

David T. Mckinney

1 What is your motivation for running for this office?

I am an educator and I am invested in the educational needs of our community. I am a member of the National Education Association and a member of the Alabama Education Association. My passion is to use my life, my education and my skills in service to others. I decided to run for the Birmingham Board of Education District 5 because I know I can make a difference in the lives of our kids.

2 What is your greatest virtue, especially as applied to leadership, stewardship and learning?

My greatest virtue is humility. It is important to understand that we are all here for a purpose and to serve in that purpose. As a leader, it is important to understand who you are leading and the importance of your role as a leader. I believe a leader must have a vision that inspires progression for the people. A leader can't lead if they are not humble and is willing to move self or ego out of the way. When it comes to stewardship and learning, I am an educator and I understand the importance of organizational structure and learning. As an educator, I have served in the classroom, advocated for the educational system and understand what is needed to develop bright and well-rounded students. I have been an educator in the Birmingham Metro area for over 10 years. I have taught Communication courses at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Miles College and at Jefferson Sate Community College. I have an earned bachelor's degree, master's degree, and an educational specialist degree. I will complete my Ph.D work in Educational Leadership in 2018.

3 If you currently attend a house of worship, what is the name of it and how often do you attend?

I attend Guiding Light Church. I attend every Sunday.

4 What impact will your faith have on the performance of the duties of this office?

My faith is in Jesus Christ. My faith will sustain me to work in honesty, integrity and in humility.

5 How will you establish a good working relationship with the elected Mayor to ensure the City's success?

Birmingham School Board members contact with the mayor is very limited. My role and contact will be with my fellow board members, with the superintendent, the community and the Birmingham city schools. I will work to support meeting with the Mayor and I will work to increase the amount of money received from the city for the school system.

6 Recognizing that education plays a vital role on the present and future of a city's economy and job growth, what are your plans for Birmingham City Schools to be seen as one of the top education institutions in the nation?

I will work to open a level of accountability with the community, by putting policies in place that allow our kids to learn in a safe environment. I will work to give our teachers the support they need to educate our kids, and I will work to address weak areas in our schools by implementing programs and educational initiatives that will place our kids in the top percentile

7 What do you see as Birmingham City Schools greatest challenges and assets?

The greatest challenges are academics and poverty. The greatest assets are the students, teachers, and the community involvement in extra-curricular activities.

8 What goals do you hope to achieve if elected?

I am working with the Alabama Education Association and National Education Association to change how the state labels our schools as failing schools. This label demeans the whole school system and creates a negative perception of the students and the teachers. I also will work to make sure programs in reading and math are evaluated through a formative and summative evaluation. I will work to build a renewed trust of the school board with the community.

9 What in your opinion is the reason for Birmingham City's failed schools and what are your plans to ensure the success of Birmingham City Schools. There are a lot of factors that are known and unknown. From my research, a lack of leadership from the superintendent and school board, ineffective programs in place to deal with the poverty of our students and a lack of transparency with the community.

10 What will you, as a board member, do to assure that teachers have the support and materials needed to successfully assist students in meeting state standards?

I will work to increase the professional development that is offered to our teachers. I will work with the Alabama Education Association to fight for a raise for our teachers. I will work to open a line of communication with all principals to maintain a record of the needs and successes of our teachers and students.

11 How would you balance your decisions as a member of the board with the input of parents and teachers? The community has to be in the conversation and must feel that their voice is being heard. I will develop a relationship with the parents and teachers. This will allow them to feel comfortable addressing any concerns with me. I will also provide parents and teachers with factual and rational solutions on what will be the best decision for the community and students.

12 How long have you lived in Birmingham, and how would you characterize the City's quality of life? How should it be improved?

I have lived in Birmingham for 12 years. The quality of life is fair. There are issues with poverty, abandon buildings and homes, and leadership of the city. The city can improve with sound leadership from the mayor, the allocation of money to build up communities and more money allocated to education.

13 What distinguishes you from the other candidates?

I am a Millennial and I am fighting for education. I have many years of service in the educational system. I am a Professor and have extensive graduate studies in Educational Leadership and Organizational Communication. I have taken courses in K-12 leadership and will provide a unique perspective to how we can improve our school system.

14 What issue is not getting enough attention?

The issue that is not getting enough attention is the poverty in over communities. It can be difficult for a student to learn when they are experiencing homelessness, hungry and poor hygiene. This in many ways is an underlying problem that affects the academics of many students.