



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.**

I am the current school board representative for district 8 and my background is in music and education. As a school board representative, I have worked to foster meaningful partnerships that have centered around the health and wellness of students. I seek to hold my seat to continue those partnerships and focus on a holistic approach to education, providing exciting and eye-opening opportunities for students, and advocate for the academic success of Birmingham's students.

- 2. Please name any endorsements you have received.**

n/a

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

The board has three main roles and responsibilities:

1. Manage the finances of the district
2. Manage the Superintendent
3. Advocate for the academic success of students and exceptional work environments for teachers, administrators, and staff.

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?

The biggest issues facing students and families in District 8 are

1. Exposure -- our students need to be exposed to more than what's in our district. They need the ability to see the many career opportunities available to them. I have partnered with local businesses and community leaders to send students to trips out of town and provide internships and will expand on those relationships.
2. Academic success -- we need more students enrolled in pre-K so they are prepared for kindergarten and on track for the 3rd grade literacy exam. I am working with neighborhood associations and community organizations to provide volunteers to D8 schools that can help students gain meaningful help preparing them for academic success.
3. Health services -- our students need to be cared for mind, body, and spirit. We have already started this by housing school-based health clinics in two schools and will expand those services this year. Students coming out of the pandemic need to have easy access to mental health counselors and internal medicine professionals. We also need to make sure that our students and their families are vaccinated. With the many COVID variations that are out there, I worry that students will (unknowingly) contract COVID and pass it along to their elderly grandparent or BCS teacher. That is why I have supported our partnership with ARMS to provide free COVID vaccinations at our high schools this summer. I will continue to advocate for the expansion of school-based health services until they are in every BCS school building.

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

The role of BCS in community and public safety is to work with parents, community leaders, business owners, and the city to provide engaging and high quality after-school and summer programming. It is also our role to ensure that students are able to safely travel to and from their school site each day.

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

Yes, I will advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth. I have already done this by favoring policies that protect students against bullying and will continue to advocate for policies that protect the safety and wellbeing of all youth.

7. What is your position on charter schools?

I am not in favor of charter schools in Birmingham.

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?

Yes, BCS should address each of our policies from a more equitable perspective. When distributing resources, we should look at the more equitable (rather than equal) way of doing so. This can be a challenge when you have 43 schools and over 20,000 students, but BCS is making efforts to make this change. Recently, we committed to being more equitable with the passage of a policy on equity.

CRT is a hot topic and very much misunderstood. Regardless of what happens in Montgomery, BCS teachers can teach our students to not just look at the effects of policy, but examine the cause from all angles -- including the racial motivation.