

Patria Lawton
75 Juniper Street
Mahtomedi, MN 55115

November 6, 2020

Members of the Mahtomedi School Board
Mahtomedi School District
1520 Mahtomedi Ave, Mahtomedi, MN 55115

Dear Board Members:

Please accept my application for the open position on the Mahtomedi School Board. I have included a copy of my resume, which outlines my educational and professional experience, the combination of which make me a uniquely qualified candidate for the position.

I am a tenured faculty member in the communication department at Inver Hills Community College in Inver Grove Heights, where I have taught for the past eight years. My teaching experience has exposed me to a wide variety of students from diverse backgrounds. I have taught underprepared students who were working on developmental coursework, PSEO students, and honors students. Through this position, I have also had the opportunity to work directly in Burnsville High School as a teacher mentor for a public speaking concurrent enrollment class. Additionally, I teach risk and crisis communication at the graduate level at the University of Minnesota. Through these wide-ranging teaching experiences, I have gained valuable insight into the factors that can affect student and institutional success.

I hold a Master's Degree in communication, an MBA, and am currently working on my Doctorate in education, which I expect to finish in the next 18 months. I have a solid background in budgeting and finance through this education – I just completed a doctoral level school and district budgeting course this fall. I also have extensive professional experience managing the fiscal aspects of multi-million dollar government contracts through my work with a national technology industry cluster. While I understand quantitative decision-making, I also value qualitative data as part of the larger picture, and as a way to gain valuable context around important issues.

I have dedicated my life to the power and promise of education and am committed to making sure that all students, regardless of demographics, have access to a safe and rewarding educational environment. I also believe that faculty and staff deserve to be recognized for the efforts that are being put forth each day to ensure that happens. All decisions that a school board makes have consequences to those in the community and I will make a firm commitment in this position to make my actions transparent and ethical because that is what this community deserves.

I realize that I am seeking a position to represent our community's needs during an unprecedented time. I do not take the responsibility of a school board member lightly and wish to serve this community, the teachers, staff, administrators, students, families and all stakeholders to the best of my ability. I sincerely believe that the strength in the Mahtomedi schools has been solidly established as the defining feature of this community and as a former student and graduate myself, I would be honored to contribute to leading it successfully into the future.

Sincerely,



Patria Lawton, MA, MBA

Patria Lawton, MBA, MA

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SUMMARY

Experienced, passionate and equity-minded leader who has dedicated her career to the power and promise of education. Unique background coupling business and education both in work experience and education. Highly skilled communicator with a passion for engaging members of diverse communities in relationship building. Experienced in strategic planning with a commitment to ethical, compassionate, and transparent decision-making processes. Experience with collective bargaining units and large scale budget planning and approval.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Inver Hills Community College, Inver Grove Heights, MN

2012 – Present: Communication Faculty

Design and implement course curriculum and structure, assess student progress, provide guidance and assistance in comprehension of material to students. Teach courses in a variety of formats including online, hybrid and residential. Work with department members to ensure that course outcomes align with accreditation standards. Propose and manage departmental budget, including budget justifications and capital equipment requests. Organize and lead department meetings. Fulfill reporting requirements to the Deans, Provost, Board of Trustees and President. Represent the college at recruiting events including guest lectures at local schools and parent information panels. Serve on multiple committees and taskforces as needed, including hiring committees. Review student success data and implement changes as needed to work towards Minnesota State's equity 2020 goals.

Courses Taught:

- Interpersonal Communication (online, hybrid, residential)
- Public Speaking (online, hybrid, residential)
- Small Group Communication (hybrid, residential)
- Intercultural Communication (residential)
- Concurrent Enrollment Public Speaking Co-Instructor, Burnsville High School

Committee Work:

- Academic Affairs and Standards Committee (AASC)
- Concurrent Enrollment Committee
- Faculty Development Committee
- Hiring Committee: Dean, Liberal Arts
- Executive Committee, Inver Hills Chapter, Minnesota State College Faculty Union (MSCF)
- Graduation Committee
- Facilities Committee

Recent Presentations:

- Revamping Credit for Prior Learning, Adult Learner Institute, Inver Hills Community College
- Succeeding in Online Classes, Student Success Day, Inver Hills Community College
- Including Academic Journal Reading in Online Courses, STAR Symposium, Minnesota State

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

2015 – Present: Adjunct Graduate Faculty, M.S. in Security Technologies Program, Technological Leadership Institute

- Course Taught: Communication of Risk & Security

Normandale Community College, Bloomington, MN

2010 – 2012: Faculty, Communication Department

Globe University, Richfield and Minneapolis, MN

2006 – 2010: Faculty, General Education Department

EDUCATION

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|-------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Ed.D. | Minnesota State Moorhead, Moorhead, MN | Ed. Leadership | <i>Expected: 2022</i> |
| MBA | Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN | Business Administration | 2008 |
| M.A. | Bethel University, Saint Paul, MN | Communication Studies | 2006 |
| B.A. | Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN | Communication, English Minor | 2004 |
| K-12 | Mahtomedi Public Schools | | |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Business Director, Advanced Power & Energy Cluster

Saint Paul, MN 2005 – 2012, 2012 - Current (Consultant Based)

- Responsible for all business management and compliance aspects of a multi-million dollar, multi-year U.S. Small Business Administration contract to operate a Technology Cluster, including: budgeting and finance; event management; financial accounting and contract compliance; reporting and metrics; and cluster member recruiting and management. Acted as executive director during the director’s absence.
- Creation and management of innovative quarterly events and national webinars for a 35-state regional business alliance, including: site contracting, negotiation and setup; catering; speakers and panels, sponsor and exhibitor identification and servicing; and budgetary responsibility. The events have been lauded by the membership as highly creative, interactive and educational, and span dozens of diverse venues and topic areas.
- Key facilitator for the business alliance’s extensive network of contacts and connections, including senior government officials, and business and nonprofit executives nationally. Professional client interaction has led to membership that has grown from inception to over 800 corporate, academic and governmental entities and 3,400 individuals.
- Awardee of the prestigious U.S. Small Business Administration Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year Award for 2007. Singled out for strong advocacy on behalf of service-disabled Veteran-owned small businesses, and Veteran hiring practices.

- 2014 recipient of the Progress Minnesota award for contribution to state technology-based economic development by fostering the growth of small businesses, including technology cluster growth and collaboration, and support for disadvantaged and under-represented demographic firms.
- Leader for cross-cluster collaboration: singled out routinely by several other technology clusters to share best practices for budgeting and accounting, staffing, reporting and metrics, and other critical tasks related to cluster management.

Senior Marketing and Communications Manager

Minnesota Wire, Saint Paul, MN 2005 – 2011

- Led the strategic marketing effort, including budgetary responsibility, as the company transformed from manufacturing to research and development (R&D). The marketing plan included embrace of new and multiple markets, collaborations and partnerships with government, academia and business, and new tools for implementation.
- Created a new corporate brand that included parent company and division logos and accompanying media. The creative approach encompassed the vision of a move to new markets and leading edge manufacturing and R&D practices.
- Personally oversaw the development of wholly new corporate websites and Intranet for the parent corporation, a division, a subsidiary and an adjacent business alliance.

MAHTOMEDI PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Your Name: Patria Lawton

2. Why are you interested in serving on the Mahtomedi School Board?

My interest in serving on the School Board is three-fold. First, as a former student and graduate of the Mahtomedi schools, I feel compelled to give back to a community that has given me so much. Because of my education in these schools, I went on to obtain several degrees as well as dedicate my life to the power and promise of education through teaching. I want to support the already existing efforts as well as contribute new ideas and perspectives to ensure that the educational excellence that this district is known for continues for each generation of learners.

Second, I want to work on behalf of the entire community to make sure that we are strategic, deliberate and accountable with addressing equity issues in our schools - particularly those that are coming to light within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am particularly excited about the Achievement and Integration 2020-2023 plan that seeks to increase racial and economic integration, and to increase achievement among traditionally underserved students. I also applaud and seek to contribute to the goal increasing the diversity of the teaching staff a reality.

Third, a creative and sustainable approach to ensure fiscal health is a critically important issue to me as a citizen and parent. I would like to be involved in making sure the district continues to be able to provide an excellent education while maintaining a balanced budget.

3. How have you been involved with this or other school districts and educational programs? Have you served on any other boards?

I am currently a tenured faculty member at Inver Hills Community College in the Communication Department where I teach a variety of courses both in-person, and online. I have been teaching in higher education for 14 years and have extensive experience designing, and implementing course curriculum, assessing student programs, and working with a diverse student body. I am also a graduate faculty member at the University of Minnesota in the M.S. in Security Technology (MSST) program, which has helped to build my knowledge and navigation of a large, public, four-year institution.

While I have not served on other boards, I have served on several committees throughout my academic career including the college budgeting committee, the academic affairs and standards committee, hiring committees, the facilities committee, and the concurrent enrollment committee.

I also have experience substitute teaching in the Mahtomedi School District. During a research sabbatical in 2016-2017, I sought to further understand the student body that was entering college and substitute taught at Mahtomedi High School a number of times.

4. What experiences or talents can you bring to the Mahtomedi School Board?

I believe that I am uniquely qualified for this position because of my background in both academia and industry coupled with my educational attainments. I have experience with strategic planning, complex budgeting issues, working with collective bargaining units, and working for and with a diverse student population.

As a skilled and experienced communicator, I would bring my talents to assist the Mahtomedi School Board with messaging, clear communication and facilitation skills.

As a researcher, I have the ability to gather and synthesize a large amount of data. I would bring the ability to dive deeply into issues and provide data-informed input to the School Board.

My experience within both a community college and as graduate faculty at the University of Minnesota means that I have a deep understanding of what it takes for students to have academic success after high school if their path leads them to continued education. Uniquely, as a community college educator, I have an intimate understanding of a wide-variety of issues facing our young people including mental health issues, food and housing insecurities, and technology access inequities.

5. What do you believe are the most pressing issues facing the Mahtomedi Public Schools?

Currently, the educational challenges surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are at the top of the list. Continuing to adjust learning models and student support, while balancing state and federal guidelines with community input will continue to be the most visible and urgent work of the school board for the near future.

Equity is going to continue to be something that needs to be prioritized by the School Board. When considering the term equity, it is critical that we are considering intersectionality – we need to be thinking about gender, race, socioeconomic and other factors in concert with one another, and not just be viewing equity through a singular lens. Framing all of the work that the district is doing through an equity-minded approach includes processes such as budgeting, hiring, and delivery model decisions to ensure that all of the students and families being served by the schools are able to access the quality education for which Mahtomedi is valued.