

CITY OF BIRMINGHAM
SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE
QUESTIONNAIRE

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

My motivation for running for this office is to utilize my experience and knowledge as an educational leader to serve in collaboration with others in transforming the Birmingham City School System into a world class school system where students can be prepared to compete locally, statewide, nationally and globally in achieving success, living productive lives, and giving back to their respective communities. I have been blessed to have a successful career in achieving my dream degree being my Doctorate in Educational Leadership, my dream job as Superintendent of Schools in two school systems in the state of Alabama, my retirement from service as an educator for 34 years with great satisfaction of the many lives I have impacted as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, personnel coordinator, hearing officer and superintendent of schools. As a result of God blessing me in this manner, I want to be that vessel where I can help create an environment in our school system of excellence, where our children can be just as successful in achieving their dreams as I have been. I owe my success to God first, my parents, and my school system for laying the foundation for my spiritual values, successful career and successful lifestyle that I am currently reaping! This is in essence my synopsis of what motivates me to run for this office.

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

My greatest virtue as applied to leadership, stewardship, and learning is my spirituality in putting God first in my life in letting him order my footsteps in tandem with being obedient in the process. I live my life according to Matthew 6:33 which states: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all things shall be added unto you. In the process of keeping God first in my life and obeying him, I have been a successful husband in my home with my one and only wife of 16 years, my church as a teacher, counselor, leadership team member, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer of a debt free ministry with 2 locations, in my successful 34 year career as a successful teacher, assistant principal, principal, personnel coordinator, hearing officer, and superintendent of schools. I have served in 4 different school systems in this state and in every single role I have surrounded myself with excellent and talented leaders as well as engaging with all stakeholders in developing my professional life as well as my spiritual life. I have been an excellent steward of the monies in my church in achieving a surplus budget and debt free ministry, achieving success in my career as an educator in having surplus budgets in meeting the needs of the districts I served, and my personal life in being debt free and teaching others how to build their faith and physical resources to achieve that goal as well. The Bible says that he who is faithful in little will be faithful in much and I can truly attest to that being true. In essence, I have gained excessive knowledge as a learner as a result of being engaged spiritually, throughout my career, in my current community service activities serving my state as the Alabama Commissioner for the Interstate Compact for Military Education Commission and national Member of the Interstate Compact for Military Education Commission, as well as being appointed to and serving Birmingham and Jefferson County on several boards and committees such as the Birmingham Building Authority Board, Birmingham Planning Commission, Executive Board Member of the Birmingham Planning Commission, Birmingham Comprehensive Planning Committee, Birmingham Zoning and Advisory

Committee, Birmingham Implementation Committee, Birmingham Prosperity and Opportunity Sub Committee, Midfield Area Chamber of Commerce and the like. Learning is a perpetual process and I am learning and growing immensely by my involvement in these aforementioned activities. In summary, I could not be involved in or successful in any of these experiences without God leading my life.

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

I am a member of Upper Room Fellowship Church located at 842 Glen Oaks Drive, Fairfield, Alabama 35064, and 109 68th Place North, Birmingham, Alabama 35206. I attend church every Sunday and Bible Study every Wednesday, along with all special programs and activities that are sponsored by the church. My wife is the Pastor and I am the Chief Financial Officer of our church. In addition, I serve as a member of our prison ministry and my wife and I support and train youth and young adults to be spiritual leaders.

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

My faith will have a tremendous impact on the performance of my duties of this office, just as it has a tremendous impact on my lifestyle because I will be prayerful in the decision making process and I will always exemplify my spiritual values, and beliefs in making the best decisions to benefit all people and especially our children. I will truly be a servant leader. I am not ashamed of my faith, and I will make it known that I will not participate in anything immoral, unethical or illegal and I will uphold the standards of my spiritual values of living for God first and foremost as he orders my footsteps in serving his people. I will bring the values of integrity, commitment, honesty, perseverance, love, understanding and the like to this office. With these attributes, I have been successful unifying people for a common goal and I consider the ability to work with people as a leader and follower as one of the qualities needed in serving in the role of a school board member.

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

The best way to establish a good working relationship with a person starts with open communication. I will certainly do this with our next Mayor in introducing myself and express my vision of what I would like the district to become and get his input on that as well as listen to his vision for the district. The school system has to be at its highest peak in order for the city of Birmingham to flourish in economical and residential growth and prosperity. By virtue of the roles I serve in at City Hall, I will make a point of checking in with the Mayor after my business is concluded there to just say hello, answer questions he may have or just provide him a personal update on the direction we are going in terms of our successes and areas of improvement. I will truly make sure I am accessible to the Mayor or any of his staff if they need me for any reason. In essence, communication, visibility and accessibility will create a good working relationship with the Mayor

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?

My plans for Birmingham City Schools to be seen as one of the top educational institutions nationwide and worldwide are as follows: (1) Create and sustain at least 5 months of operating expenses which equates to \$85 million dollars, (2) Ensure that every teacher in the Birmingham City School System is Highly Qualified and Professionally Certified, (3) Ensure that every child graduates and is career ready for postsecondary education, the military, or the workforce, (4) Have top notch education and parity in all schools thus eliminating the potential of failing schools being in our district, (5) Create a healthy and engaging teaching and learning atmosphere in enhancing a safe school climate, (6) Showing tremendous leadership in engaging parents and stakeholders inclusively and collaboratively in the educational process, and (7) Create and hold Superintendent accountable for implementing Board Policies that are sound, legal and not an infringement of human rights, thus avoiding, millions in litigation fees and decimating the general fund budget, These are my plans for Birmingham City Schools to be seen as one of the top educational institutions nationwide and globally.

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

I see Birmingham City Schools greatest challenges in the areas of financial growth in attaining excellence, gaining the public's trust and respect as a result of poor academic standing, transparency in decision making, ceasing the number students leaving the district on an annual basis, having highly qualified and certified teachers in every classroom, maintaining stability at the Superintendent's position and high level parental involvement. The assets that I see in the Birmingham City Schools are as follows: (1) Meeting the state requirement of 1 month's reserves in the budget, Excellent Career Tech Programs in the High Schools, (3) Talented teachers and administrators, (4) Availability of Resources throughout the community for excellent learning and teaching, (5) Partnership with UAB in enhancing opportunities for students. These are in essence the greatest assets and challenges I see in the Birmingham City School System.

8) What goals do you hope to achieve if elected?

The goals that I would like to see achieved in collaboration with my fellow school board members are as follows: (1) Financial Stability with at least a 5 month surplus equaling 85 million dollars, (2) Every child being taught by a highly qualified and certified teacher, (3) 100% Graduation Rate for High School Students, (4) All schools performing above grade level, thus eliminating failing schools from being in our district, (5) 95-100% Parental involvement at all schools, (6) Stability at the Superintendent's position, and last, but not least, becoming known as a world class school system where our children will be prepared to successfully compete against the best of the best worldwide. These are some of the goals I would like to see achieved in the Birmingham City School System

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?

Birmingham City Schools is failing because of lack of leadership at the school board level. The school board has shown it is not on one accord, has different agendas and decisions are clearly not being made in the best interest of children. In order for a school district or any organization to be successful you must have collaborative leadership. I would use my skills, experience, and knowledge as a leader to encourage and practice working collaboratively. I would certainly make sure that every recommendation that comes to the Board has a rationale that is in the best interest of children and one we can afford. I would use my experience to serve as a safety net against flawed educational recommendations and at the same time I will use my knowledge and experience to mentor and guide our newly appointed Superintendent who is still learning the position. Last, but not least I will not micromanage the Superintendent, but hold her accountable for carrying out the policies and curriculum to a standard of excellence. These are in essence my plans to ensure success in the Birmingham City School System.

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?

The school board has a fiduciary responsibility to the employees and citizens of the city in regards to having a balanced budget. As a board member, I will make sure that we have a priority in the budget for instructional materials and professional development. Next to personnel these categories will have the most funds allocated to it from a percentage standpoint. If you allocate the monies for instructional supplies and professional development, then this should negate teachers from being void or subpar in those areas. I will encourage our Superintendent to seek all external sources in terms of discretionary monies, grants, etc. in meeting the instructional and academic needs of teachers and schools. I will also encourage my fellow board members to add this component to the evaluation process of the Superintendent as well. This is in essence what I will do __ to ensure that teachers have support and materials needed to successfully assist students in meeting state standards

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

All concerns and suggestions from parents and teachers should be directed to the proper protocol first and foremost. However, if I am made aware of concerns and suggestions, it is my job to make the superintendent aware of these concerns and suggestions. It is imperative for teachers and principals to resolve conflict and create an open and caring environment for parents and employees to communicate with them to enhance their respective schools. If success does not come at that level it should go to the central office level to the appropriate supervisor and ultimately the Superintendent. If all fails there, then the school board is the last resort at the local level to bring resolution to the matter. As a school board member, I will hold accountable and evaluate the superintendent on her effectiveness in listening, resolving conflict and the like and I will always make her aware of a concern or constructive suggestion that has come to my attention, but it will be her job to carry out the plan in bringing resolution to issues or making constructive modifications and not my job to tell her what to do from a micromanaging standpoint. This is in essence how decisions as a board member needs to be balanced in regards to input from teachers and parents.

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 50 years and I would characterize the quality of life as being good in regards to all of the positive steps we have made in all areas of the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan which was developed and approved by the Birmingham Planning Commission, which is also a part of my responsibility as a Birmingham Planning Commissioner. From my perspective as a citizen and as a member of the Birmingham Planning Commission, our greatest needs are to improve our schools, significantly decrease crime, and devote more attention to building up our neighborhoods in reference to street repair, lighting, blight and the like. I truly believe a top notch educational system will elevate the city to world class status as well, and with that being said education is the top priority.

13) What distinguishes you from the other candidates?

My experience and knowledge as an educator from being a teacher, assistant principal, personnel coordinator and hearing officer in Birmingham City Schools, coupled with my experience as a principal in Eufaula City Schools, and Superintendent in Midfield City and Greene County Schools distinguish me from other candidates. I have worked for elected and appointed school boards, trained them in their roles, and I have been certified by the Alabama Association of School Boards in Professional Development for School Boards, and the Birmingham Business Alliance, Birmingham Education Foundation and Alabama School Boards in the areas of finance, school board roles and ethical and legal issues. In addition, Alabama State Law requires that all Superintendents in this state be certified in finance and curriculum and I am also the only candidate that holds that distinction.

(14) What issue is not getting enough attention?

In my opinion, the issue in the Birmingham City Schools that is not getting enough attention is the lack of highly qualified and certified teachers teaching our children. Too many teachers are applying for alternative certification through the state department and in many cases they do not fulfill the 1

year or 3 year requirements of passing the state exam or completing coursework and thus have to be terminated. In cases like these you start over from scratch as a result of giving teachers an opportunity to become certified and also they have a bigger learning curve on the job as a result of not having the proper certification compared to someone who is highly qualified and properly certified. This issue is absolutely critical to the success of our schools and it is imperative that it receives more attention

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