

ELECTION

KILLEEN SCHOOL BOARD

Candidates were allowed 100 words per answer. Some answers that went beyond that amount were trimmed for space reasons.

[PLACE 1 CANDIDATES]		[PLACE 2 CANDIDATES]		[PLACE 3 CANDIDATES]	
Brenda Adams, age not provided, Retired Educator and Principal, Master of Education 	Gerald F. Dreher, 70, Orthopedic surgeon; retired Army medical officer (Colonel), Doctor of Medicine 	Susan M. Jones, 63, Mortgage Loan Officer/Branch Manager II, Master of Public Administration 	David M. Jones, 72, Pastor, Doctoral Degree 	Lenna Barr, age not provided, Administration & Finance, Master of Business Administration 	Oliver F. Mintz, 48, Attorney, Doctor of Jurisprudence 
Improve student learning loss with more time intensive instruction during the year; improving reading and math performance. Utilize instructional strategies based on targeted objectives and funded with ESSER federal monies. Let's target the social and emotional development of all students and staff. KISD must provide a COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH & WELLNESS component. TEACHER and STAFF SHORTAGES require INNOVATIVE ways to recruit, hire and retain teachers. I favor PAY INCREASES for all employees. Invest in CREATIVE MODELS to hire teachers, partnering with a local university hiring pre-service teachers as substitute while attending classes Tuesdays -Thursday. (\$26,000 yr.) Once certified, they earn \$52,000 yr. with a 2 -year commitment. A WIN-WIN!	KISD faces the problems of poor staff morale, declining standardized test scores, and lack of teachers. Superintendent Craft has stated KISD is in "crisis mode and may soon reach a breaking point". An 8% increase in employee pay is being considered. Inflation was 8.5% in March. Inflation for essentials of gas, food and shelter is more realistically 30%. I propose a more substantial pay increase of 20% for KISD employees. I challenge professionals, who say 20% is too much of a pay increase, to apply to be teachers to fill the current 200 empty classrooms before the district does indeed "break." Temple VA nurses are being offered a 15% pay raise.	Teacher shortages. I will continue to collaborate with fellow trustees and community members in possible ways to recruit teachers and retain our current teachers. I will continue to advocate for an increase in longevity pay and re-instatement for returning teachers. Academic Recovery. Covid lock downs and virtual learning over a two-year period has had significant effects on student performance and social skills. I have always advocated for more summer school options and this year we will have summer school programs on all of our elementary schools. Safety and Security. Keeping guns and drugs out of our schools is crucial.	A. Teacher Pay, there has to be a way that the system can do more for our teachers. B. Special Education, how many special education Teachers are employed by the district C. What are the standards for special education students?	In my opinion, our three biggest issues are closing the education gap that was intensified by the pandemic, hiring, retaining, and supporting the staff necessary to address the education gap, and providing consistent experience for ALL children in the district. This should be done despite race, socioeconomic status, and ability. I will with community partners to leverage every opportunity we have to attract and retain good talent. I would support all staff by prioritizing fair pay and the resources necessary to complete their jobs. I would look for creative ways to reengage parents in the education process.	The primary issue within KISD is that trust has been broken between the Board and the citizens. I will work to rebuild that trust. Our special education program needs to be relooked from a process and program perspective and we should not spend more money fighting against families than we do providing the services. Correcting staffing shortages includes pay increases, but also changing the culture of the district, getting rid of the pervasive fear of reprisal for speaking up, and making this a place people want to come. We need to look at other solutions before passing another bond.
I'm a product of KISD, graduate of KHS; serving as an active member of this community. I'm your candidate with 40 years' experience, dedicated to educating and nurturing future leaders. My proven leadership speaks for itself. My first-hand knowledge tells the stories of what it takes to teach students, and what it takes to meet the diverse challenges of being the instructional leader for a school. I've hired teachers, aides, staff and created welcoming cultures for learning. I talk the talk; because I've walked the path of leading so others could succeed. I'm a collaborator, communicator, problem-solver and risk-taker; and a life-long learner.	I have great respect for professional educators. Teachers need support and parents need to respect them. Teachers put in more hours than just 8 to 3. Yes, teachers are off weekends and during the summer months, but I know many teachers who prepare on weekends, evenings and take professional development classes during the summer. Violence and vandalism in school must not be tolerated. I believe in compassion for students but demand safety and performance in achieving educational goals. Parents need to know if a classroom is without a teacher and that their children are not just being warehoused.	My past service on the board has demonstrated my commitment to a quality education for our students. I have been a conservative fiscal manager of our precious tax resources and insisted on property appraisals and accountability of expenditures. I voted against TRS health care and advocated for a self-funded robust health care program that offers choices for our employees. I advocated for an internal audit process whereas the Auditors report directly to the board. I have served on this committee since its inception and now chair the Audit Committee, which is responsible for reviewing preliminary audits and bring recommendations to the board on future audits.	As a former youth counselor, I spent 13 years talking with and helping students and their families deal with their children's crisis.	If you are looking for an independent perspective, a committed volunteer, a person with a personal investment who does their homework, listens to the community, is a collaborative leader, and is capable of creative solutions, then vote for me. My spouse and I do not and have not ever worked for the district. I have been volunteering with the district through various programs for over 15 years. I have 2 children who are at the beginning of their journey. I do my homework, listen, collaborate, and am solution-oriented.	First, I will listen and make considered decisions based on input from all stakeholders. As a retired senior Army Officer I always found great value in getting out of my office and talking to people. I believe that you are never too senior to be wrong and never too junior to have a good idea. We need to listen more and talk less. Second, I have experience running large and complex organizations. As the former chief of staff for an 18K person organization I understand how to address complex problems and ask hard questions.
Supporting Superintendent Craft's contract renewal and pay raise has been determined. I agree that the superintendent should be held responsible and accountable for IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT- our bottom line. The salary isn't commensurate with or a determinant of VALUE-ADDED LEADERSHIP reflecting gains in overall student performance. If students aren't learning, most people question, what's going on with the teacher. Leadership from the top carries the greatest degree of moral duty and ethical responsibility to students, staff and taxpayers. With evidence of improved student achievement and decreases in achievement gaps; then we're all ready for recognition with monetary compensation, and accolades.	I believe the KISD superintendent's salary is excessively generous. I do not believe that the superintendent should receive the same percentage increase as teachers. The salary should be capped at \$350,000. In my opinion a school district superintendent is like an NFL team General Manager. Continuation in the position requires success in many parameters. I will not be voting for automatic contract renewal.	Teacher salaries are based on a comparative analysis of districts within a 60-mile radius of KISD. Starting teacher salaries are also evaluated this way with consideration to national starting salaries in a very competitive market. KISD is the 24th largest district in Texas and the Superintendent pay is based on a comparative analysis to school districts of like size in the state of Texas, as well as performance. Each year, the board convenes and determines any pay increases for the Superintendent based on both objective and subjective criterion. Setting a cap for KISD Superintendent would be irrelevant because of this process. It needs to be noted that the pool of Superintendents, like teachers, is also drying up.	I would support renewal of the superintendents contract and a cap of 350,000 dollars.	Performance reviews should be completed for all staff from top to bottom. They should start with providing clear, specific, and measurable performance objectives in addition to a baseline acceptable operation. Every staff person should be given an annual review that weighs their performance against the local, regional, and national environment (i.e., COVID-19). In the case of Dr. Craft, the trustees should perform a salary survey of peer and neighboring districts considering relevant economic factors (i.e., inflation & cost of living).	I would not support a raise. Raises should be based on performance and right now KISD is behind. If things change then I would reconsider my position. It's not personal, just business. I would also recommend that we remove the clause in his contract that mandates he get a raise if teachers get a raise. The Board should be allowed to consider those decisions independently. I would not be in favor of capping the salary at an arbitrary number. If elected I will make public my scorecard and justify why I voted the way I did.
These are state and federally funded programs of learning for targeted populations; assisting them in meeting learning goals and challenges. Each is defined and designed with mandates, regulations and instructional expectations. Each program assists students with "unlocking essential barriers" towards greater success but aren't perfect and may fall short from time to time. However, legal mandates must be reviewed, followed and met without excuse. Keep in mind, each statute and regulation represent the FACE of a child. Do the right thing, search our hearts and minds; continuing to serve and lead with the end in mind. STUDENT SUCCESS!	I support education for all students. I believe we need an effective dual language program which will benefit all students, especially ELL and gifted students. The ability to speak two languages will afford additional opportunities in our global economy. Gifted students need to be maximally supported as many of these will be our future society leaders. I support as many GT programs as possible in conjunction with early college options. Our special education program needs a thorough review to ensure district wide standards to achieve maximal educational benefit for students and minimize costly lawsuits related to this issue.	KISD has approximately 6,000 students who are classified as Special Education Students. Their needs vary greatly and by law we must educate them in the least restrictive environment. Individual Education Plans must be completed within a prescribed time frame and followed by the teaching professionals and specialist. The board of trustees have recently authorized an audit of the department and included a parent survey. (64) English as a Second Language students are taught by teachers who receive their certifications as a ESL teacher. The district is working with teachers to increase the number of Certified ESL teachers.	There is not enough emphasis placed on special needs. I know very little about ELL and gifted students.	Programs like Special Education, English Language Learners, Gifted and Talented are intended to provide opportunity to ALL students. As a community, we have heard repeatedly from parents that pieces of these programs are not working. There is currently some restructuring within the district to address this, but even 1% of kids not being served is worth solving. I look forward to seeing the outcomes and continuing to work towards a district where kids are identified early and given adequate services to thrive.	We need to fix our special education program. I have spoken to dozens of concerned parents about this matter and each situation is different. We need to ensure that the laws are being followed and that students are getting the FAPE to which they are entitled. I would support a centralized review process headed by a highly qualified special education expert to review each case. Bilingual education is essential to prepare our students. I am concerned that we have cut too many programs for gifted students, such as the IB program which is of great value to our military community.
Calling for a bond election, is serious business. KISD is forward-thinking concerned with growth in student enrollment, safety/security, campus equity, aging campuses and having no more portables. TIMING for another bond election is significant. I'm NOT in favor of constructing buildings or monuments for the world to see. With issues of declining student performance along with teacher and staff shortages; it's not a wise decision asking taxpayers to contribute more when we're not demonstrating our best as stewards of financial resources. We're having issues hiring teachers and staff for schools now; where will we magically find qualified employees.	Before voting for another bond, I would want to review our expense allocations to be sure the taxpayers' money is appropriately spent. KISD, like many school districts in America last year, suffered a teacher staffing shortage. Will we have a sufficient number of teachers to meet our needs in the near future? I believe the district should focus on education and not just buildings. Nevertheless we may need more buildings if all other options are exhausted.	Ongoing discussions for long range planning needs must always take into consideration potential population growth and obsolete structures as well as escalating cost of construction and the availability of land. Part of the planning and discussion is potential funding sources for such projects, such as transfer funds from the General Fund balance or Bond Elections. As cost escalate and the uncertainty of how much the District will receive in funding from Local, State and Federal sources, it may be necessary to ask the Taxpayers to vote on funding such items thru a Bond Election.	At the moment I do not have enough information to make that type of a decision. As a board member I would have a better understanding of the situation, making sound wise decision.	All elections in Killeen have low voter turnout, especially the local ones. We as a community are responsible for turning out the vote. I am a supporter of the district going to the community and asking what we want for future growth. This empowers us to give the district direct feedback. I don't like the idea of funding new buildings out of the general budget. Those formula calculations are to support the education of students and could be used in supporting staff, lowering class sizes, and building up special programs like Special Education.	No, not until we have thoughtfully considered all other options. The process by which the previous bond was brought to the voters lacked dissenting voices and it was disingenuously passed to the voters as something that had been vetted, tested, and where all other options had been considered. I am also concerned that a) we are building schools we can't staff and b) we don't do proper analysis, as evidenced by the portable buildings that spring up next to new schools. If I were to vote for a bond, voters can rest assured that we have exhausted all other options.
I'm not sure, in all fairness, if I'm qualified to answer that question. I've not had the opportunity to capture/review facts relating to this case. I need to be privy to other cases of this nature to measure if it's in line or in excess. Let's look at the special education program to seek and find better solutions to mitigate circumstances of dissentation and disagreements. If elected, I'm prepared to ask difficult questions and be engaged in courageous conversations in order to move forward in a better direction of resolution based on the needs of the student.	This is a complicated issue currently in litigation. I do not have all the facts to review. Ideally, I would like to see the school district have a standardized process to evaluate and handle special needs children and avoid family frustration which leads to lawsuits which drain the district's budget.	If KISD were to give into the plaintiff's demands, it would be the same as admitting that services, prescribed by law, were withheld, which was not the case. It was determined by TEA, thru a due process hearing, that KISD met the prescribed needs of the student(s), by law. When exceptions of additional unwarranted services are provided to one student, it must also be made available to other students. Advocating for your child's educational opportunities, within the state and federal mandated guidelines, is to be commended; however, wasting the taxpayer's money on unjustifiable claims and lawsuits is simply abuse of such funds and district manpower.	It is my understanding that children are first. How can that be, if we are spending 140,000 in legal fees? Maybe, I do not understand the system or what it means when we say children first. My granddaughter left KISD with her 3 children and moved to Round Rock, I'm proud to they are all doing very well.	Decisions like this are made in executive session and there is no possible way for me to have all the necessary information to weigh in on what is fiscally responsible. I will say that I have worked with this parent in different capacities throughout the special needs community, to include serving on the Parent Advisory Committee for Special Education and I can say that she is a strong advocate for her children. Which is her job as a parent.	I have read the court documents related to this case. I have also read the TEA investigation that substantiated the fact that services were not properly provided. I am hesitant to comment any more specifically on this case in the event that I am elected and might have to take some type of action on the matter. Generally, I am very concerned that we are spending that amount of taxpayer money to fight against providing services that could have been provided at a far lesser cost. I am pleased that the board has undertaken an audit.

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istered voters. Historically, fewer than 7,000 residents decide the outcome of Killeen ISD school board elections.

Two longtime incumbent school board members, Corbett Lawler and Shelley Wells, are not running for election again this May, paving the way for at least two newcomers to the Killeen school board.

Brenda Adams, of Killeen, is running against Gerald Dreher, of Harker Heights, for Wells' Place 1 seat she's held since 2007. Adams is a retired educator and former principal and Dreher is an orthopedic surgeon.

The KISD board Place 1 seat was last won by Wells in 2019 with 1,748 votes.

Incumbent KISD board Vice President Susan Jones, of Belton, is running against David Jones, of Harker Heights, for her Place 2 seat. Susan Jones is a mortgage loan officer manager and former Bell County Appraisal District board member, and David Jones is a pastor of Pioneers Crisis Ministries.

Susan Jones was first elected to the KISD Board of Trustees in May 2011 and is serving her fourth term.

David Jones ran against Susan Jones previously in 2019 — Susan Jones won that election with 1,807 votes.

Lenna Barr, of Killeen, is up against Oliver Mintz, also of Killeen, for Lawler's Place 3 seat he's held since 2011.

Barr listed her occupation as "operations" on her school board filing application. According to her LinkedIn account, Barr is currently the vice president of Administration and Finance at the Greater Killeen Chamber of Commerce. Mintz, according to his candidate application, is listed as an attorney and consultant.

In 2019, incumbent Lawler was reelected to his Place 3 seat with 1,421 votes cast in his favor.

The highest KISD election turnout in recent years was during the November 2018 bond election when 9% of registered voters hit the polls.

Early voting begins Monday.

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'2020 changed everything' in election misinformation fight

BY AMANDA SEITZ
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Beth Bowers grew up in the 1960s and 1970s with parents who marched in protests, wrote letters to members of Congress and voted in elections big and small.

Her father, a World War II veteran, and her mother, an educational counselor, did not use social media sites in their lifetimes. But Bowers is sure they would be disheartened to see how easily falsehoods about the U.S. elections are disseminated online to millions and millions of people.

That's why the Evanston, Illinois, mom spends a few hours each week scouring Facebook groups for conspiracy theories or lies as part of a nationwide volunteer effort to debunk misinformation about voting.

"The good thing about this work is, it'd be so easy to become incredibly cynical and hopeless, but I think we feel like this is something we can do and make a difference," Bowers, 59, said in a phone interview.

As voters ready for hundreds of elections of local and national importance this year, officials and voting rights advocates are bracing for a repeat of the misinformation that overwhelmed the 2020 presidential race and seeded distrust about the legitimacy of Democrat Joe Biden's victory. It culminated in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 by angry supporters of then-President Donald Trump who believed his lies that the election was stolen from him.

"2020 changed everything," said Alex Linser, deputy director of the Hamilton County, Ohio, election board. "This has got to be a part of our job now. Not just doing our job well, but showing the public how we do our job. For a long time, the system just worked and people didn't have to think about it. Now, there's a lot of people calling it into question."

The voting advocacy group Common Cause will rely on thousands of volunteers like Bowers to identify misinformation floating around online and push for Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms to take down the most egregious falsehoods. False claims about voting times, locations or eligibility, for example, are banned across Twitter and Meta's platforms, which include Facebook and Instagram.