleigh Dickinson University, NJ, GPA 3.96
- Licensed as a Certified Public Accountant and a Public School Accountant.

Relevant professional experience includes:

- Twelve years with NJ Department of Higher Education and Kean University
- Served in financial administration positions including Director of Budget, Fiscal Analyst and Acting Associate Vice-President of Finance and Administration.
- Teaching experience includes eight semesters of college courses in accounting and public administration. Served as University President's representative to the Faculty Senate. Served on search committee for nation-wide search for College Dean.
- Served on Middle States Accreditation Team with the Dept. of Higher Education
- Twenty-five year member, American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the NJ Society of CPA's; charter member of Kean University chapter of Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society.
- Served as Treasurer and President, Franklin Township Public Library Board
- Currently the owner of Somerset Tax Services, LLC
- Veteran, US Army Finance Corps

**[www.shirleyforschoolboard.com](http://www.shirleyforschoolboard.com)**

Paid for by "Shirley Pietrucha for School Board" 1075 Easton Ave., Somerset, NJ