

This is a sample Guest Column that was written for our local newspaper informing the public about the Public Service Candidate School. You may want to consider to write a column for your newspaper highlighting the program.

Headline: Are you “Three C’s & an A”?

By Kathy Perrett, Assistant to the President/Manager of Public Policy
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The book entitled “*To Lead Is to Serve*,” by Shar McBee explains how to attract volunteers and keep them. Throughout the book, creative examples’ are given from experts and professionals for attracting volunteers. Qwen Jackson, a former National Chair of Volunteers for the American Red Cross, shares her formula for volunteerism: ‘*Three C’s & an A – Caring, Committed, Competent & Accountable.*’ After reading the book with fellow Board members of another organization, the Junior League of Battle Creek, I found it not only to be enlightening, but the information could certainly be applied in other arenas such as public service.

In the political arena, voters are looking for ‘*Three C’s & an A*’ in candidates. People are more likely to vote for someone who displays a deep sense of compassion and interest in their community – someone who *cares*. Moreover, voters look for individuals who are *committed* to their interests. In our representative form of government, we expect public officials to be *accountable* and *competent* in creating and shaping public policy.

Public service is a form of volunteerism, but often it is difficult to know if you have what it takes to run for office. The Battle Creek Area Chamber of Commerce recognizes that individuals who may be interested in such a calling want to make an informed decision. After all, it is a big decision. As a result, the Chamber is offering a series of five sessions called the *Public Service Candidate School*. The sessions are designed to offer participants the opportunity to be introduced to, and gain a working knowledge of, the local political process as it relates to school board, county and townships positions.

Chamber members Allegra Print & Imaging, Calhoun Intermediate School District, Stetler Vanderveer & Associates and Vandervoort, Christ and Fisher, PC are the program sponsors for the series. All the sessions are free of charge and will be held at SEMCO Energy Gas Company located at 55 Hamblin Avenue from 6 to 9 p.m. The sessions are open to anyone who is interested in learning more about public service opportunities (now or in the future). Participants completing the series (either School Board or County/Township tracks) are eligible to receive one CEU credit or one college credit through Western Michigan University. WMU costs apply for credit.

The five session series will kick off on Wednesday evening, February 23rd. This session will provide participants with general information and things to consider like why do you want to run?, time commitment, family members’ support, and more. You’ll also hear from former and experienced public officials and get advice on how to get started.

The second session will be held on Wednesday, March 8 and will provide information on working with the media and campaign finance. On Wednesday, March 22, participants will

learn principles in public policy formation and public meeting format such as Roberts Rules of Order.

On Wednesday, April 5, the program will be a discussion of local issues facing school boards. The final session on Wednesday, May 3rd, will focus on county and township issues.

Registration is available on-line at www.battlecreek.org, (click on *What's New*) or by contacting me at the Chamber office, 962-4076.

