

**Board of Education Candidate Survey
2021 Birmingham Municipal Election**

Greater Birmingham Ministries invites you to complete this candidate survey. Your responses will inform our non-partisan 2021 Birmingham Municipal Election Guide, which will reach over 20,000 Birmingham residents. Please return your completed candidate survey to electionguide@gbm.org by July 2.

Name: James A. Sullivan

District: 5

Campaign Email: info@sullivanforschoolboard.com

Campaign Phone Number: 334-220-4054

Campaign Address: PO Box 59025 Birmingham AL 35259

Campaign Website: www.sullivanforschoolboard.com

Campaign Social Media Pages: <https://www.facebook.com/sullivan4schoolboard>

Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography. From the small town of Maplesville, Alabama. James has found his second home in the birthplace of the civil rights movement in Birmingham Alabama. He believes this because of the people and his service on the Birmingham Public Library board and as the president of the Central City Neighborhood Association.

James holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from Stillman College, Tuscaloosa, AL, Master of Science in Management from Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL, and is a Certified Financial Education Instructor. He currently serves as President of the Central City Neighborhood Association (downtown Birmingham), as a board member for the Birmingham Artwalk, and on his local Home Owners Association.

Please name any endorsements you have received. N/a

1. **What do you see as the board's roles and responsibilities?** To hire and hold the local superintendent accountable, oversee the overall education of students, and provide governance for the local school system.

2. **What are the biggest issues for students and families in your district and how would you address those issues in your role as a Board Member?** I believe there are several issues that need to be addressed. To name a couple, most at-risk students (students who require temporary or ongoing intervention in order to succeed academically) usually have problems in the home, are in single parent households, or lack proper role models that stress the importance of discovering one's purpose. I also believe the earlier you identify and correct problems, the higher the success rate that an individual gets on the correct path. I would support programs and partnerships that build and teach Conflict resolution and violence prevention curriculums, bullying prevention programs, Afterschool recreation programs, mentoring programs, and comprehensive community interventions.
3. **What role, if any, does the Birmingham Board of Education and Birmingham City Schools play in community and public safety?** We play a vital role in public safety and crime prevention. The more kids we keep educated and in school, the more we have the potential to catch and remediate at-risk students. We know, if not caught early, children and youth tend to follow a path toward delinquent and criminal behavior as they grow up into adolescence and adulthood.
4. **As a Board Member, will you advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth? If so, how?** Yes, I support policies that would protect queer and transgenders from censorship against expression and speech, due process protections, and discrimination against equal treatment in the provision of placements, services and equal access to programs.
5. **What is your position on charter schools?** I don't support the current charter school system, but fully support our traditional public school system and believe we can turn things around if the correct steps are taken and our schools are empowered and fully funded. I don't agree with law Act 2015-3 (Alabama Charter School Law) where the commission can overrule the local school board decision to deny a charter school application and allow the denied to still receive and up to ten mills of local funds associated with each child enrolled at the public charter school.
6. **There is a national conversation on teaching Critical Race Theory in public schools to make public education more equitable. Do you believe the BCS curriculum should be changed to be more equitable? If so, how?** I believe BCS should accommodate a truthful telling of history that specifically educates children on the realities of slavery and reconstruction. Critical Race Theory should only be taught as a historical perspective and not for anything that may try to lead a student to think a certain way.