



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: Yancey Williams, Sr.

District: 6

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Campaign Social Media Pages:

- 1. Please provide a 2-3 sentence biography. I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, received my formal education from A.H. Parker High School, Miles College, University of Alabama Birmingham and also served in the United States Navy. I am a devout Christian, a member of Thirgood Memorial CME church, married to Tracey Chambliss Williams, father of two children and one grandchild. I have an established professional career as an educator, currently employed by Birmingham City Schools, and serve as an administrator at Jackson Olin High School.**
- 2. Please name any endorsements you have received. I have not received any endorsements, only the support of family, friends, church members and co-workers.**

- 3. What do you see as the board's roles and responsibilities? The ultimate and primary responsibility of the board is the education of the students in our community. We must ensure that our students receive the best quality education available to produce world class citizens who can compete in a global society. Therefore, we must employ highly qualified educators and the best staff for this purpose. We must also act in the best interest of our students by adhering to and enforcing the policies and procedures of the Board of Education, Birmingham City Schools and the State of Alabama. We must be willing to listen to all stakeholders and work cooperatively to seek the best solution possible for our students.**
- 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 include the current challenges of the pandemic, virtual education and maintaining student success. The pandemic has created issues unlike those that we have ever seen before, resulting in the need to develop strategies which continue educating students with fidelity while addressing safety for the staff and students. I believe it is in our best interest to continue with virtual education while employing all recommendations of the Center for Disease Control. We must focus on education simultaneously with genuine vigilance and also provide additional resources including virtual tutoring and any other instructional measures to ensure student success. The pandemic has made it difficult to readily assess human needs; for example, it is difficult to assess via the virtual medium, who needs food, clothing, shelter, or who is a victim of child abuse, or mental impairment. As a board member, I will work with our various education and community partners to stand in the gap for our students and make sure they have access to social services, mental health services, food pantries or whatever is needed in their best interest.**
- 5. What role, if any, does the Birmingham Board of Education and Birmingham City Schools play in community and public safety? The Birmingham Board of Education and Birmingham City Schools serve as the responsible entities for safety in schools. Schools must be free of harassment, bullying and violence in order for students to have an optimum environment to learn. Public safety is a major concern in today's climate of cyberbullying, looming threat of foreign and domestic terrorism. In recent years, we have seen an increase in school shootings. Most often in communities, schools serve as the center of safety and a safe haven. However, most of the time this is the very reason why schools are usually the targets of violence. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the board and its employees to promote and maintain community and public safety. All stakeholders and employees are essential in maintaining safety in schools, monitoring classrooms, hallways, cafeteria, transportation to and from school, visible administrators, parent volunteers, and school security are all critical to our schools, communities and a matter of public safety.**

- 6. As a Board Member, will you advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth? If so, how? As a board member, I will be an advocate for policies that protect queer and transgender youth! The Lesbian Bi-sexual Gay Trans Queer (LBGTQ) community must definitely be protected in schools. All students have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of a quality education absent of mistreatment. With the rise of suicide, self-inflicted harm, isolation and alienation, we must implement, continue to develop and enforce policies against bullying to eliminate these dangers. All students must continue to receive aggressive character development education. We have many programs currently in place but we must use them. While we are working to develop character, compassion and understanding in our students, we must make sure that our staff members are informed and are sensitive to the issues surrounding the LBGTQ community. Therefore, I would recommend professional development workshops for our staff to increase awareness on the issues and concerns surrounding the LBGTQ Community. It is imperative to follow the golden rule, "Do unto others as you will have done unto you". People have the right to live their lives the way they want to, it doesn't cost you anything, it is not going harm nor hurt you in any way. We are all God's children and equal in his sight! We are all deserving of love and appreciation, being different should not equal being mistreated!**

- 7. What is your position on charter schools? In my opinion, charter schools equal choice. People have the right to educate their children as they see fit under the law. Charter schools have their value the same as public education. It is simply a matter of choice.**

- 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 the Critical Race Theory should be assessed to determine if it has merit and how to best incorporate it into our curriculum. The theory will not make public education equitable because the social construct has to be changed to address racism. Our students must participate in all conversations which could potentially impact them. We must teach the facts, follow the State of Alabama and the City of Birmingham Board of Education curriculum. Our students need to know the facts about everything even if this information is unpleasant. We must all have an open mind and be willing to learn.**