



2020 | Maury County School Board Candidate Questionnaire



Columbia | Mt. Pleasant | Spring Hill  
**MAURY COUNTY**  
Chamber & Economic Alliance

# 2020 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

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## EARLY VOTING

July 17th - August 1st

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Saturday  
8:00 am to 12:00 pm

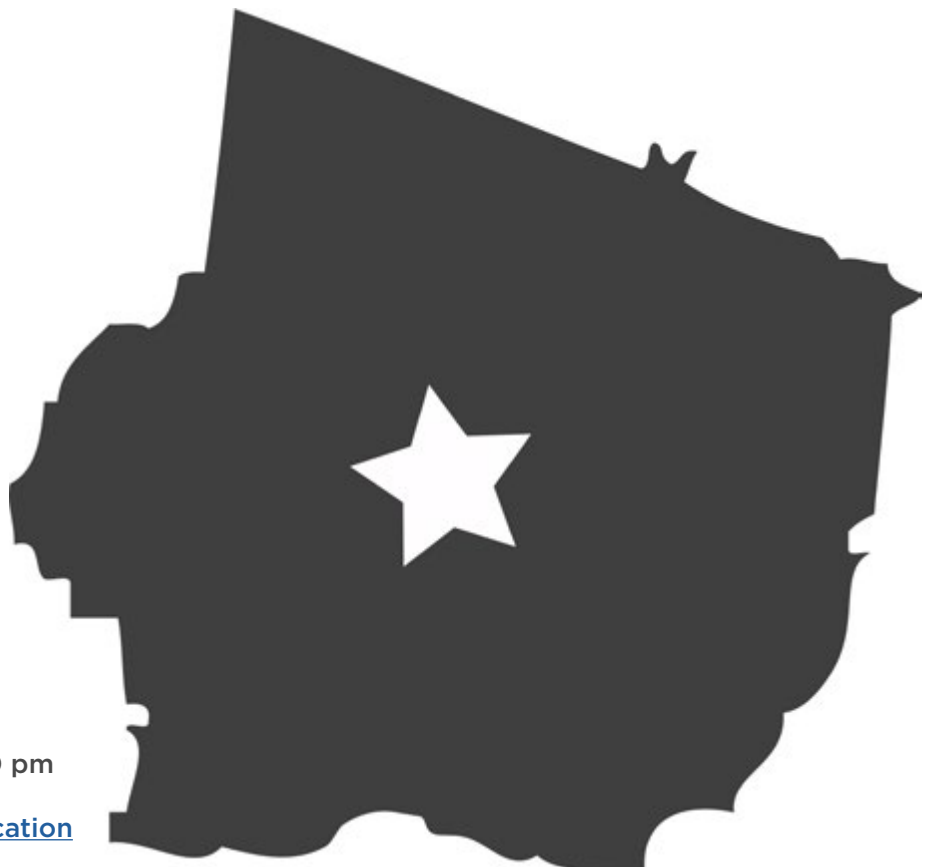
Election Commission Office  
1207A Tradewinds Drive  
Columbia, TN 38401

## ELECTION DAY

August 6th, 2020

Polls open from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

[Click here to find your voting location](#)



## DISTRICT 2 | BETTYE KINSER

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

I am a retired teacher having taught Art at CHS as well as Whitthorne and Carver Smith. I am a Mother and Grandmother of students who attended and graduated from Maury County School. I am a long time member of King's Daughters and Sons and served in many leadership roles on the Board of The King's Daughter's School including Board Chair. I volunteer as a Mentor for Compass a youth program through the partnership of the Juvenile Court and my Church, Westminster Presbyterian.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

I have served one term during which I served as Board Chair. We are moving forward with a new Superintendent and the Board will also experience some newly elected Board members. I want to continue on the Board so that all I have learned and experienced as a Board member be essential as we welcome change.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

My experience as a classroom teacher and how the actions of the Board impact students will help with my working relationship with our new Superintendent. Having served as Board Chair, I have been able to learn how important working together is to help move us forward

### 4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?

The number one priority today is to address the opening of our schools in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. We must educate our students while providing a quality education, and foremost keeping students and staff safe.

Also, providing students and teachers with the tools that are necessary to provide that quality education. That includes addressing textbooks curriculum, safety and being able to attract the best and brightest with a competitive salary.

We are growing as a County and a School System. That growth means we must continually address the maintenance and classrooms issues needed for schools to grow. That would include seeking funding for new schools and renovating the schools whose growth is most effected.

### 5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?

Success looks is measured from those indicators, test results, attendance data, graduation rates.

Although testing was suspended due to the Corona virus, our attendance and graduation has shown growth. Moving forward this an important part of the Board's expectation of our new Superintendent, increasing student achievement. During the last 4 years, we have built 2 new Schools and we have for 4 years requested funding for McDowell and Spring Hill High. Recently an sales tax referendum was passed to give needed funding to the Commission to fund our Capitol needs. Hopefully that will help with the much needed growth in the future.

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

There are still some Commissioners who lack trust in the School Board. It is essential for the Board to show that can work together by providing transparency and listening to the concerns and needs that will provide what is best for kids.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

I have always been open to listening to the concerns of the Community. I think it is important that Board Members are prepared, available and informed. That means studying agendas and always being present at Board meetings.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

The County Commission enacted the 1981 Act which placed School funding and financial management with both County and School funds under the same management with a Financial Management Board to oversee. As Board Chair I have served as a member of that Board. I feel as a Board member I need to continually study and understand our budget.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

I appreciate the support that Maury Alliance to the many educational needs of our County. Most recently Maury Alliance hosted a lunch for Business and Community leaders with the Candidates for Superintendent. That was an important event as we sought to make that selection. I think that communication is an important aspect of partnering with businesses and needs of Community. Through Maury Alliance we can work together on shared goals.

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## DISTRICT 4 | MICHAEL FULBRIGHT

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

I am married with two children in the Maury County School System. I am a licensed realtor with Keller Williams Realty. I have previously served on the County Commission for four years and have filled the recent vacancy on the school board for the past 9 months.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

I look forward to contributing to the strength of school system. I feel like I have a unique chance to build bridges between the County Commission and School Board.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

I have been in a variety of leadership roles throughout my career. I have learned that leadership involves listening, acting and evaluating. Collaborating with the new superintendent of schools will require a continuation of these skills.

### 4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?

We must increase student performance, teacher morale and financial responsibility within the central office. The finances are being improved by changes made while I was on the county commission with the financial management act. Teacher morale will be raised through proper management of finances and accounting. Clear, realistic expectations will increase both teacher morale and student performance

### 5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?

Success would include strong and appreciated teaching staff and increased family involvement in the schooling process.

### 6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?

Building trust comes through seeing desired results. Being involved with community activities and county commission meetings will increase this as well.

### 7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?

The board provides oversight of the decisions made in the central office. Advocate on behalf of children and families in the community. The board should also strive to be the entity that strives for common ground when divisions occur.

- 8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

The financial management act passed by the county commission in 2018 has addressed many of the issues that presented problems in the past.

- 9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

I am always open to input from business and civic leaders in our community. I look forward to being active in community events in order to be available for conversations on a daily basis.

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## DISTRICT 6 | MARLINA ERVIN

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

Simply put, I am a wife, mother, former teacher, entrepreneur, Christian, small farm operator, lover of life and community.

In detail, I am a Maury County Resident and product of the Maury County School System. Soon, I will celebrate my 20th wedding anniversary with my husband Van. Our marriage has been blessed with two children: Logan (15) and Callie (11). Both of our children attend Maury County Schools. Growing up here in Maury County, I have always cherished this county and its schools. With so many teachers making such a positive impact on my life growing up, I knew that I always wanted to be that same difference in the world. Therefore, I began teaching at twenty-three years old to fulfil said desire. However, with such decision, I gave up my first professional love which entailed the world of real estate, law, and mortgage. I went on to have a ten-year career as an educator with numerous awards in such including the county's Teacher of the Year. As life happened, my husband and I established a business amidst the downturn of the 2009 recession to keep him working when many businesses were folding. As the economy bounced back, our business grew, and we were blessed. Four years after starting such, with my working two full-time jobs both teaching and handling the financial side of the business, I had to decide on which path to follow. It made sense that I resign from teaching and become a permanent fixture running our business. We continued in said business until the second half of 2019 where opportunities presented for us to sell our company and expand into future growth opportunities within the larger firm that was acquiring such. However, wanting to pursue one of my two professional passions, I was at a crossroads on whether to grow into a new business venture all my own or return to the world of education. In the first quarter of 2020, I was able to serve in Maury County Schools as an interim teacher at my kids' school. It was an amazing opportunity that I cherish; however, life began hinting that a new business venture was in my future.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

It has always been important to me to give back to my community. I have often served in various service-related roles in the past. With many in the business community knowing my background as an educator, I have been known to state that if my community ever need me to serve on the board that it would be something that I would not be opposed to doing. In January of this year, I had some individuals in the community reach out to me explaining that there was likely going to be an open seat for my district with the School Board. I was asked to consider serving. This opportunity came at a time when I was unsure of my professional future; however, after much prayer and heartfelt consideration, I felt I was being called to run. As a native Maury County resident who has a devout love for this community, I want to assure that opportunities are available not only for my two children but future generations at large.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how



### **will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?**

First, the fact that I have been an educator, I believe, will be especially helpful in my position on the board. I believe that many of our county's educators will feel free to express their concerns and needs with me because they know that I have been in their position. I hope that my presence will be another positive factor into boosting teacher morale.

Second, I am a parent to students actively attending Maury County Schools. I believe I will be relatable to the concerns of parents and students as they arise.

Third, owning my own business, I believe, will make me relatable to administrators and the director. I have had to make tough choices in the past. I've been in the position of managing employees, making customers happy, and having to make all things work financially. Additionally, I was responsible for the timeliness and accuracy of many various tax filings. Such things are critical to the success of a business, and I understand all these dynamics firsthand.

### **4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?**

1. Financial Accountability – Mistakes of the past have led to a lack of trust within the community of the School System's ability to be good stewards and managers of taxpayer dollars. We must restore such trust. Being a former business owner, who has also had to be accountable for financial management, I understand the importance of the accuracy of such. Likewise, I also understand the obstacles that can come into play. However, we must establish successful programs, procedures, and overall operation practices to make Maury County Schools fiscally sound.

2. Teacher Morale - Teachers are the heartbeat of our school system. Anyone who has ever sat in a classroom can tell you a teacher can make or break a child's whole learning experience. Often, the morale of a teacher is reflected in their classroom and can trickle down to their students. We want positive, dynamic teachers who are vested in the forward growth of our students and community. I have found that becomes a much more natural process when teachers feel valued, heard, and respected as the professionals that they are. Likewise, we must assure the financial integrity of all things related to our faculty and staff. We do not need to give good employees reasons to leave our district for another. Some of the past mismanagement of employee pay and benefits has cast a dark shadow amongst several. We must work to assure our teachers that these things are rectified. Likewise, we must listen to our teachers and give them the resources they need; still yet, we must trust their instructional dynamic to allow them to reach the unique learning personalities of their students to yield in maximum achievement.

3. Student Achievement - Maury County student achievement has not reflected the capabilities of our citizens. We are a very capable people, yet we have scored low in the past. I believe a lot of this has to do with a combination of factors. First, restoring teacher morale, I believe, will yield in a trickle-down effect to our students. Second, we must prioritize the funding of resources and tools that can assist us in moving our students forward. The Covid Pandemic has highlighted a strong potential of our need to be resourceful to reach students even if in a non-traditional



setting. I believe over the next four years we will see a massive expansion of technology partnered with our learning. We must be prepared to tackle this likely change. Third, I believe children are growing up in a different time than many of us adults can relate to. The pressures of social media, recreational drugs, and sometimes even a lack of a supportive home environment has some of our children facing emotional challenges that I firmly believe interfere with the learning process. I believe we must find resources and avenues to serve the emotional intelligence of our students in order to achieve highest potential gains both academically and for society at large.

**5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?**

The most hopeful of a successful term would yield in student achievement resulting in maximum gains. My hope is for Maury County Schools to be the most improved of all districts throughout the state with hopefully a data trend line going as close to straight up as possible. Likewise, I would hope that community trust has been restored to the school system for various issues including financial management, student achievement, student opportunity, and employee relations.

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

Trust begins with honesty. I hope to be fully transparent with all of those listed above. I fully believe that by doing what is right, listening to stakeholders, being honest about the reasoning for decisions made, acknowledging failures and thus looking for ways to correct such will allow the concerns listed above to heal. Great leaders do not dictate; they serve. I firmly believe when vested individuals see a humble, servant-leader giving their best, though imperfect, all else will fall into place.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

I believe the most important role of a school board member is to simply be a listening ear to all community stakeholders and then be proactive with the information. In my opinion, a good school board member serves as a bridge between different stakeholders to move the school system and the community forward.

A successful board will ultimately be an advocate to assure schools receive the resources they need to be successful while still yet being a good steward of the county's funds.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

I believe a lot of the financial errors of the past could've been avoided with planning and priority being given to the accuracy of such. I understand it is easy for the day to day tasks of financial management to easily be swept under the rug for lack of urgency. However, I also believe that lack of prioritization is ultimately what lead to our system experiencing these financial

failures, penalties, and overall mismanagement. Personally, I believe a routine schedule of those tasked with such duties and upper levels of management should transpire to assure evidence of accountability and accuracy. Additionally, for processes that run automatically due to programmed software, I personally believe a percentage of said calculations should be audited by staff to assure the reliability of such. Ultimately, the system must develop a system to stay ahead of and on top of financial matters. Issues handled correctly on the front end would've avoided the pitfalls we experienced in the past.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

I've been in business, and I understand the need for businesses to partner with the school system to find employees to fill their needs. Most businesses want to hire local, hard-working, capable staff. The goal of any school system is to produce productive citizens. I've been in both roles of educator and employer. I'm hopeful as I embark on future business ventures, while also hopefully serving as a school board member, I can develop ongoing relations with community stakeholders and business leaders to keep the dialogue alive and developing. I know that many businesses looking to move into our market look at many factors, but one which also includes student achievement. We want to make sure we are giving the people of Maury County every opportunity for success. I am hopeful that my contributions to the school board, while also being a collaborate force with business minded individuals and organizations, can foster said relationships and yield in many opportunities for our citizens.

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## DISTRICT 6 | EDDIE HICKMAN

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

As a career educator I have been devoted to education for most of my life. As an administrator I was loyal to my employees and always supported the school. My guiding principle was to be firm, fair, and friendly with everyone. At the central office I maintained an open door policy and welcomed anyone who wished to see me. I loved being with the students as I coached or taught, and I never forgot what it was to be a classroom teacher.

I am a lifelong resident of Maury County. Born at King's Daughters in 1950, I grew up on Dimple Court in Columbia. My education began at Highland Park Elementary and continued at Whitthorne Junior High School. In 1969 I graduated from Central High School. I enjoyed playing on the basketball and baseball teams during high school. After graduating my goal was to return to Central to teach and coach.

First I attended Columbia State but then transferred to David Lipscomb University in Nashville. In 1973, I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation from Lipscomb. I began teaching and coaching at Hampshire Unit School in the fall of 1973 and stayed there until 1976. During my time at Hampshire, the girls' basketball team made an appearance at the TSSAA State Basketball Tournament. In 1976 I took a teaching and coaching position at Mt. Pleasant High School where my team made an appearance at the TSSAA Sub State Basketball tournament. In 1985 I transferred to Whitthorne Junior High School to coach and teach. There I had several successful boys' basketball teams. When the ninth grade was moved to Central High School in the fall of 1988, I transferred again to teach physical education and coach. My next teaching position was as the boys' physical education instructor, and I was the assistant coach of the 1992 Varsity Boys' Basketball Team that was state runner up.

My Masters of Education was earned from Trevecca Nazarene University in 1992. The next year I became the assistant principal at Central High School. As assistant principal, I established remedial programs for the 9-12 grads, initiated the School Resource Officer Program, requested metal instructional building in lieu of portable classrooms, supervised upgrading the auditorium and the gymnasium, painted the entire school, replaced all the school's floors, installed new lockers and created a system to reprogram lockers every year.

In July of 1997, when Glen Stewart retired, I applied for the principal's position at Central High School. In August, I became principal of my alma mater. As principal I established friendly parent program for CHS, acquired Navy ROTC and hired instructors, initiated a nationally recognized mass communication class with a televised program called Pride TV, held annual Spring Arts celebration featuring visual and performing arts, brought the nine/two calendar to Maury County Schools, increased graduation rates, added additional AP classes, built and nurtured a relationship with the school board and county commission, became the educational advisor for the Tennessee School Resource Officers' Association, affiliated with the National SRO and received training on school and community safety, and approved Cowboy Up (a suicide prevention program) for our system.

In 2004, I became Director of Maury County Schools. As Director of Schools, I supervised the construction and the opening of Marvin Wright Elementary and Spring Hill Middle School, held classes for prospective administrators, provided retreats for board members to know each other and to share ideas informally, spoke at county wide in-services, rezoned fifth graders to middle school because of overcrowding, continued district accreditation with Advanced Ed, publically recognized students, staff, teachers and administrators for their accomplishments, initiated the I Can Learn math program, continued planning for a new Central High School, devoted resources to maintenance at all schools and hired a supervisor for facilities, provided factual information for the media, followed carefully both state and federal regulations, consulted the school board's lawyer about issues on a regular basis, maintained an open door policy for everyone, always supported teachers and staff, contracted with outside firms for custodial and lawn care, hired a public relations administrator. I attended MCEA's monthly meetings, trained in collaborative conferencing, participated in educational facilities forum, and received regular annual training with the Tennessee Association of School Business Officials, trained in Project Lead the Way, yearly financial training for business personnel, central office/school bookkeepers through the Tennessee Comptroller's office.

In 2015 I retired as Director of Maury County Schools. For forty-two years I had served in the Maury County School System as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal and Director of Schools.

After I retired, I spend my time on Mockingbird Hill Farm on the Carter's Creek Pike. I am active in the Columbia Breakfast Rotary Club, and chairman of the scholarship committee. Also I am Chairman of the Advanced Ed (Cognia) Board for the state of Tennessee and an Educational Advisor to the TNSRO Board. For the Beech Grove Church of Christ I serve as an elder and the treasurer.

**2. Why are you running for school board?**

My decision to run for the school board grew out a desire to use my years of experience in education to help the school board become more effective. Even though I have retired, I still wish to be involved in helping our school system become successful.

**3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?**

My experience and training at all levels of education have allowed me to learn the intricacies of working with all those involved in the system, especially the county commission. Working with the new superintendent will be an opportunity to share my experiences and support him as he endeavors to improve our school system.

**4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?**

As I see our situation, the three top priorities are (1) financial accountability, (2) successful academic achievement, and (3) improvement in teacher morale.

Financial accountability can be achieved by following the guidelines of the federal, state and local government. Successful academic achievement is possible by balancing academics with career education. Improvement in teacher morale is imperative and can be accomplished by valuing teachers and treating them with respect and acknowledging their daily contributions to Maury County's students.

**5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?**

If my term is successful, Maury County Schools will again be recognized as an exemplary school system. Parents will want their students to attend our schools, and teachers will want to come here or stay here to teach.

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

Trust among the board, the superintendent and the county commission can be achieved through team work and honesty. Each of these entities must be assured that their ideas and money are dedicated to pupil success and wise use of resources. Each entity must respect and know each other's roles and responsibilities.

Community expectations for academics need to be addressed because so much innovation and technology many have ignored basic skills. Keeping the public aware of the accomplishments as well as the weaknesses of our system will insure trust.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

As a good board member I will have the responsibility to support the actions of the board as their decisions meet the needs of our school system. Presently the board as a whole must establish credibility with the commission, administrative staff, the teachers, the students, parents and other stakeholders Supporters of the school system need to know that the rules set forth by state and federal law are followed and that anyone who chooses to ignore those laws will be held accountable.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

Financial management is achieved by following the TCA law, the rules and regulations set by the comptroller's office, and school board policy. The board must hold those who spend the money accountable. Again, anyone who chooses to ignore the laws must be held responsible and properly admonished or dismissed.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district**

**to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

Previously Maury Alliance has been a valued partner of Maury County Schools. Recently the Alliance has been misled into believing that the school system was doing well until the test scores were released. If we are to have an enhanced relationship with the Alliance, both the school superintendent and the board must recognize not only the system's strengths but also its weakness. In recruiting business and families to move here, it is necessary that we tell the truth about our schools and see what the master plans are to improve at all levels. Together the board can use the assistance of the Alliance to decide what resources are needed and how to obtain funding from the county commission.

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## DISTRICT 8 | GREG HANNERS

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

Originally from north Alabama, I have lived in Maury County for 20 years. I grew up near Hartselle, AL on a small farm, and attended the University of Alabama where I got a BA in English & German. I work as an HR Benefits Manager in Nashville (currently from home). I have been married for 33 years, and we have one son. My wife is a teacher at Central High and my son (currently a sophomore at UTK) attended McDowell Elementary, Cox Middle and Spring Hill High. My wife and I have been very involved in PTO, Band Parents, Fall Festival, etc. as parents active in our schools. Both my wife's family and my own have many public school teachers – among others, my brother is a high school history teacher and my father-in-law is a retired principal – so I kind of feel like public schools are part of our family. I have also participated in Scouting as an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 103 for 8 years, and during graduate studies at the University of Texas, I taught English Composition and German courses (several years ago), so I have a little personal experience working with youth and teaching.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

I am running primarily because I heard that Denny Beavers was retiring. I believe especially now, in a time of social and economic upheaval and leadership (superintendent) change in MCPS, we need strong, steady guidance from our school board and a focus on delivering results for students, parents and teachers. I think our School Board also needs to accept constructive criticism and use it to improve.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

In my career in business I have worked in two Fortune 500 companies and I have been a 6 Sigma project manager, as well as an examiner for the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE - the state quality award) and the Baldrige National Quality Award, so I know what excellence looks like and how to measure success. I also understand that visionary leadership and effective two-way communication across the organization are the keys to implementing any plan.

### 4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?

Increase the % of students who read at grade level (especially in elementary)  
Increase our high school graduation rate  
Improve teacher morale

I would like to see MCPS use the TNCPE Performance Excellence model to improve and standardize our processes. We know the WHAT we want to do. We need to figure out the HOW. Benchmarking



other successful school districts would be an important part of that learning. Mr. Morrison started us down this path, with Mr. Gaines' assistance, several years ago, but when Mr. Morrison left the Board, it kind of fell by the wayside. I'd like us to get back on that path to excellence.

**5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?**

If we have improved our reading scores each year, increased our graduation rate each year, and improved teacher morale each year, that would be my idea of success – especially if we have learned how to improve and sustain the gain!

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

I believe the Board needs to know our stakeholders (students, teachers, parents, etc.) and their needs, so that we can present those needs to the county commission and effectively represent the school system. I expect the next 2-3 years will be very challenging economically for our county and state, and it is key that the Board work closely with the superintendent and county commission so that we are all pulling in the same direction. Trust is built over time, but it begins with having a clear and compelling rationale for our budget requests to the county commission.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

The most important role for me or any board member is as an effective listener. We need to be able to take feedback from students, teachers, parents, administrators, business and political leaders, county tax payers – basically all our customers – and use that to make MCPS more effective and successful. Good ideas can come from anywhere, so listening is really crucial.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

I think the number one financial solution is accountability for responding to audit findings - either in the school system or in county government. I believe a failure to respond and fix things that state and external auditors identify as broken is the opposite of sound financial management. Not acting on the advice of experts has not produced good outcomes at times in the past, but we can easily fix that.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

Maury Alliance has to be a key stakeholder for MCPS, because the Alliance represents the employers who will hire these students when they enter the workforce and begin contributing to the economic success of Maury County. If the Alliance has ideas about how MCPS can improve, I

know the Board is keen to hear them. As for myself, I would love to have a representative of the Alliance attend Board meetings and provide their input, and also have a Board member attend Alliance meetings. The key is that all our stakeholders actually want the same thing – we all want every child to have the best opportunity to succeed in our public schools. We just have to keep the lines of communication open.

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## DISTRICT 8 | AUSTIN HOOPER

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Austin Hooper, I'm 21 and attend UT Chattanooga majoring in political Science and minoring in philosophy.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

The school board is the most intimate form of public service, we have the chance to directly change our communities by providing strong and responsible leadership. This capacity for change is the primary reason I'm running. There's a quote from National Treasure where Nicholas Cage says "those who have the ability, have the responsibility", this quote has stuck in my head ever since the first time I watched the movie and has become a personal motto for me.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

I've lead small groups of children when I worked at the boys and girls club of Maury county as a youth development coordinator, I've coordinated multiple group projects throughout my years in school, including writing case briefs for competitions or actually proposing legislation to the city of Chattanooga. So the experience is all linked together, politics is the same animal no matter what level you're in, someone makes decisions and you have to work with those and the school board is no different. Like politics, regular everyday jobs have decision makers that you have to deal with and I've had many jobs over summers, Lowes, OfficeMax, and Home Depot.

### 4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?

The top 3 priorities for our county is to protect what's working and that's unit schools, secondly we have to make sure we use the peoples money responsibly, and lastly we have to let teachers teach again Maury county can and should be one of the top academic counties in the state. I can help make these goals come true by being the loud unwavering voice for the people who know the benefits of unit schools, speaking up about needless spending that serves only parts instead of the whole, and by working with the new superintendent to come up with a plan that lets teachers actually teach instead of collecting data.

### 5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?

Success can look very different from what's in my head, but overall success is when I can come home to the 8th district and talk to the parents, children, and grandparents and not have to give out excuses. A successful term is having the people I represent know that their voice was heard in the school board meetings.

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

Working with the board will be the job and that's something I expect everyone on the board to do, the new superintendent is going to hopefully bring about some much needed change and I'm excited to get to know him and his ideas. As far as the county commission I expect to have a great working relationship with them, and I would start by calling for the board to move our meetings to a different day so we as a board can go to the county commissioners meeting and vice versa.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

The most important role for a school board member is to consolidate the voices of your district and present them in a persuasive and decisive manner at the meetings, and if things become complicated be able to simplify the information and make it known to your district. As a whole the board needs to be able to think clearly and efficiently in order to get plans out in time, like the reopening of schools, things that are important the board should be calling special meetings nightly until they come up with a plan.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

We need to come in as a board and go through everything on the budget and make new decisions, most people know when you take the time to go back over what you're spending you always find some things that you can cut. Moving forward we need to get more organized and get a better grip on the outstanding problems that are going to cost a lot of money and start planning now instead of later down the road.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

Working with the Maury alliance will provide us new opportunities as a board and be able to provide more for our kids. Partnership with Maury county businesses should always be sought after by the school board, any time we can offer more to our kids we should jump to take that chance. This partnership would be cyclical in its benefits because schools doing better brings in better businesses and so forth.

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## DISTRICT 10 | JULIE GORDON

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Julie Gordon. I'm happily married and have 3 children. Our family loves living in Tennessee. Some of my hobbies include photography, traveling, flying, and camping as a family.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

I decided to run for school board because I believe I could be a voice for District 10. I am committed and firm to only trying to achieve what is best for our student population and ensure tax dollars are used in a conservative fashion.

I would like to be a voice that promotes improvement of literacy scores and overall educational scores ranked by the state. Currently our MCPS scores are in the bottom portion of the state. This has a negative impact on our community as a whole. As one of the fastest growing counties in the state, our concern must be about the education of our children. We must provide education that allows for greater ranking in competitive scoring against other county school systems in our state, especially for secondary educational opportunities. I am extremely concerned for the lacking literacy proficiency our student population has. In touring our Mount Pleasant Middle School I was shocked at the low benchmarks set for the student population. I would like to see more programs in place to improve these scores. I would like to see equality of education for all.

Broadband Internet... Yes I've been talking about broadband for a few years. I've found one hand doesn't know what the other has or how it functions. Each body of government I've gone to in Maury County has clearly stated they are not responsible for implementation of further utilities. Yet, in the last 5 years our schools have opted to go digital. This only has created an inequality of education for students who are not fortunate enough to live in an area that offers internet, or in a family who can not afford internet. While our school board has opted to start to replace schoolbooks, what decline of education has the students in the middle of this time period experienced?

Simply put, Maury County taxpayers deserve a better return on their investment in education from their hard earned tax dollars. Ask any parent and they will most likely say they would love nothing more than their children to return to Maury County after college and be gainfully employed. Or for those who are not on track for college to find quality skill trade opportunities in our county. First step is reforming our educational processes. Without the proper tools (namely literacy), how will this happen?

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

I have always been active in the community that I have lived in. We moved here to Mount

Pleasant, Tennessee 4 years ago and I have taken time to learn the culture and community to best determine how I could use my time and talent to further enhance our community. In northern Michigan, I was a Board Director for a non-profit at risk youth programs that serviced 13 counties. It was during that time period that I learned much about how to lead and move a non-profit and large organization forward.

Professionally, I worked in management for a Fortune 100 company. My role was in management and cultivating increased and sustainable revenue paths. Much success came through using SBI impact tools (Standard/Behavior/Impact/Plan)... Keeping the narrative of topic to a clean and simple format. Using these methods it kept each item of key concern to strictly the issue at hand, leaving out emotions. Onward, forward this would be a key tool that would help with any organizational decision making processes.

Success within our Maury County schools will only occur if there is a concentrated effort of teamwork between the school board, county commission and superintendent. Once there is unity and increased student scores, I do believe the community would have better trust of the educational process here in our county. I believe the new superintendent needs a clear structure of expectations and benchmarks. Allowing accountability with the benchmarks set. Even with the recent superintendents yearly evaluation, it's my understanding that the school board graded his performance before the state scores were readily available. How does that happen? Especially if it's a benchmark... I believe it is the time to start a clean slate with the proper structure of expectations and evaluations. If these structures and benchmarks are not put into place at the onset of employment, I do believe at the end of his contract, we as a county will witness another un-renewed contract. The hiring process takes time and money. Both of which Maury County can not continue to afford each contract year.

**4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?**

My top 3 priorities for Maury County schools are as follows:

1. Equality in Education for all.
2. Competitive Test Scores and higher proficiency rates, especially for literacy.
3. Transparency and Accountability for the board, the staff and student scores.

I would like to see the people of Maury County to receive a return in their hard earned investment. We will see a return in that investment when the school scores increase and there is higher benchmarks of proficiency expected at every grade level.

**5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?**

Success looks like transparency of how and why decisions are made. Implementation of keeping constituents informed of how and why votes were made. If elected, I can not promise to vote as each person would like me to, however, I can promise to explain my votes and keep an open door. I will also say I owe no political favors and have no family to hide behind. I am not a native to Maury County but love the area and am only committed to the success of student population and our community in education. Simply put, higher education equals less crime.

**6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

I believe the most effective use of working, as a team to achieve success, would consist of mutual transparency and accountability. Currently there seems to be much mistrust between the community and the school board, also between the school board and the county commission. Transparency and accountability are two main areas that I see need to change. In an effort to promote transparency, perhaps even the school board offering up moving their meetings to a non conflicting day so county commissioners could attend would be a good start. Promotion of the school board meetings should be offered to the community instead of trying to discourage residents to attend.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

The most important individual role a District 10 Board Member should have is knowing and understanding the struggles and successes our District 10 is experiencing. This takes time and effort in communicating with the educational leadership and parents within the district. Followed by communicating with other district board members to work in conjunction as a team to achieve better results as a whole board.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

Since the implementation of the financial management act of Maury County and the financial management board is in place, I hope that will end any controversy regarding school finances. It's a great step in the right direction. If elected, I as a school board member will continue to support the Financial Management Board of Maury County and their decisions.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

I believe that transparency is number one. When partnering with Maury Alliance all marketing must be 100% on target. There is absolutely no room to create suspicion with the tax paying general public, which include, parents, community members and businesses. We have much work to do in changing that mind set. I have read many marketing tools used by different organizations in relation to the schools and it has been inconsistent information. This only lends to mistrust. I have seen many areas of conflict where there should have not been. Perhaps any promotion of school agendas should always run thru the school board as a whole before promotion.

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## DISTRICT 10 | WAYNE LINDSEY

 [Click here for a brief video interview with the candidate](#)



### 1. Tell us about yourself.

I'm married to my wife of 16 years, a father of 3 Maury County students, a life-long resident of Maury County, and a product of Maury County Schools. After high school, I attended Columbia State for two years and then transferred to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville where I graduated with a BS in Plant Sciences and Landscape Systems.

### 2. Why are you running for school board?

I have 3 children in the system so I have a vested interest. I think I bring a common sense approach that can help move our system forward.

### 3. How does your life experience translate to leading essential, complex organizations and how will you use that experience to work with the new superintendent?

Having served on the board in 2012 through 2016, I have a good understanding of board and school operations as well as a clear understanding of the budget issues and processes. Also serving during the first year of the last superintendent I was able to see both the good and the bad as he learned on the job.

### 4. What do you see as the top 3 priorities for Maury County schools and how would you contribute to accomplishing those priorities?

- Improve classroom performance: Support Mr. Hickman as he attempts to bring about change as well as hold him accountable and relay the board's expectations to him.
- Improve facilities: We have a number of aging buildings and athletic facilities that are need of repair and updating. We have to develop a plan and stick to it in order to improve the appearance of our school facilities. We as a board must find the revenue and funds to complete these tasks without always asking for an increase in taxes.
- Repair the working relationship with the County Commission: There appears to be some mistrust between these two bodies currently. The school board must work toward mending this divide by regaining the confidence of our funding body.

### 5. At the conclusion of your four-year term, what does success look like?

I hope to see a reenergized staff that is seeing great strides within our system. We are starting down a new road with a new superintendent and that brings excitement. I hope in 4 years that excitement remains because if it does then we will see an improving school system.

### 6. How would you work with the full Board, the superintendent, and the county commission

**to build trust, ensure pupil success and financial stability, and align with community expectations?**

Proper communication is the basis for success when dealing with other individuals and groups. Poor communication is where a lot of mistrust originates. It's important to fully communicate all needs, desires, and expectations so everyone can be on the same page. We may not always agree but with good communication everyone will at least have a better understanding of all situations.

**7. What do you see as your most important role as a member of the Maury County school board and what do you see the most important role of the Board as a whole?**

I believe that my role as an individual member and the role of the board as a whole are exactly the same. We should always make decisions that are in the best interest of every citizen and every student in Maury County. Problems arise when we fail to do what's best for the whole and only focus on a small group or individual. What's best for me may not necessarily be what's best for the whole system and I have but self aside when it comes to decision making.

**8. The financial management of the district has been a point of emphasis for several years. What solutions do you see and how can you contribute to those?**

The introduction of the new financial act removes a lot of burden from the school system when it comes to finances but the superintendent and department heads must be held accountable for the management of the school system budget. We as a board must be willing to put in the work to ensure that Maury County is getting the most out of every dollar.

**9. Educating our young people and a successful school district are high priorities in economic development and livability. Historically, Maury Alliance has partnered with the school district to attain better results. How would you enhance that partnership and advocate with Maury Alliance for positive outcomes?**

Tapping into Alliance members as a resource to improve education is beneficial for both the school system and future employers. Business are able to bring real world experiences into the classroom that the school system alone may not be able to provide. A better student makes a better employee which makes for a better Maury County.

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# 2020 COUNTY GENERAL/STATE PRIMARY ELECTION

## EARLY VOTING

July 17th - August 1st

Monday - Friday  
8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Saturday  
8:00 am to 12:00 pm

Election Commission Office  
1207A Tradewinds Drive  
Columbia, TN 38401

## ELECTION DAY

August 6th, 2020

Polls open from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm

[Click here to find your voting location](#)



## GENERAL BALLOT

Circuit Judge - Part III - 22nd Judicial District (unexpired term)  
Public Defender - 22nd Judicial District (unexpired term)  
County Commission - 1st District (unexpired term)  
Assessor of Property  
Superintendent of Roads  
School Board Members - Districts 2,4,6,8 & 10  
Constable - 4th District (unexpired term)

## PRIMARY BALLOT

US Senate  
US House - Districts 4 & 7  
Tennessee Senate - District 28  
Tennessee House - Districts 64 & 69