



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: Mary Boehm

District: 3

Campaign Email: marydboehm@bellsouth.net

Campaign Phone Number: 205-541-2833

Campaign Address: 1132 Glen View Road, Birmingham, Alabama 35222

Campaign Website: Being developed

Campaign Social Media Pages: Under Development

1. Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography.

I am a lifelong resident of the City of Birmingham. I have worked for the American Red Cross, the YWCA, the Alabama Power Foundation, the Bellsouth Foundation and A+ College Ready where I gained broad experience that I now bring to the Board. My three sons attended EPIC School and I have been honored to represent District 3 on the School Board for the last 4 years,

2. Please name any endorsements you have received.

None to date

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

- To establish and regularly monitor the district's strategic direction, goals and objectives.
- To hire and annually evaluate a superintendent.
- To solicit feedback from parents, students, and employees within the school system.
- To represent the interests of the community at large.
- To ensure that the district's finances are solid and aligned with district priorities.

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?

- Improving academic proficiency in reading and math at every grade level.
- Developing stronger social-emotional learning programs across the district.
- Strengthening special education and mental health services.
- Increasing the number of pre-K classrooms for 4-year-old students.
- Addressing the issue of declining enrollment.

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

We need to engage our students and parents in a concerted, district-wide effort to end gun violence and to provide our students with better training in self-regulation, stress-management, and conflict-resolution. The role our School Resource Officers can play in this effort should be re-examined.

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

I will advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth. Historically, the district has not served these students well. Administrators, teachers, students, and board members need more training on this issue to help us become more respectful of and responsive to the district's LGBTQ students. BCS should develop a stronger partnership with the Magic City Acceptance Society and involve them more comprehensively in our efforts to craft programs and policies to accomplish those goals.

7. What is your position on charter schools?

Birmingham City Schools is a Charter School Authorizer which requires us to review charter applications as a board and vote on whether to accept or deny each applicant. This allows the Board to stay abreast of who is applying and to make decisions based on both program design and potential merit to BCS. However, I am concerned that charter schools – which serve fewer students than do traditional public schools– are often given more attention and community support than other schools in the BCS system.

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?

I believe that schools in Alabama, including BCS, have not taught history fully or accurately as it relates to the continued impact of slavery, racial violence, and political disenfranchisement in this country – nor have they fully addressed the numerous ways that ongoing and systemic discrimination impacts economic opportunity, residential patterns, and mental health in our community. Our curriculum should be revised to address these issues in carefully considered, age-appropriate ways within each grade band.