

# Election Guide

Birmingham Municipal Election  
August 24, 2021



Cover art Telysa Pride-Harris @pridegraphix



# Dear Reader,

At Greater Birmingham Ministries, we seek to serve people, build community, and pursue justice. You may know about our food, financial, and clothes assistance (call 205-326-6821 if you want information about those services). Our work to increase voter participation is also a part of that mission. When more people have access to their voting rights, when more voters turn out, and when more constituents (including non-voters) participate in our democracy in a meaningful way, we can make more of an impact on the issues that matter to us.

With those values in mind, we offer you this Election Guide as a useful, non-partisan tool as you make plans to vote in the Birmingham Municipal Election on August 24, 2021. This guide was created by GBM's program The Exchange, a group of mostly Gen Z and millennials that gather monthly to discuss justice issues and what we can do locally. The team researched the offices, polled community concerns, and developed candidate surveys about important issues in Birmingham. They sent the surveys to all candidates for whom they had contact information and then synthesized the responses with their own research. We couldn't fit every question in this guide, so we have made available the completed surveys on our website, [gbm.org](http://gbm.org).

## I want to call your attention to some features of the guide:

- Those eligible may decide to vote by mail or vote early using Alabama's absentee voting system. See pg. 3 for instructions.
- On pg. 4, follow the flowchart for steps you can take to prepare to vote.
- Starting on pg. 8, you will find information about the candidates on your ballot.

## Please also keep in mind these very important dates:

<b>Last day we recommend mailing an absentee ballot application</b>	July 31, 2021
<b>Elect Fest in Linn Park:</b> <i>candidate forums, live music, and more</i>	August 7, 2021, 12:30 to 6:30 pm
<b>Last day to register to vote for the Municipal Election</b>	August 9, 2021
<b>Last day we recommend mailing an absentee ballot</b>	August 10, 2021
<b>Last day to vote absentee in person</b>	August 19, 2021
<b>Deadline to hand deliver an absentee ballot</b>	August 23, 2021 at 5 pm
<b>Election Day</b>	August 24, 2021
<b>Last day to register to vote for the Run Off Election</b>	September 20, 2021
<b>Run Off Election (if necessary)</b>	October 5, 2021

Thank you for exercising your right to vote in this election.



**Scott Douglas**

Executive Director, Greater Birmingham Ministries

# Voting Absentee

People who meet certain criteria can use our absentee system to vote by mail or vote in person before Election Day. This election has no special Covid-19 provisions for absentee voting. You may vote absentee if you:

- will not be in Jefferson County on Election Day.
- are ill or have a physical disability that prevents you from going to your polling place.
- are an Alabama voter living outside of Jefferson County, such as military personnel, someone living outside the U.S., or a college student.
- are an election officer or poll watcher at a polling place different from your own.
- work a required shift that is 10 or more hours and coincides with poll hours.
- are a caregiver to a family member confined to their home.
- are currently in prison or jail and have not been convicted of a disqualifying felony.

## Vote Absentee by Mail

1. **Get an absentee ballot application.** Find it on [alabamavotes.gov](http://alabamavotes.gov) OR call the [City Clerk](#).
2. **Fill out the application.** Choose “Municipal Election.” Choose the reason that best applies to you. Make sure you sign the application (no witness necessary).
3. **Mail the application and a copy of your photo ID to the City Clerk.** See pg. 5 for a list of eligible IDs. Use one envelope per application.
4. **When your ballot arrives, fill it out with a black ball point pen, then seal it in the proper envelopes.** Your ballot could take a week or more to arrive. Seal your completed ballot in the secrecy envelope, then seal your secrecy envelope in the affidavit envelope.
5. **Recruit a notary or two witnesses and sign and fill out the affidavit.** This step is essential to having your ballot counted.
6. **Seal your affidavit envelope inside the pre-addressed envelope and return your ballot.** You can mail it with three stamps via USPS, mail it via a commercial carrier, or return it in person at the City Clerk’s office.

*Note: if you apply for your absentee ballot but do not turn it in, you still have the right to vote in person. If the poll worker says you are marked as absentee, ask for a provisional ballot. Later election officials will confirm that you didn’t vote absentee and count your vote.*

## Vote Absentee in Person

Until August 19, you can do the whole absentee process from application to turning in your ballot in person at the City Clerk’s office.

## Birmingham City Clerk

Lee Frazier, City Clerk

Office of the City Clerk- 3rd Fl:

710 North 20th Street, Birmingham, AL 35203

(205) 254-2290

*Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8 am to 5 pm*

After Election Day, visit [myinfo.alabamavotes.gov/voterview](http://myinfo.alabamavotes.gov/voterview) to check the status of your absentee or provisional ballot.

# Preparing for Election Day

1

**Check your eligibility to vote!** Will you be at least 18 years old on Election Day?

No ↓

**You are not eligible.**

**However, you can still be involved.**  
Skip to Step 6.

Yes →

Are you a US Citizen?

No ↓

Yes →

Do you have a previous felony conviction you believe disqualifies you?

Yes ↓

No ↓

**You may still be eligible!**

Check with Dori at GBM (1-866-222-8683) to see if you've lost your voting rights, and if you have, how to get them back. **Regardless, you can still be involved—see Step 6.**

**You're eligible!**

2

**Register to vote!**

If you have a valid Alabama's Driver's License, or Non-Driver's License, you can register online at [sos.alabama.gov](https://sos.alabama.gov). Paper forms are available at the Board of Registrar's office.

3

**Make a plan for how you will vote!**

**Check your registration status and polling location.** Do so at [sos.alabama.gov](https://sos.alabama.gov). While you're there, take note of your City Council and Board of Education district (you'll need it in step 4).

Polling location: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

**Decide what time of day you'll vote.**

*(Polls are open 7 am to 7 pm)*

- Morning  Lunchtime  Evening



**Use the buddy system!**

Decide what friends or family members you can encourage to vote or take with you to the polls:

Person 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Person 3: \_\_\_\_\_



**Don't forget your mask!**

Take Covid-19 precautions at the polls by maintaining physical distance, wearing a mask, sanitizing your hands, and bringing your own black ball point pen.



**Make arrangements for transportation.** Will you:

- Drive your own vehicle  Carpool  
 Ride the bus  Walk

If you need to request a free ride, reach out to the Poor People's Campaign at 205.677.6107 or [alabama@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:alabama@poorpeoplescampaign.org).



**Decide if you will vote absentee.**

You may vote by mail or vote in person before Election Day if you meet certain criteria.

**See pg. 3 for more information.**

**Remember your photo ID.** To vote you need a valid government-issued ID. This could be:

- Driver's license or non-driver ID
- Alabama Photo Voter ID Card
- US Passport
- Government Employee ID
- Student or Employee ID from a public or private college or university in the state of Alabama (or a state institution or higher education in another state).
- Valid Military ID
- Valid Tribal ID

You can get a free Alabama Voter ID through the [Board of Registrars](#) (205.325.5550) or the [Secretary of State](#) (334.242.7200).



***Continue to Step 4 on the next page...***

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**Learn more about what will appear on your ballot.**



**If you did not do so in Step 3**, look up your polling station at [sos.alabama.gov](https://sos.alabama.gov) and make note of your district. District:\_\_\_\_\_



**Look up your sample ballot, found on [birminghamal.gov/city-clerk](https://birminghamal.gov/city-clerk).**  
Find the races for your district.



**Use this Election Guide to learn more about the offices and candidates starting on pg. 8.**

**Research the office.**

What does this office have control over? What issues are important to you in their area of influence?



**Check out the candidate's platform.**

Look up the candidate's website and social media or request materials. Where do they stand on issues that are important to you? How do different candidates compare to each other?



5

**Do your own research about the candidates.**



**Check out their voting record.**

Use other resources to compare candidate's platforms with their voting records.

**Attend the candidate forums at [Elect Fest](#) on August 7 in Linn Park, 12:30 to 6:30 pm.** Candidate forums can be a great way to get to know your candidates. Come prepared with questions you'd like to ask.



**Beware of false information and false political ads!**

A lot of websites aim to spread false information, and political ads don't have to be true to be shared, so exercise caution and skepticism. Consider whether the source is reputable and see what other news outlets are saying about the same topic.



**Decide how you will vote.** You can mark up your sample ballot and/or this guide and bring it with you to vote.



If the candidate has held a previous legislative office, [ballotpedia.org](#) and [GovTrack.us](#) are good resources to use. If the candidate held a state legislative office, you can use [legislature.state.al.us](#).

Ask questions like: How have they voted on related issues important to me? How does their record differ from their stated platform?

**Look into Campaign Finance.**

If you want to dig even deeper and look into where each candidate gets their funding, that information is public record and available on the Jefferson County Probate Court's [LANDMARK WEB](#) platform. Consider the number, the sizes, and the sources of the contributors.



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## Volunteer with Greater Birmingham Ministries!

Contact Amanda at [amanda@gbm.org](mailto:amanda@gbm.org) or 205.623.5858 to see how you can partner with us in our Systems Change and voter engagement work.

# Mayor + City Council: How do they work together?

The **Mayor** is the head of the executive branch of city government, and the **City Council** is the legislative branch. They play different but related roles in the running of the city and they are elected every four years.

**Budgets:** The **Mayor** proposes the Operating and Capital Budgets. The **City Council** can propose certain edits pending the **Mayor's** approval. The **City Council** passes the budgets after a public hearing. The **Mayor's Office** then administers the budgets and all city finances.

**Passing ordinances:** The **Mayor** and the **City Council** may propose ordinances, the **City Council** may vote to pass them, and the **Mayor** may sign, veto, or let them pass. If the **Mayor** vetoes an ordinance, two-thirds of the council may override the veto and pass it. The **Mayor** then enforces all laws and ordinances.

**Departments and personnel:** The **City Council** establishes administrative departments and divisions, and the **Mayor** appoints, supervises, and removes the personnel in those roles. **City Council** members only supervise their own staff. The **Mayor** also has a staff and establishes departments within the **Mayor's Office**. The **Mayor** and the **City Council** appoint people to some boards and agencies.

## How to Get Involved with Local Government:

- *Attend **City Council** meetings every Tuesday at 9:30 am.* The **City Council** passes ordinances, and the **Mayor** gives a report. They livestream on the [City Council Facebook page](#). **City Council** committee meetings are also open for public viewing online.
- *Apply for an appointment to a board or agency.* Oversee important parts of the city, like water and transit. Apply at [birminghamal.gov/boards-and-agencies](http://birminghamal.gov/boards-and-agencies).
- *Participate in your [Neighborhood Association](#).* Find yours by calling (205) 297-8192.

## Candidates for Mayor

*We are a 501(c)3 organization and do not endorse any candidates. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.*

□ **William A. Bell, Sr.** is a Birmingham native and previously served as Mayor from 2010 to 2017 and Interim Mayor in 1999. He also served on the City Council from 1979 to 1999 and was Birmingham's first Black City Council President. Bell is a graduate of UAB and Miles College.

- **Birmingham's biggest challenges:** Bell sees the biggest challenges facing Birmingham in the next five years as reducing crime, strengthening the education system, and developing and revitalizing neighborhoods. To address these challenges, Bell plans to implement 21st century policing protocols and increase city funded programs addressing the root cause of crime, such as reading initiatives, mentoring programs, expanded pre-K programs, and increased career, tech, and vocational programs. Bell states that he would also give attention to roads, dilapidated houses, street lighting, and the Land Bank Authority program, and he would work with the 99 neighborhoods.
- **Crime and public safety:** Bell says he would address crime and public safety by implementing a 21st century policing program and Neighborhood Watch programs; by involving parents, churches, and businesses; and by increasing city lighting.



- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Bell says BPD “should have no role in enforcing Federal law as it relates to immigration policy” and the city would only collaborate with ICE concerning violent crime. In 2017 he called for Birmingham to become a Welcoming City (as designated by Welcoming America); he wanted to avoid any federal penalties of becoming a Sanctuary City.

□ **Cerissa A. Brown** grew up in the Birmingham area, and this is her first time running for office. Brown is a Peer Counselor and Empathy Specialist at Peer Collective and the director of the Birmingham chapter of the Little Black Dress Club for business women. She previously worked at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama. Brown has a BS in Business Administration and Management from Alabama State University and a Certificate in Women’s Entrepreneurship from Cornell University.

- **Birmingham’s biggest challenges:** Brown sees Birmingham’s biggest challenges as repairing the trust between residents and the Mayor’s Office, dealing with crime and gun violence, educating youth for careers and trades in demand right now, addressing food deserts, and becoming one of 20 cities to receive funding under the Green New Deal.
- **Crime and public safety:** Brown says, “We must dismantle our public safety system’s instinct to criminalize and replace it with an instinct to provide care.” She would advocate for The People’s Response Act, create an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, publicly track crime reduction, create an ordinance for stricter gun laws, mandate yearly psychological evaluations for law enforcement, create a Citizens Review Board elected by residents, employ Crisis Cops trained to deal with mental illness, treat addiction as a disease, and bring back the Good Neighbor Next Door program.
- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Brown states she would work with the City Council to pass ordinances and policies to “obstruct immigration enforcement and shield criminals from ICE.”

□ **Napoleon Gonzalez** We found no information or contact for this candidate.

□ **Ervin Philemon Hill II** is a Birmingham native and the CEO of EPH Sports Warehouse, LLC, and Legacy Sports Entertainment Management and Consulting. He ran for Mayor in 2017. Hill founded The Shower of Love Project, a mobile hygiene service for the homeless. Hill has a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Tuskegee University and an MBA from Clark Atlanta University.

- **Birmingham’s biggest challenges:** Hill sees Birmingham’s challenges as creating and implementing a comprehensive public health and safety plan, reducing unemployment by making city employment opportunities easier to access and by creating job training programs, drafting a new city governance different from the current Mayor-Council Act, and responding to what he calls the “miseducation of students and citizens” by creating an Office of Cultural Affairs, by starting an African American Studies program for Birmingham City Schools, and by improving education and job training.
- **Crime and public safety:** Hill says he would address crime and public safety using the following tools and resources: crisis intervention training, Cure Violence Global, conflict resolution, a Citizens Review Council, mental health and counseling resources, community policing, and self-defense programming. He says he would support city-wide surveillance cameras and the creation of safe zones and spaces.
- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Hill states, “I would create a strategy for making the City of Birmingham a Sanctuary City. This process will include terminating the City’s relationship with ICE. It will also include creating the city’s first Office of Immigrant Affairs and Office of International Affairs.”

□ **Lashunda Scales** is a Birmingham native and currently serves as the President Pro-Tem of the Jefferson County Commission and Commissioner for District 1. Scales received an Associates Degree from Jefferson State Community College, attended Stillman College, and is an alumna of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. Scales represented District 1 on the City Council from 2009 to 2018.

- **Birmingham's biggest challenges:** Scales sees the biggest challenges facing Birmingham as city infrastructure needs such as roads, ditches, and flooding; gentrification; the North Birmingham Superfund site; public transportation; and recidivism. She says she would address gentrification through "public education regarding land ownership, taxes, and maintenance." To reduce recidivism, she would work with law enforcement, courts, and nonprofits to provide second chance programs for successful re-entry.
- **Crime and public safety:** In order to address crime and public safety, Scales says she would strengthen community policing; require precinct captains and lieutenants to attend community meetings; establish a proactive Police Department and an equitable Internal Affairs Division; rehabilitate non-violent offenders through workforce development and community service; partner locally, regionally, and nationally to proactively fight crime and identify and target potential and known violent crime offenders; provide tougher penalties for violent crime offenders; and host community meetings.
- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Scales states, "City actions will be in accordance with state and federal laws," and says her administration would continue working with ICE.

□ **Darryl T. Williams** is a "community activist," according to CBS42. He is active on his personal Facebook page, but our research found no other information on this candidate. He did not respond to our survey.

□ **Randall Woodfin (incumbent)** is from Birmingham and was elected Mayor in 2017. Woodfin received a BS in Political Science from Morehouse College and a law degree from Cumberland School of Law. Woodfin served on the Birmingham Board of Education from 2013 to 2017. Previously Woodfin worked for the City of Birmingham Law Department, the Mayor's Office, and City Council.

- **Birmingham's biggest challenges:** Woodfin says Birmingham's challenges are "reimagining public safety and fully recovering from the pandemic." Woodfin plans to fund mobile vaccination clinics and provide credible, culturally-competent outreach to address vaccine hesitancy. He plans to continue offering rental and utility assistance to residents and using funding to support small businesses hardest hit by the pandemic.
- **Crime and public safety:** Woodfin states addressing gun violence requires a "robust enforcement response" and names efforts during his tenure: having the Police Department confiscate guns, partnering with other law enforcement to predict and respond to gun crimes, and through Crime Stoppers of Metro Alabama offering cash rewards to people who "get off the sidelines and speak up." He says he has also responded to the root causes of gun violence, such as poverty, food insecurity, and housing instability, and established the Office of Peace and Policy. He plans to use Biden's American Rescue Plan funding for community intervention pilots, re-entry programming, and community-based first responder programs.
- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Woodfin says BPD "already limits cooperation with DHS and ICE in enforcing federal immigration policy, and that policy

would not change.” Woodfin describes Birmingham as a “welcoming city.” In his 2017 run, Woodfin campaigned on making Birmingham a Sanctuary City. To date no ordinances have passed to this effect.

☐ **Chris Woods** is a Birmingham native and is the president of C.W. Woods Construction. Woods received a BS in Industrial Arts from Auburn University, where he played football. Woods also spent three years playing in the NFL for the Raiders and the Broncos. Woods ran for mayor in 2017.

- **Birmingham’s biggest challenges:** Woods sees the biggest challenges facing Birmingham in the next five years as crime, education, growing the city’s middle class, and preparing Birmingham residents for post-Covid jobs and opportunities in the tech field. To address these challenges Woods would implement his 7-point crime plan, introduce a free preschool program, and provide early exposure to and pathways into tech.
- **Crime and public safety:** Woods’s 7-point crime plan includes partnering with the Sheriff’s office; using deterrence policing to respond to gun violence, human trafficking, gangs, and drugs; investing in Crime Stoppers and Neighborhood Watch; supporting education, including free preschool; investing in community engagement programs, social programs, and Police Athletic Teams; replacing blighted housing with affordable community housing; and having a City Hall liaison assist with job training and opportunities.
- **Immigration enforcement and collaboration with ICE:** Woods states that he would not utilize “Birmingham personnel to assist ICE” and would instead focus on violent crimes. He says, “Birmingham has a crime problem, not an immigration problem.”

## Candidates for City Council

### District 1

☐ **Clinton Woods (incumbent)** is from Birmingham and is managing partner of Prescott Contracting and executive pastor of Christ Church in Fairfield. Woods was appointed to City Council in January 2019. Woods studied economics at UT-Chattanooga and a Masters in Construction Management at UAB. Woods managed Sheriff Pettway’s 2018 election campaign and is mayoral candidate Chris Woods’s son. **Candidates running unopposed do not appear on the ballot.**

### District 2

☐ **Lawrence Conaway** is from Birmingham, and he has a BS in Information Technology from Athens State, an MBA from UAB, and an MA in Ministry from the Birmingham Theological Seminary. He is pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church and Executive Director of Charity in Action. He ran for City Council in 2009 and 2017 and for Alabama House District 54 in 2014.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Conaway says top issues are “crime rooted in poverty, economic opportunities for youths and young adults, and deteriorating communities.”
- **Crime and public safety:** Conaway says he will work with the Mayor and the Police Department to reduce crime. He will organize Neighborhood Watch programs and bring together stakeholders to develop solutions to address systemic problems.

☐ **Kimberly Jeanty** has lived in Birmingham since 2009, is a former Neighborhood President, served as neighborhood liaison for former Councilor Rafferty, and ran for City Council in 2017. She is currently employed as a Virtual Assistant.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Jeanty states her district needs “more public safety personnel

with updated equipment and improved roads and sidewalks.”

- **Crime and public safety:** Jeanty says Birmingham is short of the number of officers needed and we have officers retiring and transferring faster than we recruit and train new officers. She says we must “support law enforcement by making sure they have the funding, personnel and equipment to keep us safe.”

□ **Don D. Scott.** We confirmed no information, and candidate did not complete our survey.

□ **Hunter Williams (incumbent)** is originally from Birmingham, previously served as a neighborhood officer, and has been on City Council since 2017. He studied finance at Southern Methodist University and graduated from the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Academy. He works in the field of medical services and technology.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Williams names blight and abandoned buildings as issues and says he has combated them through repurposing certain buildings in his district. He also says infrastructure such as paving streets has been an issue he has addressed.
- **Crime and public safety:** Williams currently serves as Public Safety Committee Chair and says he has worked with the Mayor’s Office to reduce gun violence, such as through the Gun Violence Task Force, which shares information to track and confiscate illegal handguns. He says he also favors utilizing non-law enforcement resources, such as adding social workers and working with groups aiming to end conflicts.

### **District 3**

□ **Valerie Abbott (incumbent)** is a native of Birmingham. She graduated from Auburn University and obtained an MA from Birmingham-Southern. She worked for South Central Bell, later AT&T, from 1999 until retiring in 2011. She has served on the City Council since her election in 2001.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Abbott says incentive requests should be evaluated, and important are “the number and quality of jobs created and the commitment that Birmingham residents will be specifically recruited and trained.”
- **Crime and public safety:** Abbott states public safety is the responsibility of the Mayor, and she will respond to proposals from the Mayor and Chief of Police and pass legislation to enhance their efforts if needed.

□ **Joseph Casper Baker III** was born in Selma and moved to Birmingham to attend UAB and receive a B.A. in Philosophy. He founded the Facebook group I Believe in Birmingham and served on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee for Birmingham. He is a consultant and contractor in the field of technology. In 2018, Baker ran for State House District 54.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Baker supports investing in better education, skills training, and business training for individuals as well as seeking partnerships to fund critical tech developments. In addition, the city needs to continue reducing competition and poaching with area municipalities.
- **Crime and public safety:** Baker believes the only effective way to reduce crime long term is to improve lives through education and employment opportunities. He says most crime comes from stresses and pressures related to poverty.

□ **Wil Jones.** Our research found no information on this candidate, and candidate did not respond to our survey.

□ **Alice Speake** was born in Auburn and has lived in Birmingham for nine years. She is a Library Assistant with the Jefferson County Library Cooperative and has worked in a variety of fields. She is a grassroots organizer and current networking coordinator on the CellA65 activist team, and she organized with People’s Budget Birmingham.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Speake says the City Council must evaluate a company’s contributions when considering incentive packages: will the jobs they provide be for current residents, offer good health insurance and employee protections, allow growth opportunities, and have dignity? She says the city can partner with ethical companies that agree to Community Benefit Agreements. She wishes to support small, local businesses with similar incentives and training.
- **Crime and public safety:** Speake emphasizes crime prevention and getting to the root causes of crime which she names as “lack of access to health and mental health care, good jobs, quality housing, [and] nutritious food.” She supports community policing, “an authentically derived” Citizen Review Board, police transparency, Peacemakers, CAHOOTS, and youth programming.

#### **District 4**

□ **Scottie McClaney** grew up in Collegeville, has a degree from Stillman College, and a Master of Public Administration from UAB. She previously was appointed to the Downtown Redevelopment Authority and the Birmingham Parking Authority. She has professional experience in grants management and supplier diversity. McClaney founded the nonprofit Peek-A-Boo Vision.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** McClaney believes incentives should be based on company revenue and “companies would receive a rebate of 50 percent of their income with a yearly cap over [10] years.”
- **Crime and public safety:** McClaney says she would increase police presence in District 4 and encourage Neighborhood Watch programs. She says getting residents to assist will help public safety.

□ **J.T. Moore** grew up in Birmingham. He was previously an intern with the Division of Youth Services and a coordinator for Alabama Possible. In 2019, the Woodlawn Foundation appointed him as a Manager of Community Partners for Hayes K-8. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** No information found.
- **Crime and public safety:** Moore says he plans to focus on neighborhood safety by establishing Neighborhood Watch committees, repairing street lights to deter crime, and collaborating with BPD to provide resources to maintain safer neighborhoods.

□ **William Parker (incumbent)** is the current City Council President and has served on the City Council since his appointment in 2013. He graduated from Talladega College and served as an assistant to former US Congressman Earl Hilliard. Parker served one term as a member of the Alabama House of Representatives. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Parker has voted in favor of every economic and corporate incentive submitted to the council for which we could find records but has not made public statements on how to provide these incentives.
- **Crime and public safety:** No information found.

□ **Q. “Cory” Pettway** first ran for District 4 City Council in 2017. Since then he has worked as District 5 Community Liaison for the City Council. Pettway studied social work at Miles College, counseling at Baptist College of Florida, and early childhood education at Jefferson State Community College, and he previously worked for JCCEO Head Start. He co-founded the Birmingham Barbers Coalition.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Pettway would like to see a transparent incentive process involving Neighborhood Officers and residents and requiring Community Benefits Agreements. Pettway says companies should speak to neighborhood concerns.
- **Crime and public safety:** Pettway’s model for addressing violent crimes includes “Prevention, Accountability, and Rehabilitation.” He says he will advocate for more funding for preventative measures and more conservative spending on enforcement, such as safety checkpoints.

□ **Rev. Gwendolyn Cook Webb** was born in Birmingham and was a student leader at Western Olin High School during civil rights demonstrations. She became one of the first Black female police officers in Birmingham. She is the current Neighborhood President of Inglenook and Community President for East Birmingham, and she led the fight for the new Kingston Fire House. She is an ordained minister and has founded several nonprofits.

- **Economic and corporate incentives:** Webb says tax incentives do not guarantee secure employment, so she would work with the Mayor and councilors to design the model of “a good corporate neighbor.”
- **Crime and public safety:** Webb supports recruiting public safety personnel from their own neighborhoods and finding success stories from other municipalities. She says reducing poverty is key because poverty creates the conditions for violent crime. She would also work with the UAB School of Public Health to explore new approaches.

### **District 5**

□ **Richard E. Franklin, Jr.** is a native of Birmingham and a graduate of Lawson State Community College. He is the President of the Birmingham Federation of Teachers.

- **Crime and public safety:** Franklin says he would promote activities for youth and job training for young adults, as well as provide information about the use of handguns via mailers and school visits. He supports a media campaign about conflict resolution.
- **Public services:** Franklin thinks parks and recreation facilities are essential because they can help develop mindfulness and community pride as well as address social and emotional needs of community members.

□ **Darrell O’Quinn** was elected to the City Council in 2017. He previously served as Vice President and President of the Crestwood Neighborhood Association and as President of the Citizens Advisory Board. He received a PhD in Pathology from UAB and worked as a clinical veterinarian. O’Quinn has also worked with pro-transit and pro-biking nonprofits.

- **Crime and public safety:** O’Quinn says addressing violence requires a multi-pronged approach, including community street outreach teams, hospital-based violence intervention, conflict resolution training, de-escalation techniques, and investing in individuals’ self-worth.
- **Public services:** O’Quinn sees public safety and public works as key functions of city government. He also believes transportation infrastructure is critical because it connects us to each other, to services, and to employment.

□ **Hiram G. Rahim** Our research found no information or contact information for this candidate.

□ **Erica “Star” Robbins** was born in Munford, Alabama, and graduated from Stillman College. She then moved to Birmingham and began working in corporate communications. After getting to know her homeless neighbors and volunteering in homeless shelters, she founded Be a Blessing Birmingham. Robbins ran for City Council in 2017. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Crime and public safety:** No information found.
- **Public services:** In a 2017 interview with Bham Now, Robbins said, “While the downtown Birmingham area is revitalizing, the surrounding areas of Birmingham need attention in terms of economic growth, education initiatives and services. Many of our residents are living below the poverty level and are eager to get back to work.”

□ **Roshanique Yvette Taylor** We could not confirm information about this candidate, and candidate did not respond to our survey.

### **District 6**

□ **Keith Aaron** was Neighborhood President of Arlington-West End. He studied Political Science at Miles College. He ran for City Council in 2009 and 2013. Candidate did not answer survey.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Aaron mentions in his plan of action the following issues: abandoned and disrepaired houses, trash in streets and alleys, lack of economic development, lack of skilled workers, and absentee leadership.
- **Crime and public safety:** No information found.

□ **Crystal Smitherman (incumbent)** is a practicing attorney and was appointed to the City Council in 2019. She graduated from Hampton University and received her law degree from UA.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Smitherman says the largest issues in her district are public safety, illegal dumping, and improving the quality of life. She mentions food deserts and improving opportunities for children through tutors and financial literacy.
- **Crime and public safety:** Smitherman says she has responded to gun violence through security cameras, improved lighting, and security for Washington K-8 students before and after school. She says she supports funding the Peacemakers and Cure Violence organizations using the city budget and American Rescue Plan funding, and she supports the Citizen Review Board and block watch opportunities.

□ **Keith O. Williams** is the current Vice President of North Titusville Neighborhood Association and works as a web developer. He studied at Alabama State University, Liberty University, and Achology and was in the U.S. Army. Williams is a minister at St. Mark Missionary Baptist Church and a co-founder of Voters Legal Justice Watch Group. He ran for City Council in 2017 and 2019.

- **District’s biggest issues:** Williams says the biggest issues are crime, neighborhood revitalization, economic opportunity, and transparency.
- **Crime and public safety:** Williams’s approach includes investigating the Police Department; redirecting funds to address mental health, substance abuse, social services, education, and socioeconomic development; petitioning to stop the selling of military surplus to local police; petitioning for gun sense laws; making the Citizen Review Board independent; supporting alternative policing such as violence interruption and community policing; addressing crime’s root cause by reinvesting corporate funds into

people; and creating a system of cooperative economics.

### **District 7**

□ **Wardine Alexander (incumbent)** is a Birmingham native and a graduate of UAB. She was appointed to the City Council in 2018. She is a retired board-certified medical technologist. Alexander is the former president of the Birmingham Board of Education, a former Trustee of the Birmingham Public Libraries, and Vice-President of the OneRoof Board of Directors.

- **District's biggest issues:** Alexander says her district is "plagued with uncleanness and blight from many abandoned homes and overgrown lots." She says her approach has been to demolish dilapidated homes, host community cleanups, create a process for vendors to mow overgrown lots, and host a web series about bulk trash pickup, acquiring property through the Land Bank Authority, and building generational wealth.
- **Crime and public safety:** Alexander believes high crime rates are influenced by "low socio-economic status in our communities, the lack of jobs, and low availability of social services." She plans to create a workforce development pipeline and says she has hosted ride-alongs to show quality of life issues like crime, trash, and roads and has used discretionary funds for schools and nonprofits.

□ **La'Toya Lee** has worked in the field of education as a substitute teacher, a Family Service Worker at JCCEO Head Start, and currently as a Case Manager at the Jefferson County Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Authority. Lee studied Social Work at Alabama State and Biblical Studies at Samford. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **District's biggest issues & crime and public safety:** No information found.

□ **Lonnie Franklin Malone** is an Alabama native and received from Herzing University a BA in Information Systems and Technical Management and from West Coast Bible College & Seminary an MA in Religious Education. He is the founder of The Effective Family, a non-profit mentorship program. He previously ran for Board of Education in 2013 and for City Council in 2017 and 2019.

- **District's biggest issues:** Malone says the biggest issue is infrastructure, including flooding. Malone says the city should be able to remove old pipes or clean them and then pave roads.
- **Crime and public safety:** Malone says he would make a budget line item to reduce crime or gun violence and says we need more financial opportunities and for the community, educators, and law enforcement to come together.

□ **Don "Donnie" Stone** attended Lawson State Community College where he played baseball, and he received a BBA/Marketing degree from Alabama State University. He is a volunteer children's basketball coach, a former GED teacher, and the founder of Princeton Furniture Market. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **District's biggest issues:** On Facebook, he names priorities as bringing economic prosperity through entrepreneurship, well paying jobs, and job training; decreasing violence and deaths; and addressing dilapidated housing.
- **Crime and public safety:** On Facebook, Stone says he would be tough on violent criminals; he would team up with the District Attorney, residents, and law enforcement to create safe communities; community policing and neighborhood interaction will be key in reducing crime; and he supports police accountability and opposes random traffic stops.



## District 8

□ **Carol Clarke** is a Birmingham native and graduated from Georgia Tech. She works for Corporate Realty, which is working on the Carraway Redevelopment project, and is General Manager of Southside Development Company, which partners with the Housing Authority to redevelop Southtown. She previously worked for the Birmingham Department of Economic Development and Regions Bank. Clarke is on the board of REV Birmingham.

- **Crime and public safety:** Clarke says she would advocate for better screening and support of police officers, including filling vacant positions (possibly by police social workers). She says she would advocate to become a trauma-informed city with affordable mental health care and for support for citizens returning from incarceration. She encourages everyone to participate in violence prevention by being “shot spotters, truancy officers, [and] play mamas” and by patrolling our communities.
- **Public services:** Clarke names recycling as important and suggests an awareness campaign and allowing an opt-in for pickup. She also names blight elimination, saying we need more community development corporations to work hyper-locally. That way, the city can redirect money from maintaining neglected private property towards streets, parks, recreation centers, and libraries.

□ **Barbara Files-Kennedy** grew up in Ensley, is a Behavioral Change Counselor at UAB, and works at MayaTech. She has worked to prevent substance abuse. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Crime and public safety:** No information found.
- **Public services:** Files-Kennedy says one of her goals is to organize community events to educate youth and seniors on topics such as health, nutrition, recycling, and culture.

□ **Lynette Peters** is an accountant and has lived in Birmingham for 30 years. She has served on the Ensley Highlands Neighborhood Association, the Five Points West Community, and the Bush Middle School PTA. Peters ran for City Council in 2017. We could find no contact for this candidate.

- **Crime and public safety:** See below for Peter’s 2017 priorities, including public safety. She said in 2017, “We must work united for one goal: to not die by gun violence.”
- **Public services:** In 2017, Peters said she would advocate for public safety, business development, and fair opportunity for youth. She said her priorities were improving education, jobs, and access to mentoring programs, combining them with public safety.

□ **Celida “Celi” Soto** is the Hunger Advocacy Coordinator for Alabama Arise and is on the board of SWEET Alabama and the Dynamite Hill-Smithfield Community Land Trust. She studied Sociology and Administration of Justice at Rutgers University. She worked as a Child Protective Service Investigator for DHR and then for UAB’s Minority Health and Health Disparities Research Center, where she developed partnerships for programs like Fountain Heights’s Mobile Grocery Market.

- **Crime and public safety:** Soto says she will use a human-centered approach and a public health lens and address violence by combating poverty and mental health issues. She says she will establish a Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets (CAHOOTS) program. She would pair first responders with trained violence interruption and mental health specialists and host conflict de-escalation workshops.
- **Public services:** Soto says residents have named the following priorities: “child and youth development (i.e. libraries, education, and other youth programming), food security, true

public safety, mental health care, and developing affordable housing.” She says she will implement participatory budgeting so residents can establish budget allocations.

□ **Adlai M. Trone** works in the field of finance and has been a financial planner and a teacher. He is the Fairview Neighborhood President and on the board of the Offenders Alumni Association. He was a volunteer radio personality on WATV 94.9. Trone ran for Mayor in 2013 and City Council in 2017.

- **Crime and public safety:** Trone offers four solutions: 1. identify the root of the problem, 2. implement solutions-oriented initiatives to deter high-risk activity and raise awareness, 3. partner with those committed to lowering homicide rates, and 4. create enrichment opportunities for creating wealth and improving the quality of life.
- **Public services:** Trone says neighborhood revitalization is a critical public service and promises to demand appropriate funding for it and to ensure code enforcement.

□ **Harry “Traveling Shoes” Turner** is a US Postal worker, the State Legislative Director of the American Postal Worker Union, and an evangelist. Turner ran for Mayor in 2009 and 2011.

- **Crime and public safety:** Turner says only God can change hearts and minds. He suggests having the military house police precincts, instituting jail and prison reform, having churches send letters to people incarcerated, encouraging incarcerated people to take classes and trades, supporting drop outs, and allowing people to do police ride-alongs to “give police back the respect they deserve.”
- **Public services:** Turner names priority services as mental health, homelessness, first responders such as police and the Fire Department, and training for citizens who are often on the scene before calling 911.

□ **D. Denise Webber-Jenkins** is a JD candidate at the Birmingham School of Law and a PhD student at Northcentral University. She graduated from LeMoyne-Owen College and holds a Master of Business Management. She worked for the City of Memphis in various roles. She founded The Webber Paralegal Firm and provided paralegal services for civil and criminal trial cases.

- **Crime and public safety:** Webber-Jenkins says domestic violence and gun violence would be key issues for her. She says she would enhance Neighborhood Watch programs, call for better communication with Neighborhood Presidents about crime, and work with BPD and the Jefferson County Sheriff to provide a possible reward to citizens who anonymously report criminal activity.
- **Public services:** She names the following as important services: “[s]afety, education, job opportunities, job training programs, and better public housing.” She mentions Fultondale and Hueytown as areas to emulate and promises to work with the Birmingham Business Alliance and regional corporations.

□ **Wanda Wright** is a licensed realtor, an ordained minister, and the director of two nonprofits. She was previously a licensed state home builder.

- **Crime and public safety:** Wright says she will work with police, city officials, and Neighborhood Associations to combat crime. She says she will also provide job training and access to assistance in order to build morale and lower crime rates.
- **Public services:** Wright says funds should go towards gun control and education,

resources for schools, Covid vaccine education, vaccination pop-up stations, and upkeep of communities.

### **District 9**

□ **Eric Hall** is an associate minister at Peace Missionary Baptist Church, an Army veteran, former president of the Central Pratt Neighborhood Association, director of the Angel Toy Drive, founding member of Black Lives Matter Birmingham, and co-chair of Our Revolution Birmingham Chapter. He attended Lawson State Community College and graduated with a BA from Miles College. He is currently pursuing a Master of Social Work at Alabama A&M University. He ran for City Council in 2017.

- **District's biggest issues:** Hall names poverty, low wages, and food insecurity as issues.
- **Crime and public safety:** Hall names some approaches he would take to re-envision how we address crime and public safety: community-based transformative violence prevention and intervention, support for criminalized populations, community-based mental health and substance abuse treatment programs, and a Real Time Response Center with social service practitioners and mental health providers.

□ **John R. Hilliard (incumbent)** is a lifelong resident of Pratt City and was elected to City Council in 2017. He previously served in the Alabama State Legislature for 10 years. Hilliard is a real estate agent and insurance broker and has a Bachelor in Business Administration from Alabama State

- **District's biggest issues:** Hilliard says his top priorities are public safety, education, and neighborhood economic development. He says he has brought industrial jobs and retail and helped residents take ownership of vacant lots and homes.
- **Crime and public safety:** Hilliard believes in partnering with stakeholders, strengthening Neighborhood Watch, investing in education and youth programs, supporting returning offenders, and supporting programs to help with mental health and finance.

□ **David Russell** has run for City Council in every election since 2001. He has also run for Public Service Commission and Alabama House District 60. Russell works as an insurance agent and graduated from Alabama State University. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **District's biggest issues:** In past elections, Russell has prioritized water and sewer rates, school tax rates, minimum wage, housing and employment assistance for veterans, tutoring for students, activity centers for seniors and veterans, and turning the Ensley area into an entertainment district.
- **Crime and public safety:** In a past election, he mentioned having police officers patrol areas where they live.

□ **LaTonya Tate** grew up in North Birmingham, graduated from Bevil State Community College as a Licensed Practical Nurse, earned a Bachelor and Master degrees in Criminal Justice Administration and Security from the University of Phoenix, and holds a Master degree from Grand Canyon University in Public Administration and Policy. LaTonya worked previously as a Probation and Parole Officer and founded the Alabama Justice Initiative.

- **District's biggest issues:** She says her district's biggest issues are "blight, bad roads, abandoned buildings, food deserts, [and] too many fast food restaurants and no healthy alternatives." She says she would address these by holding town hall meetings and then presenting participatory budgeting.
- **Crime and public safety:** Tate states she would work with the Chief of Police, stress community policing, and partner with the Birmingham Peacemakers on their gun violence initiatives.

# Birmingham City Schools (BCS) Board of Education

The [Birmingham Board of Education](#) hires and fires the Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer, and Board Lawyer for Birmingham City Schools. The Board works with the Superintendent to establish a vision for the school system and adopt goals, policies, and operating budgets. The Board is charged with addressing student needs, student performance, and overall operations. The Board also reviews data to monitor implementation of policies and programs and advocates for the needs, resources, and interests of students.

## How to Get Involved with Birmingham City Schools:

- Attend **Board of Education** meetings the second Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm. Meetings have been live streamed on [livesream.com/bcs](https://livesream.com/bcs).
- Attend **PTA meetings** at your child's school. Form a group if one does not exist.

## Candidates for Board of Education

### District 1

**K-5 Schools:** Huffman Academy & Sun Valley **Middle School:** Smith **High School:** Huffman

**Sherman Collins, Jr.** is a Birmingham native, attended BCS, and was formerly on the Board of Ed from 2013 to 2017. He ran for City Council in 2017 and 2019. He earned a B.S. from Samford University. Collins owns an insurance agency and a realty company and is a volunteer basketball coach at SunValley Elementary school.

- **Charter schools:** Collins states, "I am for public education."

**Douglas "Doug" Ragland (Incumbent)** joined the Board of Ed in 2017. He attended BCS and holds a B.S., M.A., and Ed.D in Education from UAB. He retired as Superintendent of the Midfield City Schools in 2010, served as the Superintendent of Greene County Schools, and worked as a teacher and principal.

- **Charter schools:** Ragland says he wants BCS to excel "thus eliminating the option for Charter Schools" but also thinks parents should be able to choose based on their child's needs. Ragland has voted to deny all four charter school applications during his tenure.

**Jerry Tate** is on the board of the Ed Foundation and works at Spire as a Business System Analyst and Project Manager. His children attended BCS, and he has been active in the PTA. Tate ran for Board of Ed in 2013 and 2017.

- **Charter schools:** Tate's priority is BCS and says he "will work to make our schools the first choice" while following the state laws designating BCS as a Charter School Authorizer and while looking to stakeholders for direction.

### District 2

**K-5 Schools:** Martha Gaskins and Robinson **K-8 School:** Christian

**Middle Schools:** Huffman, Ossie Ware, Mitchell, and Putnam

**Terri Michal (incumbent)** was elected to the Board of Education in 2017, founded Support Our Students (SOS) in 2012, and works for the Birmingham Federation of Teachers. Michal ran a DJ company for over 10 years. Her children attended public schools in Alabama.

- **Charter schools:** Michal does not think Alabama can create charter schools free from

systemic racism, and she prioritizes equity in public education. Michal has voted to deny all four charter school applications during her tenure.

□ **Neonta Williams** is the Founder of Black Alabamians for Education and an Army veteran, and she has a Bachelor of Social Work from Miles College and a Master in Public Administration from UAB. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Charter schools:** Black Alabamians for Education advocates for charter schools and claims to follow in the footsteps of the National Black Alliance for Educational Options, which assisted in passing Alabama's Charter School Law.

### **District 3**

**K-5 Schools:** *Avondale, EPIC, and Glen Iris*    **High School:** *Ramsey*

□ **Mary D. Boehm (incumbent)** was elected to the Board of Ed in 2017, is a Birmingham native, and has worked for the American Red Cross, YWCA, Alabama Power Foundation, Bellsouth Foundation, and A+ College Ready. Boehm's three sons attended EPIC School.

- **Charter schools:** Boehm says she is concerned charter schools receive more attention and community support than other BCS schools despite serving fewer students. Boehm has voted twice in favor of charter school applications and twice against.

□ **Byron Lagrone** is the Director of Engineering at Abel Healthcare Enterprises and a teaching assistant with the Technology Education and Literacy in Schools Program. Lagrone attended the University of Phoenix. His wife is City Council candidate Alice Speake, and their son is a BCS student.

- **Charter schools:** Lagrone is "firmly against charter schools." One reason he cites is they are a "for-profit institution with low regulation."

### **District 4**

**K-8 Schools:** *Hayes, Hudson, and Inglenook*    **High School:** *Woodlawn*

□ **Derrick L. Billups** is a former BCS student and attended undergrad at UA and graduate school at Samford and UAB. He has been the Director of Education at the Woodlawn Foundation and has taught in BCS, Hoover City Schools, and Jefferson County Schools.

- **Charter schools:** Billups says charter schools are an alternative to public, private, and parochial schools and are another option for families seeking a favorable education.

□ **Daayge Hendricks (incumbent)** is a Birmingham native and BCS parent. She joined the Board of Ed in 2013 and is the current president. She has worked for Wee Care Academy and the Birmingham airport. She has a bachelor's from Clark Atlanta University and an MBA from UA.

- **Charter schools:** Hendricks says she is "not opposed to charter schools properly applied and managed." She also says she strongly supports public education and concentrates her efforts on improving and advocating for public education. Hendricks has voted to deny all charter school applications during her tenure.

### **District 5**

**K-5 Schools:** *Barrett and Oliver*    **K-8 School:** *Phillips Academy*    **High School:** *Parker*

□ **David Tarell McKinney** is a professor at Jefferson State Community College. He holds a bachelor's degree in Communication from Troy University, a master's degree in Communication Management from UAB, and an Educational Specialist degree in Instructional Technology from UA.

McKinney ran for Board of Ed in 2017. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Charter schools:** No information found.

☐ **James A. Sullivan** is the President of the Central City Neighborhood Association and has served on the board of the Birmingham Public Library. He holds a B.S. from Stillman College and an M.S. from Faulkner University, and he is a Certified Financial Education Instructor.

- **Charter schools:** Sullivan says he doesn't support the current charter school system and doesn't agree with the Alabama Charter School Law, which allows the commission to overrule the local Board of Education decision to deny a charter school application.

### **District 6**

**K-5 School:** *Hemphill*    **K-8 School:** *Washington*

☐ **Jamaree' Collins** is a BCS graduate and holds a B.S. in Psychology from the University of West Alabama. He leads a mentoring program with the organization IAmGreatness Youth INC.

- **Charter schools:** Collins says his primary focus is on BCS. He does not have an issue with charter schools as they are an alternate option for unhappy parents, but he says he will not vote to approve another charter school.

☐ **Leticia Watkins** moved to Birmingham in 2009 to attend UAB where she graduated with a Master in Medical Science. During her time at UAB, she developed an undergraduate mentorship program and provided support to BCS students in STEM programs. Leticia serves as the Director of Children & Youth at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church. Candidate did not respond to the survey.

- **Charter schools:** No information found.

☐ **Yancey Williams, Sr.** was born in Birmingham, attended BCS, and is currently the Assistant Principal at Jackson Olin High School. He holds a B.A. from Miles College and an M.Ed and an Ed.S from UAB. He is a Navy veteran.

- **Charter schools:** Williams says, “[C]harter schools equal choice. People have the right to educate their children as they see fit under the law. Charter schools have their value the same as public education.”

### **District 7**

**K-5 Schools:** *Oxmoor Valley, West End Academy, and Arrington*    **Middle School:** *Jones Valley*  
**High School:** *Wenonah*

☐ **Walter “BigWalt” Wilson (incumbent)** was elected to the Board of Education in the January 2021 Special Election. He previously served as a constable. He ran unsuccessfully for City Council in 2009 and for Board of Ed in 2017. He worked for the Department of Public Works and as a substitute teacher and volunteer assistant football coach for BCS. He is a radio host. Candidate did not respond to our survey. **Candidates running unopposed do not appear on the ballot.**

### **District 8**

**K-5 Schools:** *Brown, Central Park, Minor, and Princeton*    **K-8 School:** *Bush, Bush Hills STEM*  
**Middle School:** *Green Acres*

☐ **Antoinette “Toni” King** grew up in Birmingham and is a BCS graduate. She has worked for the City of Birmingham in a variety of roles. Previously she worked for St. Vincent's Hospital and Brookwood Medical Center. She has three children.

- **Charter schools:** King says she currently does not “see the benefit of having charter schools in Birmingham.” She says charter schools are normally for-profit, may not be in a student’s best interest, and may close unexpectedly.

□ **Curtis Tyrone Robinson** is an adjunct faculty member at Miles College in Religion and Philosophy and works at 4C Enterprises. He has an M.A. in Public Affairs from UAB.

- **Charter schools:** Robinson says he is against charter schools.

□ **Sonja Q. Smith (incumbent)** joined the Board of Ed in 2017. She is from Birmingham and received a degree in music from BSC and a Master in Music from LSU. After moving to Chicago, she taught private piano lessons and high school and college music classes. She is the Project Manager at the Negro Southern League Museum.

- **Charter schools:** Smith says, “I am not in favor of charter schools in Birmingham.” Smith voted to deny charter school applications three times and was absent for the vote once.

□ **Antwon Bernard Womack** ran for Mayor of Tarrant in 2008; for Birmingham Board of Education in 2009, 2013, and 2017; and for Alabama House District 55 in 2018. He qualified to run for Jefferson County Board of Education in 2010 but withdrew prior to the election. In past elections he has faced criticism for misleading statements about his education and leadership background. Candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Charter schools:** Womack says he is against charter schools.

### **District 9**

**K-5 Schools:** *Norwood and Tuggle*    **K-8 Schools:** *Wylam and South Hampton*

**Middle School:** *Wilkerson*    **High Schools:** *Carver and Jackson Olin*

□ **Le’Darius Hilliard** ran for Alabama House District 60 in 2018. Hilliard is the President of the Jefferson County Millennial Democrats and is a minister at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church. He is the nephew of City Councilor John Hilliard and works for his uncle in the D9 City Council office. At the time of publishing, candidate did not respond to our survey.

- **Charter schools:** No information found.

□ **Jason Meadows** is the Director of Community Engagement for the Woodlawn Foundation and served as Manager of Community Partners for Oliver Elementary. Jason holds a B.A. in Business Marketing from UA and is a Youth Pastor at Emanuel Temple Church of God in Christ.

- **Charter schools:** Meadows states the board must educate constituents about charter schools so parents can make informed decisions. He says charters are free public schools but each is different so parents must research the school’s mission.

□ **Susan Diane Mitchell** is the founder of the Dynamite Hill-Smithfield Community Land Trust and a former officer of the East Thomas Neighborhood Association. She holds an MA in English and American Literature from UAB and was an instructor at Lawson State and UAB. She has nine children, who have all attended BCS.

- **Charter schools:** Mitchell says she is not in favor of charter schools because they disrupt the tax revenue for public schools and create “bubble-like privatized institutions” that may even resegregate schools based on race and class.



## Greater Birmingham Ministries

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