



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.

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1. Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography.

- a. I am a Birmingham City Schools stakeholder with strong, personal ties to several Birmingham City Schools. My experiences as a Birmingham City Schools parent, student and parent advocate, has helped me form my vision and purpose for our schools, which includes creating a strong culture of learning and excellence for our students.

2. Please name any endorsements you have received.

3. What do you see as the board's roles and responsibilities?

- a. As a school board, we should make decisions to ensure that a proper education is provided for all students in our 99 neighborhood communities. We should collaborate with the Superintendent, other board members, and other stakeholders to establish a clear vision for our school system. As a member of the team, I would be partially responsible for providing governance while creating policies and providing the resources that our school requires to ensure that our school system can achieve its vision and mission. The board should maintain fiscal responsibility and ensure that our budgets are in-line with our district priorities. As a board, we are also responsible for ensuring we have professional, competent, effective and visionary district leadership.

4. 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?

- a. **Safe Schools** – We will work with the district and school leadership to implement and enforce procedures that will keep our students safe and secure. We lost a student in 2018 in one of our schools and that absolutely cannot happen again. Our school must be safe for our students. We must put in place all necessary safety measures to ensure our schools are safe.
- b. **Bullying** – We will task our school and district leaders to enforce procedures to eliminate bullying. We will also educate our students, staff and stakeholders on the effect of bullying on our students and how it negatively impacts the learning process. Students will not learn if they are in an unsafe environment. Our schools will become a bully free zone.
- c. **Academic Achievement** – The last update the community received from the district leadership highlighted that over 75% of our 2nd graders were 2 or more grade levels behind in math and reading. That means that with the passage of the literacy act, they cannot be promoted past 3rd grade and could be held back. That's an increase from the estimated 60% that Dr. Herring stated when she began as our superintendent. Those numbers are not heading in the right direction. Dr. Sullivan was right when he said recently that "We are in an education crisis and must act now". We must improve the academic outcome for our students to give them better options than crime and poverty. This must be the primary focus of our district and all financial budgets and resources must be directly connected to this effort. Our students deserve our very best. The Alabama Department of Education will be ready to move if we don't improve our academics data for our students. This must become a priority and we will hold all of the stakeholders accountable to improving the student's academic outcome.

d. **Parental Involvement** – We will work with neighborhood, community partners, parents, churches and all available stakeholders to increase parental involvement.

i. We will ensure that all our schools are welcoming to students, families and the community.

ii. We will include parents in major decisions concerning our schools and students

e. **Classroom Behavior**

i. We must support teachers in addressing classroom behavioral issues so that our teachers can effectively teach all our students

f. **Old School Buildings**

i. It is time to replace old school buildings, and not just provide a facelift. We must develop a capital improvement plan that includes input from the 99 neighborhoods.

5. What role, if any, does the Birmingham Board of Education and Birmingham City Schools play in community and public safety?

a. First, we must protect and keep students safe within our schools. Parents trust us with providing a safe, secure and nurturing environment. School safety will be our #1 priority. We will protect our students

b. The care of our students extends beyond our classrooms. Our schools are an integral part of the community. We will work with parents and other groups to develop and implement ways to help keep our students safe during school hours and beyond.

c. We will partner with community organizations to develop before school and after school programs to provide our students with safe and supervised activities.

d. We will sell and/or lease abandoned school properties in our communities that have become blighted and havens for illegal activities in our neighborhoods.

6. As a Board Member, will you advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth? If so, how?

a. As a board member I would work collaboratively with the entire board and superintendent to ensure we are protecting the rights and safety of all students. We will implement additional policies if necessary, to protect students that may

face specific or additional issues. All students will be protected. We will provide a safe, secure and nurturing environment for LGBT students. We will not tolerate or condone hate, bullying, or discrimination of any students

7. What is your position on charter schools?

- a. My responsibility is Birmingham City Schools. I will work to make our schools the first choice and not the last option for our parents, students and community. We will grow and attract new families to our schools and city.
- b. We will also follow the laws and guidelines as described by the State of Alabama that Birmingham City Schools must follow as a Charter School Authorizer.
- c. I will seek the input from our community and stakeholders on all major decisions concerning our schools. Together we will decide what is best for our students

8. 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?

- a. I believe Birmingham City Schools should offer African American Studies in all schools. This will allow us to teach the history of our people. I will also work with our board and the Alabama School Board to ensure we are meeting state standards. I will fight to give our community and parents input on the curriculum.