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**Proviso Teachers' Union Endorses Proviso 209 United Slate**  
PTU will support Barbahen, Joseph-Hixson, Ocampo in school board election

PROVISO TOWNSHIP, Illinois – For the first time in Proviso Teachers' Union (PTU) history, the organization is endorsing candidates running for the Proviso Township High School District 209 Board of Education.

On August 8, PTU President John Wardisiani informed Proviso 209 United that by a 97 percent vote, the union had decided to endorse the candidates, who will run for the three open seats in the April 2023 election. The union met with Proviso 209 United's slate of candidates Jenny Barbahen, Sandra Joseph-Hixson and David Ocampo earlier this month.

"The PTU is excited for this opportunity for change. An overwhelming majority of PTU members have confidence in this slate," Wardisiani said.

PTU Vice President Micala Soto, who teaches at Proviso East, lives in the district and has a child attending high school in D209, said she believes strongly in the slate. "I am extremely excited that our membership has made the decision to support the Proviso 209 United slate," Soto said. "The district recently presented data from the 5 Essentials Survey in which the 'Effective Leaders' section scored a 0 at both East and West. This echoes the sentiment that teachers, students, and parents have expressed at board meetings over the last two years and the current board majority repeatedly ignores. David Ocampo, Jenny Barbahen and Sandra Joseph-Hixson will be fierce advocates for all stakeholders and that is what this district truly needs."

Barbahen, Joseph-Hixson, and Ocampo said they are extremely grateful to the PTU for their endorsement.

"I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the PTU for their endorsement and confidence in the Proviso 209 United team," Barbahen said. "We look forward to working with the PTU collaboratively to advance issues of importance toward improved academic experiences and success for all D209 students."

"The message is clear," said Ocampo. "The community wants fundamental reform at all levels and this partnership will help usher in that change."

Joseph-Hixson responded to the PTU and news of their endorsement with the following: "We really appreciate you. Thank you from a servant's heart."

The Proviso 209 United team is looking forward to the support of the PTU during the upcoming campaign.

Kathleen Franzwa, one of the founders and campaign managers for Proviso 209 United, said, "The Proviso 209 United team is thrilled to receive this endorsement. We share the same goals to improve our schools for our students. We are excited that this will be the beginning of great collaboration between our teachers and our Proviso Community for years to come."

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