

Jennifer May Zywietz



March 28th, 2025

USD 413 Board of Education
321 East Main Street
Chanute, KS

Dear Members of the USD 413 Board of Education,

I am writing to express my sincere interest in serving as a member of the USD 413 Board of Education. I believe I would be a healthy and supportive addition to the Board, bringing a unique blend of global perspective, deep local roots, and a lifelong passion for education. Here is what I would like you to know about me:

1. A Global Perspective on Education Systems—Rooted in Southeast Kansas

My interest in education is deeply rooted in my own journey, which began right here in Southeast Kansas. I was born and raised in Humboldt but spent most of my early education at Chanute Christian Academy, attending from kindergarten through 10th grade. Changing schools for my junior and senior years at Humboldt High School gave me firsthand insight into how different school systems shape student experience. I graduated as valedictorian of the Class of 2001 and, thanks to a few life-changing academic scholarships, went on to Kansas State University, where I earned dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Business Administration and Psychology. (Purple will always be part of my wardrobe!)

At K-State, I studied abroad at the University of Maastricht in the Netherlands, where I experienced a student-led, flipped-classroom approach to learning. That exposure deepened my interest in how systems around the world support student growth. I later earned a Master's in Neuroscience from Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, and completed post-graduate studies at Harvard's School of Public Health—giving me insight into both European models and elite U.S. institutions.

Professionally, I continued exploring education by leading strategy and operations for McKinsey & Company's Global Education Practice. McKinsey is one of the world's leading management consulting firms, advising governments, school systems, and organizations on complex strategic challenges. In that role, I worked directly with education systems around the globe—from the well-resourced in the United Arab Emirates to emerging systems in Azerbaijan. Our research, including McKinsey's groundbreaking education reports highlight how the most improved school systems achieve excellence and equity. See examples [here](#) and [here](#).

During the pandemic, out of necessity, I also founded and ran a successful micro-school, overseeing everything from hiring to curriculum selection and student evaluations. This gave me

practical experience with alternative education models—an area I believe will grow in importance as school choice continues to feature prominently in political discussions.

2. Board Experience and Governance Know-How

In 2010, I was a founding member of the [GCC Board Directors Institute](#), an organization focused on strengthening board leadership across the Middle East. My work involved training directors of publicly listed companies in both their legal responsibilities and the art of collaborative, effective governance. I understand how boards function and how to get the best out of them—through constructive debate, clear roles, and keeping the mission at the center of every decision.

3. A Lifelong Passion for Learning and Development

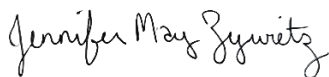
Today, I work in adult development, coaching senior executives at companies like Google, Novartis, and PepsiCo. This work constantly reinforces how foundational education shapes opportunities throughout life. I see the challenges faced by those whose early education left gaps—and the lasting advantage for those who had access to strong schools. I would bring that long view to the School Board's conversations, with the hope that we continue to prepare our students to thrive locally or anywhere their hearts take them.

4. Deep Commitment to Southeast Kansas

After spending two decades abroad in the Netherlands and Dubai, I returned to Chanute for what I thought would be a short visit. But something unexpected happened—my children fell in love with CES, we adopted a few chickens, and we decided to plant roots here permanently. Now, I'm looking for meaningful ways to give back to the community that raised me, and I can think of no better way than through service on the School Board.

Thank you for considering my application. I would be honored to contribute to the continued growth and success of USD 413.

Sincerely,



Jennifer May Zywitz

