



## **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](mailto:electionguide@gbm.org) by July 2.*

**Name: Terri Michal**

**District: 2**

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**Campaign Social Media Pages: [www.facebook.com/TeamTerri2021](http://www.facebook.com/TeamTerri2021)**

**Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography. I have been a strong advocate for public education since 2012, when I became aware of the inequities between Title 1 schools and Non-Title 1 schools. I have been attending BCS Board Meetings since 2014 when I began working for the Birmingham American Federation of Teachers. Because of this, I have a very good understanding of the history of BCS and what our strengths and weaknesses are.**

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

Network For Public Education, DSA, Working Families Party

**What do you see as the board's roles and responsibilities? We are responsible for hiring/firing the Superintendent, Chief Financial Officer and Board Lawyer. We are also responsible for keeping policy updated and in line with the state, and we pass a fiscally responsible budget that ensures we maintain at least a one month**

reserve as required by law. We also have a responsibility to promote public education and to keep our constituents informed on BCS business.

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? Of course right now, because of the pandemic, families are very concerned about their scholar's ability to work at grade level. The pandemic has caused learning loss for many students and it will be a challenge to get them caught up by June of 2022. However, I, as a board member, have supported the Superintendent's plan to hire more paraprofessionals for the classrooms and retired teachers as tutors. There have been many programs put in place this summer to help our scholars make some academic gains. I held a 45 minute virtual town hall with the Superintendent and Director of curriculum ahead of the opening of the summer sessions to help inform families and optimize participation. We have had 4,000 scholars participate.

What role, if any, does the Birmingham Board of Education and Birmingham City Schools play in community and public safety? Indirectly, our ability to engage students and provide them with a high quality education benefits the community because studies have shown that a child that drops out of school or that cannot read proficiently is more likely to be involved in illegal activities in their community.

As a Board Member, will you advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth? If so, how? Absolutely. We have already ensured that our antibullying policies include sexual orientation and I have arranged a meeting between the HRC and the Superintendent concerning professional development centered around diversity and inclusion as it pertains to our transgendered students. As chair of the policy committee I am also aware that there may be a need to protect our students right to be called by their chosen name and pronoun.

What is your position on charter schools? 1. Charter schools are only as strong as the legislation that created them, and our charter school bill is lousy. 2. Public education in Alabama has always had systemic racism at it's core, just look at our system of funding schools based on property values. The same people passed the charter school law that refuse to fund our schools equitably AND created a voucher law that labels black and brown children 'failing'. I do not have faith that Alabama is capable of creating charter schools free from the reach of systemic racism. We should be demanding equity in education instead of layering a

**separate education system over our public schools that will suck money and resources from them.**

**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? First I'd like to say that the conversation about CRT is incorrect. No k-12 public school system in this country uses CRT. It is a problem manufactured by people that wish to ensure that America's history will continue to be whitewashed. I feel our curriculum is equitable, but I also think an audit of our curriculum would be useful to ensure equity for all students.**