

# 2009 Voters Guide



**The League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford**  
[www.lwvgh.org](http://www.lwvgh.org)



Naogan Ma	Democrat
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## **Biographical Information:**

A member of the Trinity College faculty since 1984, I began my teaching career as an English teacher in China. I have a BA in English from China, a second BA, and MA from Wesleyan university. My husband and I raised two children in West Hartford. They both attended schools in town since kindergarten. Amy is a teacher now, and David is in college.

## **Response to Questions**

### **1. How would you address the state mandate for our West Hartford schools to be more racially balanced?**

I understand the need to racially balance our schools. I must also stress the crucial element of parental investment in their children's education. Parents spend a lot of money for their children's higher education. Parents should also have choices when their children are ready for elementary school. State Mandate allows us to be more proactive in our effort to promote a racially diverse learning environment. Our goal should be focus on building high quality neighborhood schools, not disrupting them. Only Charter Oak and Smith are affected by the State Mandate, and both schools are voluntary magnet schools. They are building a community, we must support our community.

### **2. Can West Hartford maintain a quality school system without a budget increase next year assuming no increase from state aid? Explain.**

I have been a resident of West Hartford for more than twenty years. I have seen our property taxes increase and school budget cut. It is painful but necessary to continue to maintain our quality schools. Just like our own family budget in hard times, however, we have to spend our money more carefully. In the last budget cycle, the board faced extremely challenging economic reality. The board worked

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with the town council to preserve programs. When budget is tight, it is vital to focus on our priorities.

**3. What can be done to promote respect for differences and to decrease bullying in the schools?**

When I served on the Board, the Board established the policy regarding bullying. Schools must be a safe place for our children regardless of their cultural backgrounds, language barriers, religious beliefs, and physical appearances. I will work to build the communication between teachers, administrators, students and parents to promote respect for differences in our schools. Students should also be encouraged to voice their concerns.

**4. If elected, what initiative would be your top priority?**

- Preserve our quality neighborhood schools
- Be fiscally responsible while protecting vital educational programs
- Improve our curriculum in order to prepare students to be more competitive globally
- Develop better communication between schools and homes