

10 Candidates for the Cabarrus County Schools Board of Education were asked to provide responses to 11 wide-ranging issues important to teachers and stakeholders.

Candidates were informed that all responses would be used to generate specific questions in Thursday evening's Cabarrus Association of Educators' Forum and shared with the *Independent Tribune* for publication.

The prompts are listed here:

- 1. Please tell us a little about yourself (family, beliefs, career, etc.).**
- 2. Why are you running for school board? How are you prepared for this role? What are your goals if you are elected?**
- 3. We know that the primary purpose of testing is to assess what students know. How else should testing be used in the classroom? What percentage of instructional time should be utilized for CCS-mandated testing?**
- 4. Please offer perspective on Cabarrus County Schools' policies promoting teacher retention, including local compensation.**
- 5. What are your views on racial equity and what does the term "racial equity" mean to you.**
- 6. Over the last several years there have been more opportunities for students to participate in remote and virtual learning, while we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on "brick-and-mortar" buildings. With more physical seats being "vacant" now than ever before (while we retain students), how do you see construction projects fitting into future capital needs?**
- 7. Please share your ideas on improving our EC and AIG programs.**
- 8. Every school board may encounter a time when they have to hire a superintendent. What qualities and qualifications would you be looking for in a new superintendent?**
- 9. With continued growth of private or for-profit charter schools in the region, CCS will continue to allocate critical state-funding for local students who choose these schools (rather than CCS). How would you use your role on the Board so we are not losing students?**
- 10. Explain your views and ideas regarding local preschool programs.**
- 11. Often the BOE becomes isolated from the views of teachers, students and families. What concrete actions will you take to ensure that does not happen?**

Frederick (Preach) Merry

1. I am a disabled Vietnam Vet. I am married to my wonderful wife of Janet. We have 5 children and 3 grandchildren. I retired from Allstate Insurance Accounting Div. I moved to Concord in 1984. I am a Pastor and believe in God, Country and the American Way.
2. I have spent 26 years involved in Cabarrus County Schools as a Parent, Band Parent, Band Grandparent, Volunteer, Football Coach and full-time Substitute. I believe being in the classroom and working with great teachers and students has afforded me the opportunity to witness what teachers go through and also students. I feel I have prepared by talking with community leaders and parents, as well as listening to teachers. My goals are to work toward supplements for our teachers. I discovered we are the 11th fastest growing county in the state, but 33rd in teacher pay. I also believe we show 1 in 5 students go to college. I would love to see more Vocational Classes to prepare those who don't go on to college to enter the work place.
3. Testing is a tool that can show the students as well as teachers what areas the students need more help in. It can also help teachers to teach better, knowing the weakness of certain students to bring up to same level as other students. It can be 37 to 40 percent of instructional time and could be higher for some students.
4. Retention is done through professional development, mentoring, teacher work condition surveys and making sure beginning teachers have a support system. Local compensation comes through incentives that County Commissioners vote on. I believe this is at around 9 percent at this time.
5. Racial equality is very important at all levels of Cabarrus County Schools. Every student, no matter who they are, should be given the best opportunity. Racial equity is when we give equal opportunities to people of all races, regardless of physical traits, including skin color, beliefs or national origin.
6. I believe we will see a decline within a few years for the need of building new schools. We can accomplish more by upgrading some of our older schools. I think the curve has already started. We can look at also moving students around to maximize our current schools. Make them more efficient.
7. EC was one area I loved to Sub in. First is making sure we have experienced teachers. This has to be those who have the patience of Job. Students need to be able to fully trust them. Some students will need one-on-one instructions while some can work in groups. Many can work in a class with other students not EC and this should be something to take in consideration. AIG These students must be given every opportunity available to them. They must be given the material and taught that is above the normal class work. This is where we need teachers that are qualified to bring the material to the students.
8. I want a visionary superintendent. One who is successful in leadership and in education. One who will monitor what is going on in the schools. One that will be able to choose leadership in the schools, Principals. One who will communicate openly with the parents and school staff. My major one is one who will come in and set goals for the district and stick to them, but willing to change if the need arises.
9. As a School Board Member I believe we have to work with our State Legislators to find different funding for private or charter schools. I think we will always lose some students. We have to make sure we are offering courses at the public school level to help retain them.
10. I believe preschools are essential to help get children used to being in a bigger setting and interacting with other children. Helps them to start the learning process they will need. I believe we should continue to fund local preschool programs. We need to have the best teachers there as well as we do in all of our schools. We have to make sure we keep preschool programs.
11. Since I have announced my desire to run for the school board I have reached out to parents and teachers. I also have heard from students and their concerns. As a School Board member I want to be able to hear, but more than that to listen to the concerns of students, teachers and parents and that I have done so far. I would encourage my fellow Board Members to listen. They may not always have the answers right away, but can research or ask others.

Nora Isabella May

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1. I am 37 and have lived in Concord for 3 years and 5 years prior in Kannapolis. My family moved from South Florida and are extremely happy we made this decision. I currently work for CBRE serving Wells Fargo as a Coordinator. I have 3 children; two in high school and one in elementary.
2. I am running for BOE to represent other parents in my community. I am not a teacher nor have any background in politics or government, but I will make every decision based on our children's best interest. The top change I would like to see for our school district is to move to entirely year long school; this will benefit all children and improve our overall education goals.
3. Testing should be as least as possible. What we should focus on is our children's improvements and goals.
4. We should provide incentives to new teachers and provide adequate pay for all employees to keep retention.
5. We need to come together as a community and have discussions to improve racial equity. We should educate those who are unaware of issues and make all decisions based on equality of all.
6. We should continue projects but may need to discuss facilities going forward. If virtual learning is successful, this might be an indication that some virtual learning may need to continue ongoing.
7. I do not have direct knowledge of these programs, but if they are currently lacking then we need to compare our programs with successful ones across the state and country and create and implement plans to make them better.
8. A leader who listens to the community they serve and is able to be proactive with communication.
9. If families are looking for education in other schools, I would want to know what CCS is not doing that the other schools are? Once I have this information I would work to improve our plans to show parents that we are meeting the same goals and have made improvements.
10. Preschool is necessary for all children and should not be dependent on family income.
11. I would like to meet with PTO/PTA organizations and attendants for all CCS to ensure I am representing their views.

David Harrison

1. Hello, I'm David Harrison. My background includes serving on church, civic, tax, foundation boards, and involvement with the Chamber's Envision and Leadership teams. Married with three CCS grads, I twice graduated from Appalachian State (BS/MA), taught 22 years as a part-time community college instructor (English), am a Rowan native and a 20-year resident of Cabarrus.
2. In terms of being prepared, hey, I am an old Eagle Scout. This is my 6th campaign for the CCS Board, so I've observed, learned and been actively engaged in CCS (and as a parent) for 18 years. Having really no ego and even less of a personal agenda, I've always fallen back on this: I offer myself to 'missions' and purposes which are greater than myself, with no benefit (but some risk) to me. That's my motivation. If I am some small part of knowing Cabarrus children, families and school staff are successful, it's reward enough for me.
3. CCS does not mandate testing, and therefore does not control testing. That is, in 8 years I've never been expected to vote for / against testing. Testing mandates and the requirements that are tied to them are passed down largely by state and federal regulations, related to the various funding that comes from those agencies. If we want the money -- and want to avoid jail time for violating assorted laws -- we must test. That said, testing is one component of the 'data-driven' accountability that sustains those funding sources. Parents fully deserve a quantitative range of how their child is doing in school (EOCs / EOGs). Do we test too much? Out of 1,100 hours of instructional time in 10 months, is 1% too much? Of course, professional educators probably say, "Yes!" And, honestly, does very much useful data come out excessive testing of, say, EC kids with severe conditions? Meanwhile, the 'givers of the money' (such as it is, or isn't) continue to require testing (while recently relaxing assessments only because federal mandates were expiring and the funding was ending, anyhow). And well we all recall the unnecessary frustration teachers endured earlier this year over (dare I speak the name?) Istation. All this said, testing is a necessary evil, because 'reporting' gives parents at least the sense that they are aware of what goes on in the classroom (when joining their PTA / PTO would be more enlightening).
4. "Not at all thanks to me, but thanks to the CCS Finance Dept's professionalism and close relationship with the County Commission (from where a vast amount of all funding comes), the local teacher and staff supplements have risen from about 5% since about 2014 to almost 10% today. The County is in complete agreement with CCS that to retain superior educators and all levels of support staff, we have to work together to keep their base pay, supplements and benefits at 'market value.' We continually communicate with the County and State legislators about compensation, and keep the governing policies up to date. (As background, see the Policy 7000 series at <https://boardpolicyonline.com/bl/?b=cabarrus#&&hs=TOC%3a7>)"
5. "I prefer the term 'fairness.' For example, the new West Cabarrus HS 'fairly' draws many Logan and JM Robinson students into that school, so they can have the advantage of a 'fresh start of Grades 9-11. Every school we build goes through similar considerations for the direct benefit of communities across Cabarrus County. For as long as I can recall, it seems discussions of 'equity' have gone nowhere. We just chase our tails on this topic, I think (and I sincerely beg your indulgence for voicing the truth). ""Equity" sounds material, but is really aspirational, and no one ever quite gets around to defining what it means, in exact terms. The Leandro saga is the NC court system's attempt to bring plain 'sound, basic education' constitutional fairness closer to reality, yet proposes to do so to the staggering tune of \$28 billion -- literally a doubling of the entire state budget. Understand also that while 'equity' in Leandro would mean (in theory) a net gain of funding for NC's poorest areas, what no one admits is that literally implementing Leandro would mean a net loss of funding for NC's 'wealthy' areas, like Cabarrus, which is openly described as a 'rich' district. I hope all can see the twin evils of envy and competition that would result. Maybe I shouldn't think so hard about this topic, but what I'm getting at is this: 'Equity' is an absolute zero-sum concept that (a) is all talk, without much practical material reality to it, and (b) which, because of the extensive resource redistribution that it assumes, would not serve to bring about racial justice / harmony, but rather would engender real and intense social friction. Again, forgive me if I'm too honest."
6. There's a lot in this question. Current projects, like the new middle school, will be completed. But, parents vote with their feet. With the pandemic, some 1,000 students have 'gone elsewhere' -- at least until a Plan A can be brought about and we all return to 'normal' school. Let's hope, then, that parents will consent to bring their children back into our physical facilities. The code word of education is 'choice' (which means wholly different things to different listeners). As CCS uses it, choice is an appeal to parents, an attempt to encourage parents toward acceptance of our excellent programs -- STEM, IB, Academies. 'Choice' seeks to win parents' support and gain

(or re-gain) their long-term buy-in, to let CCS's experienced and professional educators do the job of shaping their children's learning and lives in positive and lasting ways. Our teachers and staff have proven themselves true heroes for how they've adapted to and improved the choice of remote / online learning in Cabarrus since Spring 2020, but it's crucial that we return (when health data warrants it) to in-person learning, which we all know is far superior to remote / online. Meanwhile, with local tax revenues likely to be reduced due to the pandemic shut down, I'm not sure the County will be able -- short of significant tax increases -- to honor the CCS Ten Year Plan, which until this year was our go-forward construction map to build new and re-purpose existing facilities.

7. "We all know this is a highly sensitive topic. An EC / AIG child has to have consistency and predictability. How fast or slow 'new' stimuli can be added to that child's routine is individualized. That child's needs – really, that child's actual future and life – must be the focus and end-goal of all of the adults obligated and responsible for the welfare of that child. I hope wise board members – certainly those like myself without deep expertise in IEP / 504 laws and policies, let alone without deep clinical / medical knowledge of the wide range of EC conditions – will let the EC and AIG teams do their best to administer services for children (including good communication with parents / guardians about issues that arise). I trust – and try not to second-guess – our licensed EC and AIG experts, and feel they have the judgment and experience, along with Dr. Lowder's support and specialized legal advice, to help our special needs students exceed their educational potentials. Frankly, to my awareness, I think from a lay-person's view that our EC / AIG programs are doing exceptionally well, and are fully compliant with legal requirements. I know of no formal audit findings that indicate otherwise, and I'd say it's imperative for anyone with documented, objective, verifiable evidence to the contrary to step forward and make the case, so all our children can be served as fairly as possible."
8. A backbone. A focused determination to carry forward toward resolution of difficult conversations and actions which Cabarrus needs to confront. That is why I, for one, do not want CCS to lose Chris Lowder, any time soon, at least.
9. "CCS does not allocate this funding. By state law, that has been confirmed by the courts, the ADM and local funding for families which opt for the charters 'follows the child.' The funding initially comes to CCS, but CCS is a pass-thru vehicle, auditing, investigating and verifying a CCS child indeed is at a charter, and forwarding -- according to law -- those funds to the charter. (My elevator speech): The environment and quality of education offered by CCS is superior to any offered regionally by charters, even if that is just my opinion. Our 4,000 teachers and staff are far more experienced, are paid better (which is a different subject, right?), have greater employment packages and protections and implement education consistently and reliably for our 33,000 students. About 10-15% of parents who go to charters come back to CCS. It's a chance and an experiment they can take. I never have, as my daughters are CCS grads."
10. Our pre-school services help start a child off well in their early lives. Title I programs in CCS provide to the most vulnerable of our children with nutritional, transportation and tutoring services they otherwise would not have, along with school supplies (coats and gloves, too!) Our pre-schools engage lower income parents to work toward their children's success, supporting at-risk and homeless kids at early ages to think of 'school' as a place where they are protected. The pre-schools are first lines of defense to note and report abusive conditions that endanger children. (Example: The Mary Frances Wall Center is a clearing house of great local resources for this protected category of kids: <https://www.cabarrus.k12.nc.us/site/Default.aspx?PageType=1&SiteID=49&ChannelID=7028&DirectoryType=6>
11. In the 'fish bowl' of the BoE, I'm not sure if it's possible to become isolated from the views of community stakeholders. I feel very well informed, without pretending to know how a classroom-level educator should do their job. Over the last six months, I received probably 600 emails, reading all and responding to most. That's what I'll keep doing. I hope I have earned your vote to move CCS forward. Thanks! David

Cindy Fertenbaugh

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1. "My father was the first to graduate from high school in his family. When my brothers and I were in grade school, our Mom went to the community college to become a Licensed Practical Nurse and continued her studies at a

university. Education was always a priority in our lives. I have a B.A. in Mathematics with minors in Business and Computer Science. I worked in IT for 40.5 years and retired at the end of January 2020. As a continuous learner, I hold three active certifications in IT Security, IT Auditing, and Project Management, and additionally a Real Estate Brokers license (never officially used but obtained out of personal interest). I have lived in Cabarrus County over 34 years. Started volunteering in CCS early in 1988 with Junior Achievement, continued volunteering for 12 years, becoming the Treasurer and Chair of JA of Cabarrus County; received the JA Silver Leadership Award (a national recognition); simultaneously volunteered with Communities In Schools and started the first school supply drive locally around 1996 in conjunction with the Chamber. Recognized by the USA Weekend magazine with a Make A Difference Day Honorable Mention. Have continued with school supply drives over the years and as of 2018, have been the Cabarrus County coordinator for WSOC's 9SchoolTools drive, continuing in 2020. Taught Sunday School several years, was a lector, and a committee chair for multiple Capital Campaigns for my church. Was named a member of the Business and Technology Alliance (BETA) by Gov. Easley in 2003, with a focus to extend broadband to every school in North Carolina. After this goal was accomplished, Lt. Gov. Perdue named me to the eLearning Commission which initiated the North Carolina Virtual Public School, including assisting with writing the related legislation. Currently serving with former Gov. Perdue on the DigiLearn Partnership for MicroCredentials which is in the research and feasibility phase. Named to the NCSBA All-State School Board for 2012-13. Have taken over 400 hours of continuing education during my time on the school board. Served on the Cabarrus County School Board from 1998-2012 (including as Chair and Vice Chair), did not run in 2012, re-elected in 2016 and served two years as Chair. Currently a member of the C&I, Technology, and Budget committees. I take these committee roles seriously. I have two daughters, both fully educated K-12 in CCS and now with their Master's degrees. My older daughter is an Environmental Engineer for the state of NC in the Water Resources Division, and my younger daughter is a teacher in CCS."

2. "Education has always been important on a personal level and has also been the focus of my volunteer work for most of my adult life. When I originally ran for School Board, it was a way to contribute to public education at a higher level following many years of volunteerism. I am running for re-election because I want to continue my service and because I feel that my preparation and challenge to staff often helps the board, as a whole, to be better informed and to make a better decision. I did not see enough "digging" into topics during my four years not on the board, and a loss of history. As a continuous learner, I am continually learning more about all aspects of being in a board meeting, preparing for board meetings, asking questions of staff, and collaborating with other board members. One thing that many may not realize, is that I ask staff many questions every week. I always want to be respectful to staff and not surprise them. It is better for all to be prepared and have the meeting run more smoothly. If re-elected, I will continue to be a prepared and thoughtful school board member, listen to concerns, be realistic about what can be accomplished, and stretch and challenge staff and the Board to do more with our funding and to make the best decisions."
3. First, I think it is important to separate teacher-initiated assessments from any mandated testing. Each teacher needs to be able to create assessments of their students to measure their curriculum delivery and level of learning. I have consistently asked that C&I reduce participation in voluntary testing as requested by the state. Just like teacher assessments, when a curriculum direction is adjusted, the district's C&I team wants to measure success. The local School Boards have little say in the NC testing and can generally only express our local testing preferences. I strongly suggest that teachers talk with their Principals about testing concerns with documented and accurate evidence, and ask your Principals to bring it forward as a collective concern.
4. "There are not (capital P) policies on teacher retention so I think this question is about the local supplement. Please advise if you are referring to something different. As Chair for two years, Steve Morris (Chair of the Commissioners) and I worked closely with Dr. Lowder and County Manager Mike Downs, to create a plan to achieve a full 1% supplement increase in each of the past two years, 2019-20 and 2020-21 (Keep in mind that we often plan forward with budget requests so even though I am not chair in 2020, we had planned this increase.). There were many "lean" years when the Commissioners would not entertain the allocation of additional funds for any supplement increase, no matter our request. Keep in mind that the Commissioners started at a .25% increase in 2019-20. The relationship now between the School Board and Commissioners is strong and they have been willing to look at options. We asked them to come up to a .5% increase and allow us to use local cost savings to achieve the other .5% for a full 1% increase. That strategy carried over to this school year and a second 1% increase was approved. I am hoping we can continue to sustain this pattern of increases. Each 1% supplement increase costs nearly \$1.5M in recurring operational funds from the property taxes paid to Cabarrus County. As a member of the CCS Budget Committee, I continue to advocate for supplement increases each year. It is

important to know that I, as a School Board member, work diligently "off camera" to achieve improvements for staff and the district."

5. "I was raised to not "see" color, nationality, or an economic level. My grandfather was an immigrant from eastern Europe and lived through discrimination of his situation. Every day as an American was a day of gratitude for him and he flew the flag daily. While I will admit that sometimes it is easy to slip into stereotypes, I advocate for all students and maybe even a bit more for students who may be at a disadvantage for any reason. My goal with the 9SchoolTools project has been to give every child the tools to be excited about school. We have consistently placed very strong Principals and APs at schools with high diversity, to give those schools extra support. We seek out bilingual staff to fill positions. As we look forward to building a new R. Brown McAllister with higher capacity, I have been vocal about reducing bus rides for children from the Logan Community and realigning the district. Racial equity means removing stereotypes, pre-judging, and treating everyone as a neighbor. Each person should be included and be able to achieve their full potential intellectually, economically, and in society."
6. "The virtual learning pre-COVID was for partial days and each student still needed to have a seat in the building. There was a low volume of fully virtual students as that was not a program in our district prior to 2020-21. With the pandemic, we have a lower ADM but a high volume of that is from Kindergarten-eligible students who were held out of school this year by their parents. It will take some period of stabilization to determine what the in-school ADM is after the pandemic is over. Since multiple schools are still over capacity, the current new construction will help to relieve middle school overcrowding. I will respectfully disagree that we will have a lot of "vacant" seats going forward into 2021-22. It is too early to predict what will or will not be needed as far as new construction. I'm hoping that a reduction in the need for new seats may enable funding for more of the needed replacement and maintenance projects."
7. "While improvements to these areas are best designed by specialists, I will offer my comments. EC programs are highly governed by Federal and State requirements. The current specialized classroom approach has been successful although I would like to see students be able to take many of the programs at their home school. The challenge to that is funding, space, and staffing as EC positions are typically the last to be filled each year. I have heard of some situations where a parent wants an IEP for their student but the school disagrees. We need to remember and communicate to parents that it is our duty to place students in the least restrictive environment. For AIG programs, the Program Choice and Early College and additional CTE options have created a good variety of programs for those who are interested in pursuing specific areas of study. I hope that we will continue to expand options and specialties which will meet more students' interests and academic needs, and further enhance workforce readiness. Based on my own technology career, I am looking forward to adding CyberSecurity and other options. It concerns me a bit that students are taking Honors and AP classes but yet do not have a solid foundation in the subject. I have asked questions and received responses and concluded this practice may be good for students, to push them to achieve. Both the EC and AIG areas need to continually evolve to serve and challenge students."
8. I had the opportunity to hire one Superintendent, Dr. Shepherd, and to closely watch the process as Dr. Lowder was hired (in my gap time on the Board). What I know for sure: Running the 8th largest district in the state is very different than running a very small district. We need to carefully look to hire from within if possible which means we need a succession plan (often discussed!). The Superintendent needs to surround themselves with experts in all areas as they cannot individually be the expert in C&I, School Nutrition, HR policies, building maintenance, etc. The person needs to be a strong instructional leader and be willing to back up the leaders in his/her organization while being fully cognizant of policies and statutes and professionalism. No finger pointing. If I have the opportunity to hire another superintendent, I have many lessons learned from my first experience to fall back on."
9. As a clarification, CCS, and other LEAs, are only the pass-thru for the state and local funding for charter schools. We do not allocate money from our budget but do have to account for the way that NC has decided to distribute funding. The County Commissioners allocate the portion of per student local funding and passes it through CCS as well. The growth of Program Choice options has the additional benefit of being a reason that students stay in or come back to CCS. Many students leave a traditional public school for a personal (or political) preference. Perhaps the parent did not like the Principal or certain teachers, maybe the student had some discipline challenges. Very often, we see the student returning later in the school year or in the next school year. The Program Choice enhancements and additional CTE offerings have been successful in the past to retain students. The expansion of the Royal Oaks School of the Arts is an important addition and the Arts program is expected to

eventually grow to the high school level within two years. Creativity and collaboration is key to student retention. Fortunately, we have a strong Program Choice director who brings us great ideas to consider. As information, ways to improve EC, AIG, and retaining students are all topics which we learn about at our continuing education programs."

10. The Mary Frances Wall program is by far a shining star in our district. I would love to see it expanded to a second site. We have discussed doing this and need an available location, and the extra operational funding, to expand. With the current plan to build a new R. Brown McAllister school, there has been some consideration to remodel the old building for a preschool expansion. All facilities expense comes from local money, just like teacher supplements, so we need to carefully balance what we request each year.
11. "I am happy to say that I don't generally feel isolated from the views of teachers, students, and families. While I cannot possibly communicate with every stakeholder and employee, I do work to engage and seek out opinions from many people. Sometimes folks will email or call me. It also helps to have a teacher in my family. My philosophy is to ask for thoughts when times are relatively good, then they will feel more comfortable about engaging when times are bad, in a civil way. I do not take the approach to only gather negative opinions. I want to know what is going well also. With my part-time job at Harris Teeter, I often check in with students working there to see what classes they like or dislike and why. I know teachers and parents from church. If I see positive or negative posts on social media, I reach out privately to get a better understanding. I much prefer conversation to build relationships. I also learn a lot in my CCS committees. And I regularly inquire to the Teacher of the Year to get their opinion on the topic at hand. It is important for staff, parents, and students to realize that they have a perception of their situation that may not necessarily be a broad-based opinion and may not always be changeable. Sometimes, it can be a situation they caused (i.e. a suspension, bad grade, bad evaluation) or a situation caused by circumstance (large class size for student or teacher). My goal is to first help the person understand the situation and then determine what can be done to resolve it. And Board members always need to allow Principals to have the first review of situations from the concerned party. If a board member reports it, the situation goes back to the Principal for review anyway. While protocols can be frustrating, it is important that we allow each CCS staff member to do their job and not "assume" anything. There is always more to learn about the viewpoints of others. But I want you all to know that I am an active Board member, seeking information in a variety of ways, not waiting for anyone to come to me."

Catherine Bonds Moore

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1. "I am a lifelong resident of Cabarrus County and a proud graduate of Northwest Cabarrus High School. I have two children who are both graduates of Jay M. Robinson High School. I am a member of Poplar Tent Presbyterian Church where I serve as an Elder and Co-Chair of the Family Life and Outreach Committees. I recently retired with 35 years of experience in education. I have a Certificate of Advanced Study in Counselor Education from UNC-Charlotte, two masters in School Counseling and School Administration, a bachelors in Elementary Education and Middle School Math from Appalachian State University. I was a school counselor with Cabarrus County Schools for 33 years and also have 2 years of experience as a classroom teacher with Shelby City Schools where I was recognized as an outstanding first year teacher. I have spent the past 35 years as a teacher and school counselor supporting teachers, school staff, parents and most importantly, our children. I would like to continue this journey by serving on the Cabarrus County School Board."
2. "I have always had an interest in local politics. My father was a County Commissioner here in the 80s and I would attend meetings with him. During my career and afterwards, I have been an advocate for children and I want to continue that role as a member of the Cabarrus County School Board. I have 35 years experience in education which would be very valuable as a board member. My top priority is to provide every child with the opportunity to receive an education in a safe environment. With having a sincere interest in public education, I want to work with other board members to improve student achievement. I have lived the life as a teacher and a parent which provides so much insight when making BOE decisions."

3. "Testing is not something anyone enjoys but is necessary to measure growth of our students and gives valuable feedback to teachers. I agree that it takes a lot of instructional time away from the classroom and we need to look at options on how we can provide support in getting these requirements accomplished. Teachers need to be a part of choosing our local testing with flexible dates for administering the test. If a test does not benefit our students or teachers, it needs to be reevaluated and eliminated or replaced by another form of measurement. It does seem like our students are becoming "data points" but sometimes it is necessary to get the help we need for some students. Test scores are only one piece of data and classroom performance with teacher judgement should not be forgotten. We also need to keep parents informed with assessments to make sure their children are on track in meeting state goals."
4. Teaching is a hard job with long hours and our teachers need to be treated as professionals so we can retain qualified teachers. Cabarrus County is growing and we add new teachers every year. I will always be an advocate for teachers and education at the state level. We need to be sure that our local supplement is where it needs to be when competing with surrounding school systems. Recruiting new teachers is very important but consideration needs to be given to current employees if they are qualified when new positions become available. We all had a special calling for this profession and sometimes it is not about the salary but how you are respected. Teachers need to feel support from leaders without feeling all the pressure of test scores. I loved my job and enjoyed all my years in education with CCS and want the same for others.
5. Racial equity means to me that we are all created equal. Everyone should receive equal treatment, education, employment and all opportunities regardless of race. As an elementary school counselor, I hope I taught this value to all my students. We are all role models for children and should be setting a good example for them when it comes to recognizing individual differences.
6. "Cabarrus County has a great school system and is one reason why families are choosing to locate here. We do need to make sure we have adequate space for our students and teachers. I hope virtual learning is just a temporary option. As an educator, I am the first to understand how important it is for students to get back into the classroom. Nothing can replace face-to-face teaching with student interaction."
7. "We have so many students with different learning styles and individual needs in our schools today. Sometimes teachers do not have the necessary staff and services needed to meet all the challenges in the classroom. Our AIG and Exceptional Children's programs are so important in providing support to our teachers with meeting social, emotional and academic needs for our students. Teachers and parents need to be heard and informed of what programs are available for students with different abilities. As a counselor and a parent, I have been part of the AIG program team, MTSS/Tier process, 504 and EC/IEP meetings. It is so important to work together as a team with parents in making sure that all children reach their highest potential. We need to make sure appropriate resources are made available to help our students become successful in preparation for their future goals."
8. A school superintendent needs to have strong leadership skills with a clear vision for what is best for the district. Past experiences, future goals and effective communication skills are so important when looking for a community leader. I also appreciated the superintendents who visited our school to motivate and support us for the work we were doing with children. A great superintendent will make decisions for what is best for all students.
9. "Education and schools have become a competition. We need to be sure we are selecting strong leaders and working to keep the best teachers. Our school system needs to continue providing options for different programs within our schools. We all need to work together to promote our system as the best choice for education in our county."
10. I am a strong advocate for preschool programs. The early years are so important in building a learning foundation. Both of my children attended preschool programs and it was a very positive experience for all of us. I do wish we had more options for parents in the schools. I have observed at Mary Frances Wall on several occasions and was so impressed in how they are preparing students for kindergarten. We need more programs available to support children with developmental delays. Early interventions with professionals can help make the transition to kindergarten easier for students and parents. I have worked with kindergarten students for 33 years and the information that is shared from parents and preschool is so valuable with getting to know their child. Young children love to learn and it is so uplifting to see that enthusiasm coming into our schools."

11. All board meetings are available on the district's website for teachers, parents and community to watch. Individual emails are also listed for concerns and there are scheduled times for anyone to address the BOE. I believe in an open door policy with communication. I served 3 years as a teacher representative with the superintendent and these meetings need to continue with the board getting a copy of the minutes.

Keshia Sandidge

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1. My name is Keshia Sandidge. I turned 42 years of age on September 17, 2020 and I live in Concord, NC. I came to NC in 1996 on a basketball scholarship to Barber Scotia College where I graduated with a BA in Criminal Justice. I have had the pleasure of calling Cabarrus County my home since 1998. I have a Master's degree in Social Work and work in varied counties throughout NC as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Licensed Clinical Addictions Specialist.
2. "Throughout my life, I've been a voice for those not equipped to defend themselves against others. We need leaders who are in touch with the problems faced by their constituents. As a mother, I've had two kids enrolled in our public school system. Over the years, I've attended and voiced my concerns regarding my children in appearances before the board. Too many times, I experienced a lack of response from the board or was totally dismissed. More importantly, I've been on the receiving end of decisions that affect my kids, without anyone trying to engage the populous. I believe that too many elected officials, at every level of government, do not adequately uphold their responsibilities to the communities they serve. Instead, many focus too much on delivering results to special interests groups who work to get them elected. Our communities will flourish when local lawmakers are seen by constituents as their vehicle for positive change. Like Ronald Reagan, I do not believe government is the answer for all our problems. Like many centrists, I see our government as a power tool to facilitate constructive change. All across our state we are seeing the negative effects of behavioral health and socio-economic disparities. If elected, my extensive mental health and social work experience will serve as a resource for our county. I'm desperately hoping our school board will work to adopt policies that adequately support all children, regardless of socio-economic status."
3. "Testing should be utilized to assess our students' educational, social, and emotional needs at least quarterly. I believe teachers are the true professionals and are best equipped to assess the students assigned to their charge. As a board member, I think this mandate should be addressed in partnership with the teachers, to determine how best to implement these mandates and achieve the best results for our schools and students. From the many teachers I've discussed this with, the consensus is we are spending a significant amount of time "lesson planning" for mandated tests. From my experience, seemingly big government has forced these requirements on our teachers without adequately getting their buy-in to support these initiatives. I've never met a teacher who didn't want what's best for their students or to be held accountable for their results. However, I've constantly and repeatedly been given feedback that our teachers simply want to be a constructive part of the process. I want to be a voice for interactive change. As a board member, my ears will always be tuned to school administrators, teachers and parents, to build a coalition of professionals working together to achieve the best results for Cabarrus County. In essence, like many teachers, I believe our current methodologies cannot be one-dimensional or one size fits all. Creatively, we must find ways to assess the true abilities of students and our teachers. This narrative of interactive change must be centered on whole-person concepts. Based on board Policy Code: 7210 Staff Involvement in Decision Making- 'School system employees will be asked to help in developing policies, administrative procedures, goals and objectives, and with planning curriculum, services, budgets and facilities.' As such school administrators should encourage and support ideas from school staff and work in unison to ensure follow through."
4. According to the National Teachers Association, approximately 50 percent of new teachers will leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. This high turnover rate is extremely costly to the student and the bottom line of many state budgets. Increasing teacher retention rates must be a priority of all school boards. My candidacy is premised on being a voice for all involved in the education process. If elected, I've committed to these priorities: being transparent, working collaboratively with teachers, empowering teachers to succeed in the classroom and ensuring they have the support of the board. Primarily, I'd love to see less top-down approaches in policy to a more inclusionary model, which enables and creates togetherness. It does us no good to continually

invest in things other than our frontline teachers. Teachers need the financial resources to provide for their classrooms and their own families. My philosophy is healthy, well-paid teachers who enjoy their jobs, while having fun in their profession, will ensure the success we need in the classroom.

5. To me, racial equity is defined as everyone has a right to become their best selves, regardless of race, gender, socio-economic status or background. In this definition, it means we live in a society where every citizen has equity in laws, policies, and standards. In Cabarrus County, I see equity being evidenced by the following: (1) We work to provide resources to aid school counselors with the tools to support students who need trauma-informed/evidence-based care who can develop personalized road-maps for success. (2) We support and fund programs to build critical relationships between our students, parents, and school staff. Essentially, it means holding our administrators and educators accountable in developing biased-free standards to enrich student success ratios, ensuring they are balanced and equitable. (3) We advocate for policies to ultimately enhance salary bands in an effort to retain underrepresented teachers and staff in schools lacking diversity. (4) We create a Diversity and Inclusion Task Force to continually advise Curriculum Development Writing teams on how to create and integrate holistic curriculums, which accurately convey the true history and cultures of societies that have contributed significantly to the world.
6. I believe we live in a new COVID learning environment where things will remain fluid for the very near future. Capital investments should remain as they are for now, while keeping an eye towards what education may look like in the future. We do know businesses are moving away from utilization of traditional office space and reallocating resources towards technology enhancements to support virtual offices. I don't think we can know for sure what the future in education will look like post COVID, but rest assured, virtual learning will be here for the foreseeable future, thus we should prepare to embrace it.
7. "As a parent of two EC students, I have experienced first-hand EC services in Cabarrus County Schools. As an EC parent, I have seen the disparities these students face in our schools. Without doubt, compared to traditional students, EC departments are significantly underfunded and their staffs are stretched thinly. Several concerns I've heard on the campaign trail are these funding discrepancies are the direct result of unfunded state mandates. Of the few AIG teachers I've spoken to, their concerns center on the lack of autonomy in their respective classrooms. I believe the same sentiment holds true throughout the county in both programs. We as a board must always understand EC serves our schools' most vulnerable children. In my experience as a LCSW and EC parent, I've had to become an advocate for the needs of my children and those students who critically need the services and resources our schools provide. It's concerning that a parent should have to advocate for educational services required by state legislation. As a case manager, I've learned that most parents aren't the best skilled at advocating for the needs of their EC students. It is my belief that, for our EC and AIG programs to achieve the desired results, our programs require a complete review, beginning at the administrative level. Ideally, this would include an independent survey by practitioners with summation, which includes specific standards and tasks for implementation. Additionally, I would advocate training for AIG and EC parents, to help them understand goals and protocols for their student's specific service needs."
8. Superintendents are the face of their respective school districts. They are ultimately responsible for ensuring the board is well informed on the day-to-day activities occurring within our schools. First thing I would want to know is if the candidate is best/qualified to lead in our school system. Would their performance meet or exceed the standards I would expect from a senior leader? Secondly, I would want to know how parents, teachers, and administrators at previous stops felt about the candidate. I always believe the legacy one leaves behind is indicative of their potential performance in their new position. Additionally, I would want to know how the candidate would cooperate with the board and what innovative changes they would bring to the position. Specifically, I would want to know what would be accomplished in their first 60, 90, 120 and 180 days in office. I would use a whole person approach to assess the candidate's true motive in applying for the position and their long-term intent. Ideally, I would want a candidate who is well-versed in the technical and personal applications of the position. A candidate who connects with our teachers and our community would be at the top of my list. A candidate who is open to ideas and willing to listen to feedback from all sources, while garnering the respect of their staff would rate well with me. In general, professionally a superintendent should have years of experience in teaching and/or as a school administrator, with an in-depth knowledge of the legislative procedures and implementation of complex policies in their recent leadership experiences."

9. There are many reasons why students leave public schools. Most often kids leave due to poor performing schools or imbalances in student-to-teacher ratios. It's important to remember, schools with resource allocation and properly balanced staff, often perform as well as charter or private schools. We must ensure our schools always exceed standards. This starts with adequate staffing and resource allocation. Our focus as a school board must be centered on empowering teachers to do what they believe is necessary to achieve results. We also need to listen, support and hold them accountable for their results. I believe if we can create synergy between the students, parents, teachers, administrators and the school board, the results will improve dramatically. I'd love to see principals take on and challenge the status quo. It can be done, but it requires true leadership.
10. Offering preschool programs are critically important to the future of Cabarrus County. Often these programs provide students and parents the opportunity to take the first steps needed to achieve success. We must always remember these programs aid the academic success of the students, while providing the opportunity for parents to potentially return to the workforce earlier. As a board member, I'll always support these programs for the socio-economic impact they have on the community at large.
11. As a public servant, I would have a direct line of communication to the public. Improving communications and community integration are areas I believe I can contribute to as a board member. My goal, if elected, would be direct involvement and transparency in decision-making. I want parents, teachers, and administrators directly involved in the process. I want accountability and transparency in how we operate and the decisions that we make. I will make it my priority to actively reach out to stakeholders regarding potential decisions of the board. I am keenly focused on working with any and all community leaders, regardless of political background, to serve the people of Cabarrus County. My entire platform is built around being responsive to the needs of the public. I would consider it the honor of a lifetime to support and serve the people of Cabarrus County.

Denise D. Adcock

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1. "I have lived in Cabarrus County for the last 23 years. I am a wife and mother of 5 adult children, 2 by birth and 3 by marriage and have two adorable granddaughters. Our children attended the public-school systems in Concord and Kannapolis. I have a bachelor's degree in healthcare management from The Cabarrus College of Health Sciences and a master's degree in healthcare administration from Pfeiffer University. My career experience includes leading large, comprehensive physician medical practices (pediatric, internal medicine) at Atrium Healthcare Cabarrus working closely alongside our local physicians and pediatric specialist. Currently, I am a small business owner and consultant. My company provides leadership development resources through virtual webinars, in-person instruction and coaching. I have a passion for education and believe learning and applied instruction can transform individuals closer to their full potential."
2. "I'm running for a seat on the Cabarrus County Board of Education because I have a passion for education and I believe my leadership skills and management experience will add value to the growth and future development of the delivery of education to the children and youth in Cabarrus County. Education is a different and evolving industry with a continuous learning curve. My online teaching experience with English classes with VIPkid kids along with my current online instruction to adult learners gives me knowledge and experience in the different on-line learning platforms. The leadership skills I possess and believe will help in this role include: working with teams to development budgets, implementation of new policy and procedures, working with teams on large, construction projects, initiating new strategies, developing team satisfaction and engagement, and using effective communication skills to build consensus."

With the understanding that there may be future goals already in place, these are five of the goals I would like to mention:

- ★ Working with school system leaders to re-open schools safely for teachers, children, and school system support teams in partnership with the Cabarrus Health Alliance.
- ★ Increase the appreciation efforts to the school system teachers, leaders, and support teams.
- ★ Build relationships with local, state, and federal elected officials to advocate for increases in funding for teacher supplements and critical school programs.
- ★ Develop and implement a feedback platform to provide data from teachers, parents, and the public to be used by the BOE to make better and more informed decisions.
- ★ Empower school system leaders to explore alternative programs to challenge and make ready our youth for successful entry into the workplace or onto a college career path.

3. Testing has its place for benchmarks, growth and obtaining important measures but I think students need to spend more time with teacher-led instruction.
4. As much as it has been an exceedingly difficult experience with COVID-19, I believe the majority of those living in Cabarrus County understand what teachers have to do to provide an excellent education to our kids. I believe there should a better plan with the County Commissioners and the Cabarrus Board of Education in moving forward to increase the teacher's supplement on a yearly basis, so we know it is being addressed through the budget process. We need to make sure this does not get overlooked as we move through changes in the election process when the elected officials working with the school system change. This needs to be a top priority.
5. Every student needs to have the opportunity for a high quality education.
6. "Understanding that students have different individual styles of learning means virtual learning is appropriate for some children but not for all. Most students need to participate in a classroom environment to be successful. Therefore, I believe the brick-and-mortar buildings will not be 100% replaced. Social skills and relationship building with teachers and other students is one of the most important parts of the child's learning and growth experience within the school system.
7. As an elected member of the Board of Education, I would recognize these as two critical student populations needing evaluation and monitoring through performance standards set forth in federal and NC state law. I would be an advocate with elected state and federal officials for adequate funding to run these programs effectively and efficiently. As a board member, I will attend grievances to hear the concerns of parents with students in these programs and make recommendations for correction. I would adhere to the conflict of interest policy if I've met with families on my own that later require a vote by the BOE.
8. The superintendent is the most important role within the Cabarrus County School System. It is vital that the superintendent be well rounded in their knowledge and skill set involved in the educational process including EC, instruction, sports and extra-curricular activities. Although, I know that one person cannot be experienced in all areas of the education process, this person does need to be able to identify when those program areas are not being run effectively and efficiently and take the necessary action to correct them.
9. Charter schools are always going to have a place in the education of children for some families in our community. However, we are mandated by law to provide public education to all the children in Cabarrus County. To succeed in this challenge, we need to provide a world-class public education system and focus our efforts on the additional learning opportunities we offer through sports, AIG and EC programs, and the partnerships we have with our community businesses for internships and career advancement opportunities. We need to strive for excellence in our education delivery and look for new and innovative ways to strengthen our education options to attract more students.
10. The brain grows the fastest in children between birth and six years of age. Early childhood education delivered in preschool programs has been proven through research to help young children develop good social-emotional skills, increase better performance in school, improve attention spans, increase enthusiasm for lifelong learning, and increase the chances of graduating from high school. Other benefits include a better performance in the areas of language, literacy, math, and cognitive development. It also contributes to education equality as children from economically challenged

families attending preschool programs are seeing great learning growth and development. Strengthening these programs will be beneficial to the future success of the children of Cabarrus County.

11. I would recommend the development of a structured and system wide, feedback platform to be used by teachers, students, and parents. This confidential feedback would be organized and used to identify trends and important data to help the BOE make better informed decisions. This information would be used by Board of Education.

NeQueela Deas-Blanton

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1. I am a NeQueela Deas-Blanton, a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor and a native of Charlotte, North Carolina, married to a local attorney, John R. Blanton. We have two amazing sons, born with disabilities; Ne'Quan, living with Cerebral Palsy and John, who lives with Down Syndrome and ADHD. I hold a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice and a Masters of Education degree in Counseling and Development. I have spent over 15 years working to create successful outcomes in the North Carolina criminal justice system, as a Probation/Parole Officer and ten years in mental health. I am also a National Disability Rights Advocate.
2. Testing in the classroom should also be used for correctional instruction, small group instruction, curriculum goal setting and planning for an entire classroom; but, for individuals, as well. I believe the percentage of instructional time that should be utilized for CCS-MANDATED testing should be approximately 2%-5%.
3. My perspective on Cabarrus County Schools' policies promoting teacher retention, including local compensation is that the issue regarding teacher retention and local compensation has been validated. It is a part of an ongoing narrative and some efforts are being made to better retain teachers and improve local compensation. I believe it is critical to continue open dialogue with the educators in the county to hear from them, directly, what is needed, meet the needs that can be met, right away, to show our commitment as a community, to retain teachers. We also need an elevated focus on compromise and collaboration to create a more attractive compensation package to each and every educator in the county.
4. To me, racial equity is the absence of discrimination, operating with blinders on...values that ensure fairness and justice for all. Our public education system, Cabarrus' educational board, plays a compelling role in shaping the flight of all of our communities, especially those of color, by expanding resources, or withholding opportunities and creating racialized disparities. So, the term racial equity means true, transparent fairness and equalized distribution of resources and opportunities, that provide an open door for advancement, for persons of all colors and ethnicities.
5. I see construction projects continuing to be a priority in "near-future" capital needs, despite the opportunities for remote and virtual learning. With virtual and remote learning being forced upon us all right now, I think families who have been successful, will continue to advocate for on-line learning. However, I believe there will be no grave impact in the near future, of families desiring to go all virtual. This is definitely something that warrants keeping a close eye on.
6. My ideas on improving our EC and AIG programs begins with educating the parents. Parents need to better understand the IEP, its purpose, how it drives their child's personal educational outcomes, what the goals mean and how the percentages are used. Next, the school system needs to better align with families in the advocacy of our EC and AIG students to help parents create a win for their child. I would like to see more program options for students living with exceptions, as more options create more options, that meet the needs of Cabarrus families; and, thereby entice families to stay in the Cabarrus School System, creating a win.
7. The first thing I would look for in a new superintendent would be his/her eligibility to be superintendent, making certain that the person has the necessary credentials. I next would look at their history, focusing on how he/she availed themselves to their previous educational community, I would also be looking for someone who is knowledgeable about the best practices for maximizing the achievements of their students as well as giving support to the teachers in their district. I believe it is good practice for the superintendent to value all students and families, equally and equitably.

8. So that we are not losing students to private, for-profit charter schools in the region, I would use my role on the board to first advocate for the needed equity and equality throughout the Cabarrus County School System. The absence of equity and equality throughout the school system creates a belief in the hearts and minds of families that are in lower performing, high needs schools, that the entire system is broken, when in fact, that is not true. I would assess families to find out what attracts them to the alternative school options, try to provide some of the lacking constructs and begin to work on the implementation of new and alternative program options throughout the Cabarrus County School System.
9. My views are that local preschool programs are an absolute must. The advantage that the programs give to the disadvantaged, cannot be measured. As a Mom of two children living with disabilities, the social skills, the birds-eye view of their needs, early on provided much needed intervention strategies. The emotional growth gained in pre-school is very needed. The assessments and education that begin at this juncture provides gap-closing intercession.
10. To ensure that the board does not become isolated from the views of teachers, students and families, I will be present in the schools and throughout the community, available and open to all stakeholders, serving as a liaison, making certain to be the voice of those who usually feel unheard. I will try to use my creative efforts to engage the community differently, than the traditional ways used in the past.

Rob Walter

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1. I have served on the Cabarrus Board of Education since 2012 and am the board chair this year. My full-time position is with the City of Concord as the Aviation Security Coordinator at Concord-Padgett Regional Airport. We have been residents of Concord since 2005. I have a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management. I am a parent of a 10th grade student at Concord High School and also had one recent graduate in the class of 2020. I've been married to my lovely wife Amie for the past 19 years.
2. My passion is seeing students engaged in their education. I have worked hard over the last 7 years to provide students and families choices that get students excited about school and their future. My initial reason for running to ensure there is parent representation, with kids in our system, on this school board. I'm committed to serving and have and will continue to take the time necessary to learn about the issues, have focus on student engagement and success, and continue to solicit input from stakeholders. My goals are to continue to work to maintain our options for students, keep them engaged and prepare them to be successful in life after high school. I think we have more work to do engaging parents, supporting staff, addressing equity, and increasing student achievement.
3. I think some testing can help students practice, recall, and retain knowledge of the material they are learning. Some formative assessments can give students feedback on strengths and weaknesses. Tests that are poorly aligned to standards, redundant, or not well written should be eliminated. Teachers could also have some professional development on using testing products and use beyond just assessing what they know. Since I'm not a teacher or administrator, I don't have expertise to determine what percentage of time should be used for local mandated testing.
4. Teacher retention is a challenge. The State is ranked 30th in teacher pay. Recently teacher pay has been politicized. Tenure and master pay was removed and state pay scale hurts long-term teachers. Cabarrus County offers a supplement which has improved substantially over the last 6 years to 10% which is average in the State among all teachers. Even with our increase, our supplement, which is used to attract and retain good teachers, is much lower than other districts. We do need to continue to work with Cabarrus County to stay competitive. We also need to work on non-monetary items to help with retention such supportive administrators, modifying the school calendar, and providing planning time and reducing paperwork requirements.
5. Equity to me means helping all students have equal opportunity for success. We need to continue to work to overcome education disparities that exist. Some ways we can do that is to have high expectations of all students,

promote respect and diversity, have conversations and then address any bias and belief systems that can create inequalities or discrimination.

6. We live in a growing county and that has over-stressed our system (some schools at 130% capacity) in addition to redistricting, it was necessary to construct new schools to address that growth. Since I've been on the board, we have also tried to replace aging schools at the same time. Sometimes we could do both at the same time such as with Odell Elementary, Royal Oaks ES, and West Cabarrus HS. We still have large needs to replace older schools that are expensive to operate but there are opportunities to address growth with technology that may need to be implemented in the future as there is only so much money available for Capital projects.
7. There are always challenges with these programs. AIG seems to be able to do a lot with less but developing a 5 year plan and having a road map to working to achieve those goals I think would help our program as we address student identification, differentiated instruction, professional development for teachers, and developing community partnerships to serve our students. As for EC, I believe we are doing a decent job with the resources available. With the exception of virtual instruction, we are meeting our goals, with credentialed educators, collaboration, providing EC students positive learning environment with quality services in a variety of formats. I do think we can also work on supporting families (especially during transitions) and on staff development.
8. Someone with a track record of collaboration and success, someone who can make difficult recommendations and decisions, is an excellent communicator and motivator, and has knowledge or experience in many areas of school system curriculum and operations.
9. This has been a concern for a number of years now. We have and will continue to have to compete with these other schools and the best way to do that is to promote and develop quality choice programs that aren't available or don't match what is offered at CCS. Our Academies, IB, STEM, Language immersion, Balanced Calendar, Early College, and Arts programs are all programs that we have started or enhanced during my time on the board.
10. There are a number of quality preschool programs available in Cabarrus County, including five operated by CCS. I believe preschool is important in getting young children, especially economically disadvantaged children, ready for Kindergarten and learning that they will be experience in elementary school. This is an area that has funding challenges. I'm open to again partnering with community agencies to enhance the opportunities for our residents.
11. Being a parent helps ensure I see what is going on with at least some of our schools through connect ed messages and school involvement. I commit to visiting schools, athletic, fundraising, and arts events, being available on social media, via email, and on a personal website where I can receive news, stories, comments, questions, and concerns.

Tim Furr

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1. My name is Tim Furr and I was born and raised in Cabarrus County. I am married and both of my kids and myself are graduates of Cabarrus County Schools. I am active at my church and I am a former youth leader and now serve on the deacon board. I am the owner of two businesses in the county and also serve on the Cabarrus County Fair Board as well as the Cabarrus County Sports Hall Of Fame committee. I have also been elected to serve two terms on the school board and served as the vice-chair.
2. I want to continue to serve the students, parents and teachers of this county. I have spent most of my adult life coaching kids from coach-pitch age to high school football and baseball. I have witnessed first hand the influences you can have on our students. My life experiences in coaching, being a business owner and being on the budget committee as well as a previous board member have prepared me for this role. I want to put more emphasis on our CTE programs and my long-term goal is to have a tech high school. College is important but to be honest the majority of our kids need a trade.

3. As I mentioned in the previous question from kindergarten to when you graduate centers around college. I think testing can be used to give the teachers and parents an opportunity to put kids on the academic pathway that best fits them. Your child may not excel in Math or English during testing but can already do amazing things in other areas as electronics, building things or working on motors. We should use testing to help figure those things out. I think we should use the least amount of instructional time testing that is allowed by law.
4. I know that is a subject that is talked about and focused on very much by the board and staff. I think our county government has made a concentrated effort to improve the local supplement. We need to push our people in Raleigh to help in getting money for teachers that get National Board certified or to help with licensure. They should be compensated for trying to improve their trade. Any little thing we can do will help with retention of teachers.
5. I have been a high school coach on and off for 20 years and have not seen any racial equity problems. I have been on the school board two terms and have not felt we have had any problems in this area. In my experience we provide the same opportunities for ALL kids no matter the color. Racial equity to me means we are treating kids or schools different based on color or percentage of certain kids at a school. I just don't see it!!!
6. I firmly believe in brick and mortar schools for a student to get a full education and social experience. However we have to spend taxpayers' money wisely. If more kids in the future want to opt out to virtual then we must look at our building needs.
7. EC is always looking for ways to improve. We have to make sure we have the most qualified, trained and right people in this department. I think we as a board are going to have to demand more data and get more feedback as this department continues to grow. I think we need a board liaison for the EC department to report back to the board. AIG needs to continue to grow and we have to give the non stem AIG students more creative ways to be challenged if you want them to stay at your school.
8. A well rounded person who has had multiple positions within a school system. Must be a strong leader who is a communicator and is transparent with the board.
9. I think having the best teachers is our main defense of keeping students. We have to be flexible with our programs. During my previous years on the board we have found that a lot of kids who leave come back.
10. I think we have one of the best in the state!! The Mary Frances Wall center is something we should all be proud of. I think we should duplicate it and put in other areas of the county!!!
11. I honestly believe this is up to the individual board member. First of all you have to want to know the views of the teachers, students, and parents. I am involved deeply with this county and I have always depended on teachers and parents to help me make board decisions and will be happy to give you my cell#.

Sean Irwin

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1. Married in 1996 to My wife Angie. I have 2 daughters: Krystal 33 and Rebecca 22. Church CCMP. Over 15 years of education experience.
2. I want to make many changes to help our teachers! I have worked in education field for over 15 years. To pay teachers more and hire more assistants!
3. Way too much testing! Oral testing as well as written! 50%
4. We need to pay our teachers and assistants way more and offer them Insurance free of charge and also offer them free lunches.
5. Treat everyone as you want to be treated. I feel we need more men in our school systems.
6. Spend more on virtual learning and spend extra on educating our teachers on how to use this system better. Our teachers need more help in classrooms as well as support staff!!

7. EC: we need more teachers and support staff and to educate them on new ways of reaching out children with Autism. AIG Programs need more hands on and much more virtual learning!
8. They have to have been a teacher in our school system. They need to have worked alongside our educators.
9. Students need to have more fun activities in every grade level. Quit common core and go back to the old way of math so our parents can help them. Stop all these fundraisers. Give the kids some time to be social kids are not aloud to talk. They need to have about 30 mins social time everyday.
10. Every child needs Preschool not just a few. We need way more early education. 3 and 4 year olds can be pretested so they are placed correctly.
11. Every BOE members needs to spend 8 hours a month in a school working with teachers and kids!!!