



CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1 What is your motivation for running for this office?

I strongly believe in public education and that every Birmingham City School (BCS) graduate should be qualified and prepared to meet the needs and challenges of our global society. With recent trends in workforce development it is imperative that our school system has competent and capable leaders on the school board who support programs and policies that will ensure that our students will succeed. I feel that with my background and capabilities I will continue to be an asset to the board and to our school system by continuing to represent District 7.

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

I believe in promoting the success and greatness of those that I encounter. During my professional career as a clinical laboratory technologist, I onboarded and trained many new employees who were just entering the workforce. It was thru my mentoring and training that allowed them to quickly attain the skills that they needed to perform tasks independently.

I have served as President of the Board of Education consecutively for the past two years. I feel that my leadership and ability to work as a team and individually with each of the board members is an example of my ability to work well with others and to gain their confidence and support.

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

I am a faithful member of Trinity Baptist Church in Birmingham, AL. Rev John E. King, Jr. is our pastor.

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

I am a very principled person who believes in moral excellence. I value other people even when we do not agree on an issue. I am loyal and dedicated to completing a task and feel that my faith guides me on doing what is decent and in order.

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

I will continue to work with any individual who holds the office of Mayor. I feel that it is very important that the Mayor, City Council, Superintendent, and members of the Board of Education have a good working relationship with each other to promote and support the school system. Statistics show that the most effective school systems have strong financial support from the City. I would work with the Mayor and Council by attending monthly meetings that are held by the Education Committee. By developing a good relationship with the Mayor it can only be positive for the students and community.

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 believe that it is vital that BCS builds a communication team to increase its branding to make the members of the community aware of the accomplishments and success that is happening in our schools. We are often "reactive" to a story about the school system rather than "proactively" leading that message for ourselves. I want ALL of our citizens to have enough information to accurately answer the quest – "What's good about Birmingham City Schools".

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

The greatest assets of our school system are our students, faculty/staff, and parents. We have a wealth of talent within BCS that I believe will excel with the competent leader that we have placed in charge of our school system. We have not reached full potential yet but we are showing positive trends in our student achievement data and have decreased the number of schools listed as "failing schools".

We face the same challenges as any urban school district. Poverty, violence, lack of parental involvement, low funding, all have a negative impact on our students. These challenges can be overcome and do not have to define us as a community or school district. As we educate and train our youth to be qualified graduates we will see improvements.

8 What goals do you hope to achieve if elected?

- It is important that we see a significant improvement in student achievement data. I would like to see those numbers rise exponentially.
- I would also like to see an increase in the number of Career Academies offered in each of our 7 high schools.
- I would like to see equitable programs offered at Wenonah High School and my area middle schools in D7 as compared to those offered at other schools within the school system.
- I would like to see a more significant increase in the District's graduation rate and ensure that our students are QUALIFIED upon graduation.

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.

I do not believe in making excuses but the criteria for placing schools on the failing school list is flawed and works against the challenges that we encounter as an urban school district. Once you are placed on the list it takes at least two to three years to be removed from that bottom 6% of schools based on your student achievement scores in reading and math. We cannot change that criteria but I do feel that we can continue to focus on early intervention for struggling students and provide one-on-one learning opportunities to improve reading and math scores.

I would like to partner with more businesses to provide programs to help improve parental involvement in our schools and teach parents to become more active in education of their children.

I will continue to support programs and policies that promote the learning and success of our students. We are beginning to see the impact of the new K-12 reading program that was implemented last year. I would promote any recommendation brought forward by the Superintendent that will focus on the improvement of math and science achievement data.

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?

As a school board member, I will continue to support recommendations brought forward by the Superintendent that support teachers and students. Last year, I proudly supported the new Journeys Reading Program that totally revamped the reading curriculum for all grades K-12. I will also continue to support new programs to improve technology in the classroom so that our students can learn on a global level as well as the addition of more Pre-K classes.

I strongly believe in my fiduciary responsibility as a board member so I will continue to focus on our budgeting and spending to ensure that we are wisely investing in our students and staff.

- 11 How would you balance your decisions as a member of the board with the input of parents and teachers?

I feel a huge responsibility of a school board member is to educate the community about the school system as well as being transparent to the public. I will continue to seek input from parents and students and forward information to the Superintendent for follow-up and action as needed. I will continue to ensure that my decisions hold true to the mission and vision of the school district.

- 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 am a life-long resident of Birmingham. I have lived in other surrounding areas but moved back into District 7 in 2012. When I compare my area to those more affluent ones near me I recognize that the quality of life Birmingham is varied and in certain areas there is needed improvement. We all are affected by violence, poverty, low wages, and unemployment, no matter what District we live in. I believe that is why the Mayor, Council, School Board, and business leaders should partner together to improve our education system and the living standards for our citizens.

- 13 What distinguishes you from the other candidates?

I have proven success as a current member of the school board. For the past two years I have consecutively led the board as President. During my four years of service I have attained a Master Level of training regarding school board governance and will continue to use that knowledge to effectively lead and serve on the board.

My experience as a corporate trainer onboarding new employees gives me vast knowledge of what type curriculum and programs are needed in our schools to meet the workforce development needs in our City and state. I use that knowledge to support programs that will ensure the success of our students and allow them to be college or career ready upon graduation.

As a corporate manager I have managed department budgets that are similar to that of the school district. Using that knowledge and experience, I am able to make decisions and support programs that are fiscally sound and help the District to maintain financial stability.

14 What issue is not getting enough attention?

The need to improve business partnerships and increase parental involvement in our schools as well as increasing local funding to support District programs.