District 4 School Board Candidates Respond--

The FOR Issues Questionnaire

The Aim Higher subcommittee of FOR is continuing to expand its advocacy work in the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). As part of that work, we asked the eight school board candidates in the JCPS school district 4 race (to fill a vacated seat in southwest Jefferson County) to respond to 13 questions in six different issue areas—equity in academic outcomes; experiencing and benefitting from diversity; proactive behavior management and suspension reduction; student privacy; equitable college and career readiness; and management, budget, and funding priorities. Despite busy schedules, four have responded. Filing for the November election was a pre-requisite for being considered for the temporary appointment by the JCPS Board. Some of the other four candidates may have decided to not actively campaign after the board appointed Joe Marshall.

Because of space limitations in our FORsooth monthly newspaper, we printed responses for only two of questions—1) how to reduce learning gaps and 2) whether JCPS should increase diversity and take all steps necessary to assure we no longer have any very high-poverty schools. Below are: the complete questionnaire/background document itself; the answers to all the questions from the candidates responding; and their bios, pictures and campaign websites.

More information and/or endorsements are available on the candidates’ individual websites. Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, the Jefferson County Teachers Association, and other community organizations and media may also have helpful insights on their websites or Facebook pages.

You can find your school district number by going to:
https://www.jefferson.kyschools.us/about/leadership-and-organization/board-education/board-member-district-map

Only those living in District 4 can vote in this year’s school board contest. However, we developed this survey as—in part—an educational exercise. Each question is preceded by background information and research data that we suspect many candidates, and most readers, might not know. We think the information is useful and important to all county residents—public schools build our community’s future.

The 2019 JCPS Board candidate responses:

**Equity in academic outcomes**

For our city and society to prosper, JCPS must help develop in its students the skills and commitment to create a just and peaceful community, one with dignity and opportunity for every human being—regardless of race, gender, economic status, ability, etc.

The current five-year plan adopted by the Board—Vision2020—explicitly calls for equity, i.e. that “all students receive an education that gives them what they need to thrive in school through differentiated
supports focused on removing social factors as a predictor of success”. However, average reading and math scores for students of color and all students from low-income households continue to lag significantly behind more privileged students on state and national achievement tests. In some groups, the combined math and reading % proficiency scores are half or less of those from more advantaged groups.

There are answers for this, if the community will is there.

Research demonstrates, for example, that early interventions--such as PreK-3rd grade literacy programs and intensive pre-school cognitive and socio-emotional learning--help eliminate learning gaps before they are entrenched. Smaller class sizes allow more personalized help for underperforming students. JCPS has such programs, but they are being piloted in a fraction of the schools or target populations.

There are other initiatives being piloted in JCPS schools around math skills, literacy and other content issues. Magnet programs and the new high school Academies approach also increase engagement and passion for learning in students—both of which are critical to their academic growth. Providing family resource supports also helps many students to be able to come to school emotionally and physically more ready to concentrate on learning.

Vision 2020 also places a great deal of JCPS’ hopes for a major overall improvement as well as a reduction in outcome gaps on the student-centered “deep learning” approach. It focuses on combining the teaching and assessment of skills and dispositions for complex problem-solving tasks in a way tailored to an individual student’s culture and learning modes.

These and other proven interventions can help students while saving JCPS and other government/college budget dollars in future years.

1. **What programs and/or other changes would you champion/accelerate to close the persistent inter-group achievement/learning gaps? How would you measure progress of those programs in a way that individual students who struggle are the focus of authentic remedial help, not just prepping for and re-taking high-stakes testing?**

JOE GOODIN: BIO--Growing up in Southwest Jefferson County, I have lived and kept a southwest address for most of my life. I am a retired, career military senior leader with extensive administrative, management, logistical, and fiscal experience in building and developing organizations within government and military organizations. My JCPS experience began in the sixth-grade and I am a graduate of Valley
High School and co-founder of its Alumni Association. I hold a BA-Business Administration, McKendree University with post-graduate work; and several A.A.S. degrees in Computer Information Systems & Technology, Applied Sciences (Electronics & Communications), and Meteorology with the Community College of the Air Force. My children attended and graduated from JCPS and my grandchildren have either graduated or are currently enrolled in JCPS. I have had years of experience in JCPS classrooms working as a former para-educator in Special Education and remain a current-active JCPS classroom volunteer. We are JCPS!
www.goodinfor4.org

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Funneling JCPS’s socioeconomic student population into a comprehensive plan or strategy finds academic achievement by our most disadvantaged students persistently below standard. Magnet and traditional programs, once thought to help alleviate performance shortcomings, succeed in widening the achievement gap; limiting enrollments in these exclusive schools will extremely unpopular as will suggesting opening enrollment to include local, neighborhood students. JCPS may be on the verge of something that will positively impact low performance metrics with the “schools of color” concept. The majority of stakeholders may mistrust them but I strongly believe they will work. We’re responsible for doing what’s right to save our disadvantaged kids in the system, not just our individual district, and that calls for a worldview that mirrors who we are today. Afro-centric schools and curriculum would be “magnet schools” like we have in place—and do we not accept them? Should we embrace new approaches and unconventional means to an end, testing and measurement is archaic. The failure of corporate boards when problems arise is they don’t listen to their stakeholders. Southwest Jefferson County isn’t being heard because it hasn’t had representation that demands the board to listen.

JOE MARSHALL: BIO-- I grew up in rural Kentucky in Anderson County, attending public school from K-12. Upon graduation, I attended The University of Louisville, GO CARDS! Not only have I attended public school for the entirety of my academic career, I began working for JCPS as a Substitute Teacher in 2008 before completing my Alternative Certification in 2011 and becoming a classroom teacher for the District.

www.joemarshallky.com

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If we are going to begin to reverse the disenfranchisement of our students that has been done over the course of decades, it is going to take a bold approach to meet both short-term and long-term educational
needs. I support a short-term plan focused on directing funding to Accelerated Learning Schools that increases support staff and classroom teachers through a message of autonomy, to meet the high demand of one-on-one instruction. With more qualified staff in a building, this will decrease the student to teacher ratio and provide for more intentional deeper learning instruction. By providing autonomy for these teachers and educators we will work together with them as we develop innovative ways to increase instruction for our most vulnerable populations. The long-term solution will be to continue to utilize our diverse population as an asset, screen children early for medical and social service needs, and grow the culture and climate of our central office to be more engaging and family friendly.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: BIO-- I am originally from Cincinnati, Ohio where I went to public school my whole career. After moving to Louisville, Kentucky 2002 I attended Jefferson Community College & The University of Louisville. As a mother of 3 JCPS Graduates from Valley High School and Pleasure Ridge Park, I have been an active parent their whole career so it feels like I have worked for public schools in my many roles including PTA, SBDM Council, family and teacher advocate. I also ran a successful community funded Arts & Activism Summer Youth Camp for 5 years. It was for 11 to 17 year olds and they were all JCPS students. I have had no formal employment with JCPS. No one in my family has worked for JCPS. I have 6 children, 3 are graduates and 3 are currently enrolled in elementary, junior high and high school.

www.shameka4district4.com

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Closing the achievement gap needs to first be a district priority. I believe mentors and resources are critical to the success of students. I would be an advocate for early screening measures to identify students who are at risk, or who are already falling behind. I would want to equip our FRISKY officers with the tools to be able to provide families with wrap-around support and connect them with social service agencies in the community. Teachers would need to participate in enhanced cultural competency professional developments and we would need to look at how we assess our students as it should not be a one-size-fits-all standard.

CASSANDRA RYAN: BIO-- I attended Male High School. I have volunteered in every position I could in my sons’ schools. All of my sons have attended JCPS. My mother has worked as a Teacher for 33 years before she retired.

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My suggestion for this is to continue to hire minority Teachers and adequately train the Teachers already in the school system. How ALL children do not learn the same way. As a Mom of four African American boys I would say they are all different but one thing they have in common is they are visual. The STEM/STEAM must be a true part of the school curriculum daily and not just one day a week as a special area. The Arts program needs to be used to bring out our children's gifts and make it appealing in sounds and styles for all races. Lastly, have true after-school tutoring to assist our children's reading levels. We must make sure ALL schools welcome families in the school. Unfortunately, my experience had been the opposite and our kiddos need to know we are working together for their success. I would measure by their attendance, parental involvement with the programs, the collaboration between the schools and the families. Lastly, I would give them the test and see even the slightest improvement as a WIN!

Inter-group gap reduction is not simply a matter of increasing the learning growth rates of students in a demographic group. Gap reduction requires underperforming groups of students to improve faster than more privileged demographic groups. If we want all groups’ performance to keep rising, we cannot “rob Peter to pay Paul” and succeed.

Six years ago, a KY Department of Education consultant’s report indicated that the JCPS annual budget was approximately $200 million per year below what would be considered adequate, based on comparison with successful districts around the country that matched to our student demographics. Reductions in Federal and state funding (on inflation-adjusted basis) since then would suggest we have not improved that situation much, despite almost annual 4% increases in property tax revenues. Property tax revenues—after state SEEK adjustment—account for only about a quarter of General Fund revenues.

Property tax revenue increases above 4% are subject to recall, and no Board of Education has tested those waters. They are the single major source of JCPS revenues that the JCPS board of Education can actually adjust. Other sources of income are not increasing as quickly or are declining.

Something must change to resource the Vision 2020 fully. For example, the “deep learning” initiative is a major, integrated framework that needs funding to allow it to be fully implemented. Any reductions in student/teacher ratios directly increase staffing costs. Similarly, full-day preschool on a district-wide basis is very expensive up front, and there are only scattered pilots to date.

2. How would you pay for the additional budgets for expanding research-based gap reduction initiatives that you are recommending?
JOE GOODIN: Some of our budget woes come courtesy of Frankfort’s removal of education funds; ironically, they are telling us because we have failed to exercise the annual assessment, we now don’t have enough money. In the Corrective Action Plan related to the 2017 audit, we have little choice but to enact the annual tax increase or face possible takeover. I think stakeholders have every right to mistrust JCPS fiscal management and confidence is hard to come by with the Racial Equity Plan and these schools-of-color funding. The incentives address a definite necessity but is the money enough? However, I’m struggling to believe that within a $1.7 billion budget, there isn’t funding already available for these programs to get off the ground strongly and successfully. The future and expansion of them is dependent upon stringent fiscal management and prioritization of needs. I believe some Frankfort oversight can serve to ensure funds are spent for what they’re intended. Since it appears we will have an annual tax increase, as a board member, I want to see some of it earmarked for minority learning incentives.

JOE MARSHALL: I believe first, JCPS BOE must take a hard look at the nickel tax as a means of building new schools and improving others. Many of our school buildings are built for what the future of education will be and will cost more to update rather than building a new facility. I also support a partnership between JCPS and community leaders to form a task force around revenue to find alternative means of building up district funds. I don’t believe that raising taxes above the 4% allowable without recall is the correct way to go at this time. We must continue to gain the good faith of our community as we continue to invest in programs to close achievement gaps.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: As the Board controls the property tax increase, and as that is a quarter of the revenue stream for JCPS, I would encourage a district-wide campaign that rebrands JCPS in a way that would make every Jefferson County resident a stakeholder and, therefore, responsible for our students’ success or lack thereof. That campaign would also educate residents on funding opportunities such as increased property taxes and district-wide fundraisers. This way, we make community responsibility/buy-in the center with the return on investment being that Jefferson County students achieve success beyond what we’ve seen in the past, and in turn, pour that back into the City.

CASSANDRA RYAN: I would use the funding that makes unnecessary improvements to schools. For example, I believe a bigger gym in a school that is a low functioning school needs to be reassessed.

Across the country, many high school history and social studies curricula present a limited version of U.S. history. They often do not fully analyze difficult decisions and issues and may minimize both significant oppression of, and contributions from, minority populations. They can therefore be inaccurate, incomplete, and misleading. This makes the content less engaging for--and in some cases offensive to--different racial and ethnic group students in JCPS.
Research shows that students respond and engage better when teaching is done in consideration of cultural context.

3. **What would you do to expand the social studies curriculum and textbook selection so that they would promote a broader discussion of diverse cultural heritage and a more balanced understanding and analysis of U.S. history?**

JOE GOODIN: Textbooks are like encyclopedias and obsolete as soon as they are printed. Reference and resource information may be satisfactory from them to an extent, but the days of a book-in-the-hands are quickly fading and having experienced firsthand the evolution of modern history, as one does with lengthy military service, I’m extremely wary how social evolution is depicted to our students today. In the process of instructional designs and building course curriculum, I want to know as a board member that SME’s (subject matter experts) with real-time experience are either consulted or quoted. Some caution is necessary when you consider some of our history and heritage is outright ugly and profane and could be considered offensive to immature young minds. While our nation was founded by “white men,” is has been shaped by the amalgamation of races and cultures. Currency, accessibility, and proficiency are the essentials that experts would be able to advise and guide our teachers and the best way to impart that knowledge is keeping with technology as it evolves and advances. You’re not going to find that in a book.

JOE MARSHALL: I will work to create policies that expand the ability of School Based Decision-Making Councils to acquire curriculum that is both culturally sensitive and age-appropriate. The goal for all education should be to stimulate and engage our students with honest, truthful, and unbiased curriculum and not focus on forced assimilation.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: I am a proponent of curricula that showcases the diverse history and background of the United States, as our current approach neither serves nor educates students properly. I would support mandatory content integration in all schools. Our students receive the best education when it is inclusive, accurate across cultures leaves room for discussion and analysis.

CASSANDRA RYAN: I would make sure the old books in the schools are ALL removed and have the schools find current books that show our true history. When all cultures are represented in the schools it helps the students, families and Teachers have a better understanding how each culture began and why the beliefs are different.

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Charter school enabling legislation passed in the 2017 legislature, though related funding legislation has not been passed yet. The state charter bill does not require charters to reduce inter-group learning gaps;
it may not even require charters to outperform equivalent student demographics in the regular schools of the District.

4. **Do you see a role for charter schools in reduction of inter-group learning gaps that is not currently met by pilot programs, our high school Academies or magnets started by the district? Under what, if any, conditions would new and/or “conversion” (where existing schools are turned over to charter organizations) charter schools be acceptable to you?**

JOE GOODIN: When does exposing any segment of our public school education administration to representation by private interests make sense? If the school board opens the door to fund for the establishment of charter schools, it will be keeping with the tradition of making mistakes. Charter schools will only further marginalize the public school student population of Jefferson County worse than how our magnet and traditional schools already hand-pick the elite kids who will attend them. They will proactively exclude underprivileged and disadvantaged students, will be highly segregated, will bleed funding from public school education, and will offer absolutely nothing contrary to what our JCPS campuses already accomplish and will be staffed by lesser qualified teachers. When there isn’t enough corporate or tax money, when facilities or utilities cannot be maintained, when academic performance worsens, and nothing on the outside is coming to the rescue, it will be the student who ultimately pays the price for failure. Charter schools offer nothing better than what we have—period. They are a “poor man’s private school venture” and a disaster in waiting.

JOE MARSHALL: JCPS has championed several initiatives to meet the achievement gaps “in-house.” The Dubois Academy, Females of Color Academy, and Newcomer Academy are examples in which JCPS sees a need, and puts funding and initiatives in motion. We must expand these initiatives into our remaining schools, as these academies don’t fully serve all students who stand in need of additional services. We have the resources, but must be equitable in how we distribute them. Charter schools would merely hurt students who are already suffering from achievement gaps by merely placing them in buildings that have little to no accountability in place to ensure their achievement. JCPS has 4-5 years to prove that we can right this ship before we entertain any talks of outside influence in student education.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: Charter schools would only further hinder the progress of JCPS students, as they would pull funding from our already under-funded schools. Further, charter schools are not held to the same accountability standards, so no, I do not believe charters can adequately improve the achievement gap. In the alternative, I think charters would only increase the achievement gap amongst our students. Additionally, the public schools can do anything charter schools do with proper resources and funding.
CASSANDRA RYAN: If the charter schools did not even consider the learning gaps in 2017, then I feel that would not be a necessity in these schools in the future. I have read too much literature and seen to many families in other states complain that state charter schools don’t work. I do not believe the charter programs would help but in fact hurt our families significantly more. I could not see charter schools helping in anyway. If this program suggested is not going to improve the relationships between minority kids and the school. If the parental involvement is not a necessity then our kids will continue to be a number that is falling behind. If this continue in our schools then we will see even more kids graduating from high school not college or career ready.

Experiencing and benefiting from diversity

U.S. Census projections indicate that today’s JCPS students will live and work for most of their careers in an America where no ethnic group or race holds a majority. Current housing patterns and zoning restrictions, however, lead to most neighborhoods in Jefferson County being segregated by race and household income. We are by some estimates the fourth most segregated city in the country.

JCPS’ student mix is already a “majority of minorities” (or, “Global Majority”). This diversity is actually an advantage for all JCPS students. FOR believes that preparing students—regardless of their race-- for a successful and fulfilling life in a more diverse society requires providing deeply integrated classrooms, with more integrated social and learning experiences to provide better understanding of different cultures.

Magnet, traditional and Academy of Louisville programs were instituted to provide opportunities to attract and engage students in focused career and academic areas. They are, along with school or cluster boundaries too great to walk, ~95% of the reason for the extensive transportation program of JCPS. However, they also were intended in part to help increase diversity in the school system. Their entrance and exit requirements, though, often result in segregation within an individual school on a classroom-by-classroom basis.

5. What are your views of the current assignment plan? Through what mechanisms and with what goals should students be assigned to schools? What, if any, changes/improvements would you pursue for it and the magnet programs, etc. in order to assure daily opportunities for students of different backgrounds to study, work, and play together in welcoming, quality schools everywhere in the county? How would your proposals assure fairness to all students and families, both in terms of equitably increasing access to programs and of equitably sharing the burden of busing school assignments outside their neighborhoods? Would you, for example, support going back to fewer, larger elementary school clusters to increase choice and diversity?
JOE GOODIN: The plan’s focus on diversity and socioeconomic interests is laudable; my concerns are resultant rudimentary academic skills assessments. With magnet and traditional schools along with opt-outs via a very liberal school choice process, the idealistic goal of the assignment plan is a pipe dream. The best-of-our-best in District 4 are enabled to attend higher-performing schools and idealistic studying, working, and playing together in the manner the plan seeks to create is an illusion. Our schools that cannot handpick or draw students to compartmentalized programs absorb most of the burden of disciplinary problems. You won’t have any fairness in equality with the present plan and determined concepts like closing the academic gap, racial equity plans, and schools of color, we clearly have to do something besides what we’re doing to help our kids. We conveniently forget that public education is provided “free,” courtesy of legislation that provides for them by way of our taxes. Likewise, the privilege of free transportation to these publicly funded schools is made available to all who choose them by the same tax sources. My role as a board member is to ensure JCPS is giving the taxpayer’s their money’s worth.

JOE MARSHALL: As a whole, the city of Louisville is very diverse. Once we break this down by neighborhood, the diversity dwindles immensely. I believe the current student assignment plan at the high school and middle school level, hasn’t provided all families with equitable choices across the board. The burden to diversify schools has been placed on families of color with little to no reward for their sacrifice when it comes to the achievement of their students. This issue won’t be a ‘one size fits all” solution but will be one that is sensitive to the shared diversity that makes Louisville as a whole very unique. For middle and high school I support a plan that provides for more resides choices in order to increase parent, community, and student involvement. Along with this, there must be an increase in funding for non-magnet schools to give them leverage in keeping students within their resides. At the elementary level, we must continue to increase magnet/specialty programs and create more cohesion within clusters to provide a clear educational K-5 experience.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: The current assignment plan is not perfect, but no plan is. The goal of student assignment should be to allow students to be active participants in their learning by giving them a choice and to increase their exposure. I believe placing an emphasis on providing families with information regarding choice and transportation is critical so that an informed decision can be made. Removing choice from our school system should not be an option. Further, I would make it one of my goals to make every JCPS school a magnet.

CASSANDRA RYAN: My personal opinion is that the current assignment plan hurts the diversity and higher learning we are trying to achieve. Many times I am seeing how hard it is to put your kid in a higher learning school so then the family is forced to put their child in a priority school. The priority schools need help bringing the greatness out of all kids. Why not model after what is working? We need to have better options in these clusters as well until our lower performing schools truly take advantage of
Vision 2020. As a Mom, who hardship her two sons to a so-called better school was simply another priority school that I now had to drive 18 minutes for poor learning. The expectation of all kids will one day make the assignment plan not even an issue. However, until that day comes our kids need better options. I think it should be based on what they need or interested in. If a child is interested in Nursing then give them an opportunity to apply there without all the harsh requirements. They all just need a chance. It shouldn't be about scores all the time

National and JCPS research data show that—all other factors being equal—learning and test scores suffer for low-income students when a school’s low-income (identified by free/reduced lunch—FRL--status) student population starts to exceed about 40% of the school’s total demographic. More than 10% of our JCPS schools are over 90% FRL. Our entire district student population is about two thirds FRL.

6. To address this specific, well-researched learning impact, would you support revising the assignment plan criteria, boundaries, magnet locations and entrance requirements, etc. to keep from having any extreme high-poverty (e.g., >90% FRL) schools?

JOE GOODIN: No one in their right mind would oppose this; question is how are you going to get it done? I have alluded to how exceptions to the assignment plan empower parents and students to avoid schools with higher concentrations of poverty...quite common in District 4. So long as our high Performers are siphoned off to perceptually “better schools” outside the district, demanding the school raise the bar on academic achievement is to insist it be done without the fallback enrollment resources the best academic programs take great pride in having. Unless we stem the flow of our best students leaving the district, does anyone honestly believe we’ll excel with a majority of Apprentice-level performers? It’s time to tighten up and it won’t be popular.

JOE MARSHALL: I believe the main issue for low income test achievement is built around bias accountability test in which low income students struggle to identify with. If a math question talks about taking a plane ride to California, and the only other state you’ve been to is Indiana in a car, you don’t have the reference to put this question into context. Tests and exams aren’t made for or by those who identify with the experiences of low socioeconomic families. I worked in a high FRL school, our students knew content, and when placed in the correct context, they achieved. I don’t believe that a higher or lower number of students in poverty will make a difference. What will make a difference is when we acknowledge their struggle and utilize their experience in the way we teach and assess their achievement.
SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: My short answer to this question is yes. I would work to achieve at least 50/50 free lunch and non free lunch at all JCPS schools. The youth would benefit a great deal. This also means all of our schools will need the resources to make this a reality. There should be no lack of quality, diversity or visual difference when you walk into any JCPS site. Zip codes should not determine if a child receives top of the line education. Parents and families of all backgrounds should want to send their kids to schools in the west end of Louisville as well as the east end.

CASSANDRA RYAN: If we change the boundaries of the schools then I feel we are just moving people and numbers. If the idea is to make sure ALL kids no matter their race, family income and learning issues are going to be the same but in a different. The root of the problem is not fixed because no matter where the kids are sent the struggles are still there but in a different location. My answer is No.

Pro-active behavioral assessment and effective student-teacher relationships for a classroom climate for learning

There are pilot programs (e.g., PBIS, Restorative Practices, Compassionate Schools, Trauma Informed Care, etc.) at some JCPS schools where teams of teachers and counselors assess students and implement plans to avoid situations that give rise to behavioral problems for individual students. Teachers are trained to teach and model specific positive behaviors and to ask not “what is wrong with this child?” but “What has happened to this child?” There are also new efforts at increasing the numbers of social workers and mental health professionals in the schools. Because of their limited numbers, though, they often are called on to respond only after problems occur.

How can the schools provide professional, collaborative student behavioral assessments at every school to help teachers understand and engage with students positively, before they are stigmatized by disciplinary consequences? What programs or changes would you champion that would proactively model, instruct and reinforce appropriate behaviors and sense of accountability?

JOE GOODIN: I had a rewarding and successful experience as a JCPS para-educator in emotional-behavior disorder special education classrooms. Professional development in how to address discipline problems within the capability and resources available does help. Implication that we will foster positive reinforcement spending more money on training and administrative processes that allegedly lighten consequences isn’t real or relevant. Louisville, Kentucky is a violent city and sadly our schools will mirror some of it. Restorative practices demands the absence of the classroom teacher and all learning stops as they have to deal with a process of intervention. However, you have that situation regardless how it’s dealt with. The student who is able to be redirected and “parented” benefits greatly from applying restorative justice. The greatest value is reducing suspensions. Sending the student home
does indeed stop learning and the last thing he or she needs is more exposure to where that behavior is being fed and nurtured. Suspensions mean to “give up” and the student is getting exactly what they want. I’m concerned about more administrative demands on the classroom teacher; if we’re going to spend money, hire additional interventionists—we will need them.

JOE MARSHALL: Students learn and grow best in environments that mimic their experience. As a black male educator I support all initiatives that will place more men and teachers of color into our schools. I also support have a percentage of teachers in a building who reside within a certain mile radius of their school. The schools in my district which seem to do the best are the ones with administrators who grew up in the neighborhood, taught, or went to the school that they now lead. For the teachers we recruit from outside of our home base, we must provide cultural competency, intensive city history in terms of segregation and red-lining, along with pairing them with an educator of color to provide guidance on how to reach our children.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: The implementation of the pilot programs mentioned above is a great start in transforming the culture of JCPS and providing students and teachers more equitable solutions for behavioral issues. We need to continue to invest in competency training for our teachers and assistants that will help them identify and properly handle issues as they arise with students. I would continue to be proponent of restorative justice practices in our schools.

CASSANDRA RYAN: I believe a mental health counselor should be in every school and be the one that trains every Teacher on signs that a behavior is showing signs of a potential problem may occur. Before it gets out of hand and the student is suspended or worse, the school must be proactive. Also, the families need to be involved from the beginning so they will feel the schools care and show the families their responsibility they must have in dealing with the issues from their child. A program that involves Administration, Teachers and the whole family. Make this a model that shows accountability for everyone. Also, use the experience from the FRC to make sure all the needs are met including psychiatric help if needed.

JCPS’ first (2013) and subsequent “Equity Scorecard” reports have quantified the racial inequities in disciplinary actions, particularly in racially-disproportionate arrests and use of out-of-school suspensions. National research data show that out-of-school suspension is a key predictor of future low achievement, dropping out, delinquency, and incarceration. Just one suspension doubles the chance of dropping out. These inequities do not occur uniformly in every school across JCPS.

National research also shows that out-of-school suspensions are ineffective at changing student behaviors. Suspended students are more likely to repeat behaviors, and consequences, again. Suspensions accelerate declines in academic performance both because of the lost learning time and the
disengagement from loss of a sense of belonging. Suspensions are also expensive for JCPS—e.g., a loss of attendance-based funding and the cost of providing “alternative schools”. While all that research is clear, though, some JCPS teachers (as indicated by national TELL surveys) feel they do not have all the skills and resources to maintain their classrooms without using out-of-school suspension for “crises”.

8. How can we simultaneously create safe and welcoming schools while radically decreasing use of out-of-school suspensions and how would you pay for the programs, training, etc.?

JOE GOODIN: Hard to do when your school board removes the very presence necessary to provide a reasonable expectation that there is a safe, secure, and welcoming environment in any school. JCPS leadership is developing a concept to reintroduce “security specialists” within the available monies and resources in the district and these staff members would be under the accountability and direction of JCPS. As a board member, I will expect them to be factored in to intervention and restorative practices, skilled in safe crisis management techniques, and physically able to defend the student, staff, and school. Given the necessary tools to effectively work restorative practices techniques, they’ll contribute to doing away with a blanket-policy of sending a kid back home who cannot be compliant. School suspensions will never go away; the bottom line is if we have to choose between the welfare of the malefactor or that of the student body and staff, there’s no question regarding removal of that individual to an alternative school.

JOE MARSHALL: By simply increasing culture and climate within our buildings we can make them ten times safer without spending a dime. The first step to this is to connect our schools with community leaders who are already doing the work of making our city and neighborhoods safer. This will create a streamlined language of security throughout the building and student body. I also propose that we intently look at our new teacher trainings to ensure that 50% or more of the training focus on restorative practices and Positive Behavior interventions while giving educators the time to build a program fit for their student demographic. There are many things already being done that with simple tweaks we can be more focused in our efforts to reduce our suspensions and have our kids in class learning.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: We don’t get there by leading from a place of fear when it comes to our youth. I would work to have our students involved at every level of decision making that involves them. Getting rid of police in schools is a start. They can always be called in as needed but Student Resource Officers need to look like JCPS staff and receive the best trauma plus cultural informed training. I’ve noticed the climbing suspension rates even in our schools with good test scores. I am concerned with the school to prison pipe line our black and students of color face as well as the alarming number of white male drop outs and disconnection youth. We need to reduce suspensions and use more restorative justice practices.

CASSANDRA RYAN: The key would be more training for the Teachers to see an issue before suspensions, truancy impacts the students learning. This is where they work hands on with mental health
counselors, counselors to see the problem before the student drops out, increases violence and make poor choices that greatly impacts their future. The training will have to be paid for by each school. As a previous SBDM member at two separate schools the money is thin, but we can always eliminate some field trips, extravagant award programs and also simply apply for a grant.

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Multiple or serious suspensions can lead to assignment to one of our alternative schools. Some have precious little education going on. At one alternative school, the student population is almost 60% African American and 40% special needs students.

9. How can we decrease these disproportionalities of behavior consequences, and then find ways to keep more students in all groups in schools where they can maintain their progress in learning?

JOE GOODIN: As I have read the Racial Equity Plan and knowing schools are required to design their own, internal approaches to carrying out the plan, I think there’s some promise that JCPS may be succeeding in getting out of its own way towards positively addressing disparity and inequalities in our educational policy. Other large, urban districts have succeeded in leveling the playing field, or at least, increased opportunity for success in reducing the disparity that is rampant in our educational policy. As a board member, I’m going to want to be assured funding for equity planning is available and that JCPS leadership is sincerely looking at where adequate funding will come from within our existing fiscal resources.

JOE MARSHALL: The issue of alternative schools are two fold. 1. Most kids are placed here after not receiving adequate support or due to low expectations in a culturally non receptive environment. I’ve known kids in my experience working with JCPS who were placed into a Behavioral Defiant (BD) secluded classroom after ripping up paper and kicking chairs. One conversation with this young man and you’d realized he didn’t belong in that environment but having the label stick to him, doomed him to be placed in an environment that wasn’t conducive to his learning, all because someone who wasn’t sensitive to his current coping skills decided that fate for him. 2. We must look into ways to reach and engage our most difficult students in a way that is both meaningful and provides an immediately gateway to being a productive member of our community by harnessing the skills and abilities of each student. We can do this by placing more of our mental health professional staff in these buildings and restructuring curriculum to fit career aspects of these students. Then find mentors and teachers who can identify with these students to raise the bar of expectation.
SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: Alternative schools cannot be seen as a holding cell. Alternatives schools should only be used in extreme circumstances. As I stated in the previous question we need to be all in when it comes to restorative justice and meeting students where they are at. Students need ownership in their solutions. There are also language cultural barriers. Students with suspensions are often in dire need of wrap-around services. Every student matters. Some of these suspensions stem from their hierarchy needs not being met. We need to look at the whole student through a needs assessment.

CASSANDRA RYAN: I think the biggest issue is the lack of sensitivity and understanding at times of what is going on in the mind of some of these kids. What are we truly suspending these kids for? Why are there more African Americans suspended? I have seen first hand how kids are labeled and eagerly sent to these alternative schools that now make them feel we have given up on them. Our African American as well as special needs children must be looked at in all avenues. What about home life, parental involvement, domestic violence, truancy issues. Let us be more knowledgeable in the schools. We need to utilize our mental health counselors, FRYSC and work together with the families to try and prevent them from leaving the regular schools.

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Student privacy and the marketing of the military in JCPS

Military leaders in the Pentagon enthusiastically confirm that JROTC is a valued recruiting tool for the Armed Services. Because of the Pentagon’s financial resources, its marketing access and impact is far beyond that of colleges and trades programs. JCPS data reflect that impact—its graduating cadets enlist at 15 times the rate of noncadet seniors. There is targeting of that impact, as well. JCPS data also show a disproportionate number of low-income and/or minority students are enrolled into JROTC.

JROTC and cadet programs have claimed that they increase average cadet test scores and reduce disciplinary issues. However, analysis of JCPS data (Gainous report--2013) found no significant impact on average achievement outcomes, despite the fact that cadets who underachieve academically can be dropped from, or encouraged strongly to leave, the program.

The JROTC classes replace Related Arts classes, which research has demonstrated help students achieve academically.

10. What would you do as a board member to make sure that JCPS students and parents have objective, balanced information to make evidence-based decisions about participation in JROTC/cadet programs in JCPS?

JOE GOODIN: JROTC cadets carry course workloads similar to advanced program students, which doesn’t imply they acquire superior academic achievement and perform above average. Rather, the program motivates the weaker, unchallenged, and struggling student who can develop self-discipline, self-
esteem, and a work ethic many of their peers don’t have. I know of no cadet who has been denied related arts classes; however, the curriculum is rigorous and students are allotted just so much time and credits. That choice belongs to the parent and student. Parents should be assured if structure and organization and/or discipline and accountability is what they feel is needed by their young person, my responsibility is to see to it they’re told the facts about the program. Likewise, “underachievers” face academic probation and eventual expulsion from the program no differently than any advanced program student who doesn’t make the grade. The military is a “career-college ready” end result for some; no longer the former way out for the poor or indecisive, the selection process is far deeper and more reserved than that of our own elitist schools. I fully support the JROTC program and what it offers JCPS students.

JOE MARSHALL: Part of my HYPE platform is Honesty and Transparency. A lack of this has lead to distrust between families and the educational systems. I don’t support public education being utilized as a political tool and I believe the future career choices of families and students should be solely there's without any outside influence. To achieve this we must find ways to fund and promote ALL activities that provide for a well rounded educational experience for our students.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: I would first encourage parents, caregivers, and students to do their own research around JROTC/cadet programs in JCPS as well as the military as a whole, and explore their intentions for joining the program if that is their choice. As a Board member, I will always have an open door policy and welcome questions regarding any subject or program. I pledge to do my best to help constituents navigate issues that arise and provide honest, transparent responses. If I don’t know an answer, I will research it.

CASSANDRA RYAN: The true statistics need to be shown. It is unfair for our families to assume the choice of JROTC improves learning. It only seems to benefit the military that sometimes makes low income and minority students feel like it is their only option to have a good future. Transparency is a MUST!

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**Preparation for post-graduation success**

Under the No Child Left Behind Act and now under its replacement ESSA, schools may be required by the states to assess how many students are “college/career ready” (CCR) at graduation. The state sets the academic readiness portion of the standard, not the district.

Students who did not receive adequate support services to tap their full academic potential in elementary school may be directed by middle school counselors toward “career” (noncollege) pathways in high school. These students may then be able to achieve academic (as measured by ACT or related tests)
readiness at the less academically rigorous “career” state readiness level. That allows a district to maintain high “readiness” score, but it hides the fact that some of these “career ready” students had the potential for much more.

This is more than just an opportunity missed by not identifying and supporting gifted, but disadvantaged, young students. The US Department of Labor says two thirds of all jobs in 2020 will require some post-secondary education. Readiness for either college or career requires sufficient academic success to succeed in entry-level post-secondary settings. Average ACT for some disadvantaged groups in JCPS hover near the ACT score equivalent at which the test purveyors predict such students would require remedial courses before entering any post-secondary academic work, including—for example—at a community technical college.

We need more academic success from all students, whether their dreams and dispositions make them college- or career-bound.

11. **How would you design annual metrics and resource budgeting that would strongly encourage JCPS to provide more equitable resources early for struggling students so that the students might reach their full academic potential and competitiveness in the job market?**

JOE GOODIN: When you’re handed $16 million by the federal government to support initiatives for early childhood development and your own indecisiveness forces you to give it back, good luck convincing voters you need more money. We’re now in the predicament where we’re going to have to fund early childhood development ourselves and I am not going to be so quick to run to the stakeholders and try to sell them on supporting more taxes. I’m personally putting a lot of confidence in the mechanisms of the Racial Equity Plan and hope that we have capable and knowledgeable facilitators. The downside is I’m not sure we have a backup plan if this planning doesn’t work. The Backpack of Success model is an effective nationwide plan and I like how it puts some answerability on the student and parent instead of faulting the staff. Reaching full academic potential and being competitive has to have “buy-in” and the full exercise of parental responsibility.

JOE MARSHALL: All data points to one thing: If students aren’t reading on grade level by 3rd grade, their prospects of educational achievement are reduced significantly. This is why we must direct funding, teacher support, and additional resources to our elementary schools for primary literacy. By doing this we can begin to turn the tides of low achievement and therefore provide a means for better options for these students and families. I also believe that by building relationships with our community colleges and utilizing programs like the one offered at Western High School, in which students can earn college credit, to possibly graduate with their associates degree, expanding these programs can provide an incentive for students who would be pushed toward careers, to have a secondary education option at their disposal.
SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: As a Board member, I would want assessments in place as early as possible to identify gaps for students and propose utilizing and implementing evidence based resources to close those gaps. I would champion partnerships with local labor unions and colleges as early as middle school to introduce life beyond JCPS and elevate students’ own expectations. Studies have shown that students will rise to the expectations of their teachers and administrators, and I would be a proponent of creating a culture that requires the best of our students by providing them with the best Louisville has to offer. That would include making everyone a stakeholder in our children’s futures and outcomes and getting buy-in from corporations to universities.

CASSANDRA RYAN: This way of thinking is unacceptable. The finances should be budgeted as essential as the new textbooks and STEM Program. I have personally seen the money spent on chrome books. The idea a child in elementary school as only career ready is a travesty. Instead, fund after-school programs, tutoring and all resources to make sure ALL kids are successful and have the choice of a career or college ready. We can once again use funding from school upgrades or more taxes to make sure all kids have a chance to survive in this world. If this doesn't occur then we have many more issues that as a Mom I never knew existed until now.

Management of major budget priorities

Two thirds of JCPS students come from families with limited incomes. They do not live in the fastest-growing part of the county.

JCPS facilities practice has been summarized as to “…build where the population growth is”. This approach supported the recent construction and opening of a new elementary school in the East End, while many West and South End schools are significantly below capacity. The most recent plan calls for a new middle school in the east end, while consolidating six West/South End elementary schools into three. In addition to forcing disproportionately more students from the West and South Ends to be bused past neighborhood schools to schools further east, this also seems poor stewardship of useable buildings, JCPS bonding capacity, and tax dollars.

12. What is your vision of an appropriate, equitable set of criteria for prioritizing capital spending between construction of new schools and major renovations/replacement to existing schools? Would you support an initially recallable “nickel tax” strictly for new construction and large renovation projects? Would you fund this before, or after, any other recallable tax increase driven by needed budgets for equity/Quality improvements you supported in earlier questions in this survey?
JOE GOODIN: JCPS is obsessed with image and in that fascination, leadership feels shuttering the only remaining school in a community already decimated by the closure and abandonment of a former middle school, is how strong public schools build community. We call that something else in Southwest Jefferson County. Fiscally, we have higher priority needs than building new schools. Logistically and practically, you adapt and modify your specific physical plant for modernization and manageability before you completely abandon it and/or discard the whole of the property. There’s more life left in what we have than what those from a throw-away, disposable culture may have you think. I cannot support the “nickel tax” that will be doomed before it gets off the ground. I cannot support any recallable initiative that doesn’t address greater needs. Needs like early childhood development, west Louisville parents wanting their kids back home where they can go to a joint-use middle and high school, and regardless of initiatives and strategies to lower suspensions and redirect behaviors—were going to have some violent kids who have no place in a regular school...we will always need an alternative-corrective action campus.

JOE MARSHALL: Equity isn’t a question of where money should go, it’s a question of where money NEEDS to go. Data proves that the south/west end of Louisville is growing at a slower rate than other parts of the county. To use this as an excuse to pour money into other parts of the county seems to be a good business practice on the surface, but underneath it further stigmatizes these areas and leads to even lower economic and job growth. I’m excited about the new school that will be built in my district but my heart hurts for my families south of Gene Snyder who are losing their neighborhood school. I believe that isn’t a question of which you fund first. You find a way to strategically fund both based on need and necessity. By improving building to fit a 21st century model of education and grow the programs and educators in those buildings, you indirectly grow the neighborhood. This is an essential issue that our City government and Board of Education should partner in for the benefit of our students and their families.

SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: JCPS has a lot of property that is run down and under used. We have to address that. We need more quality middle and high schools to accommodate family choice, diversity and the best student assignment plan. All new construction and maintenance of buildings should be by our local unions. I believe in local voice first. Before we call in anyone out of town we should always exhaust all of our resources in Jefferson County first. Yes I would support a nickel tax for new construction and renovation projects. I would find this after any other recallable tax increase so that it is well thought out and community supported.

CASSANDRA RYAN: My vision would be to improve and also build in the neighborhoods that are needing the new schools. If the West/South End have the need then this should have the only option. The closer a parent is and you can get a better relationship among the families and their schools. If my child is thirty minutes away then the families with no transportation or just starting to understand the importance of involvement it will not occur. Now, we have three big schools that are low income, lower scores, frustrated Teachers and Administrators.
Let us focus on the needs of the students. First of all, every school should have I-pads We need to put more in the educational literature needed to help the children learn better and help the families be able to assist. The day to day functionally that all schools need is where the money should be spent. Let the schools tell you about the updated books, supplies and all the resources to improve learning and get all kids ready for KPREP.

I wouldn't fund any construction until we get the literature, staffing and assistance each and every schools needs to bring them up to all schools and help each student reach their greatness.

Teachers are at the front lines of educating Jefferson County’s future workers and leaders. Recent teachers’ pay scale increases have not even matched inflation.

13. What will you do as a school board member to ensure that:1) teacher/pupil ratios are adequate to ensure that every student receives the individual attention they need; and (2) teacher pay scales allow us to attract and retain the best possible, diverse classroom teaching team?

JOE GOODIN: I object to senseless suggestions that recommend “close-and-merge” when we have unused desks and entire classrooms as it is. District 4 doesn’t need a new school; what we need is the student assignment plan reworked to redesign elementary clusters first. This would allow better distribution of the student populace and likely reduce the ratios at some schools, while generating a more practical proportion at others, all the while maximizing the available space. I would insist our greatest needs in JCPS are to provide schools for our youngest children, the west Louisville community, and for alternative instruction and redirection placements. That would be the only way I would remotely consider supporting a nickel tax but I’m convinced the money can be found in the massive budget we have. As for pay scales and retention; JCPS has the best paid teachers in the Commonwealth. Though not endorsed by any political advocacy group of JCPS, I’m the only candidate with real time experience working alongside our public school teachers and stand ready to call into account anything that would be detrimental to their welfare. I will be the best board member the JCTA doesn’t want.

JOE MARSHALL: Teacher pupil ratios are essential in providing students with the individualized instruction they need. I will ensure that in our schools we allow for autonomy of teachers and administration, in which they can be free to build their culture and climate in a way that reaches their students. In our accelerated learning schools, I support placing two teachers in each primary class K-2 in order to allow for more individualized literacy and math planning while also allowing administrators the opportunity to grow these individuals through more structured Professional Learning Communities. As a teacher myself, I support an attractive pay scale that not only increases pay, but works on building tracks in which our teachers can advance their careers and grow to be teacher leaders themselves.
SHAMEKA PARRISH-WRIGHT: As a school board member I would ask the teachers what they need to achieve adequate ratios and individual attention. Then I would ask former teachers, community leaders and families how we can work together to attract the best and most diverse teaching team. Our teachers, students and families should be a part of any process to strengthen the front lines. I will always listen to students, teachers and the community first because a child’s learning experience should be holistic and not reduced to just a data point. Teachers and staff are valuable and should be paid livable wages and comprehensive salaries plus benefits.

CASSANDRA RYAN: NO RESPONSE SUBMITTED.