ELECTION 2026

CANDIDATE PROFILES

WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

Guy W. Carden

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 3
Rebulican

Have you ever held public office? Yes, current Commissioner for Williamson County District 3.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? I am a fifth generation, lifelong resident of Williamson County. I was raised in Franklin and have lived in Spring Hill for 23 years

Age (optional): 49

Occupation: I have served Williamson County in local law enforcement for over 25 years. I started with the Williamson County Sheriff's Office from 1998-2000, and the Brentwood Police Department beginning in 2000, where I currently serve as a detective sergeant in the Criminal Investigations Division. My career has included roles as a patrol officer, field training officer, SWAT operator, crime scene technician, and my current assignment criminal investigations. I am honored to be the first second-generation officer in Brentwood Police Department's history following in the footsteps of my late father Guy D. Carden.

Education: B.S. Criminal Justice Administration with minors in psychology and sociology from Middle Tennessee State University.

Family: My wife, Kate, and I have been married for 17 years and have lived in Spring Hill our entire marriage. I have an adult son, and two daughters who currently attend Williamson County Schools, a daily reminder of what is at stake in local governance. Like many of you, we value our county's exceptional quality of life, strong schools and safe neighborhoods.

GUY W. CARDEN

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): My family attends Thompson Station Church where my children enjoy the fantastic youth program. We proudly volunteer as a foster family for local animal rescue groups, primarily the Williamson County Animal Center (WCAC).

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

Community safety
The safety of the people it serves is the greatest responsibility of government. As a law enforcement officer, I have personally committed to keeping our community safe from crime and violence. Without a safe community we cannot enjoy the quality of life that Williamson County offers.

Great schools
Williamson County Schools are among the best in the country. I will fight to keep them that way by properly funding our schools to ensure all students can learn and succeed while providing competitive wages for our teachers.

Traffic and growth
Our community faces many challenges due to rapid population growth, one of which is traffic. I will continue working to responsibly manage growth and work with our state and municipal partners to find innovative ways to reduce traffic congestion.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The greatest challenge facing Williamson County today is the potential sale of Williamson Health. The sale of Williamson Health will bring challenges in maintaining the quality of emergency health services that are currently provided. Our counties' Emergency Medical Services (EMS), or ambulance service, is provided by Williamson Health, and Williamson Health currently shares the cost of this service.

Williamson Health EMS provides advanced lifesaving capabilities to include the administering of blood products in the field prior to arrival at the hospital. Williamson Health EMS is staffed by advanced emergency technicians, paramedics and critical care paramedics. This level of service is what Williamson countians expect and deserve.

The recent proposal by Ascension agrees to maintain EMS at the same level, however, Williamson County is responsible for full funding. I will ensure long-term funding for this same level of EMS care is secured by the potential proceeds from the sale before I cast a vote in favor of selling Williamson Health.

Jennifer M. Mason

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission – District 3

Have you ever held public office? Yes, I have represented District 3 as a County Commissioner since 2017.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 20 years

Age (optional): 48

Occupation: Deputy District Attorney General for Williamson County. I oversee the Special Victims Unit and specialize in prosecuting crimes against children.

Education: Maryville College, B.A. – 2000, University of TN, Winston College of Law, J.D. - 2005

Family: Cory Mason, Husband – Executive Director of Communications for Williamson County Schools. We have one son who attends WCS.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Member of the Child Protective Investigative Team (CPIT), Fraternal Order of Police (FOP), Brigadier General Richard Winn Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), Independence Touchdown Club, Williamson County Republican Career Women (WCRCW), Williamson County Convention and Visitors Bureau (WCCVB), Spring Hill Chamber of Commerce, Lion's Club of Spring Hill Sponsor, and the University of Tennessee, Winston College of Law Alumni Board.

JENNIFER M. MASON

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

My top three priorities are debt-management, continuity of EMS services in Spring Hill and completion of the JJJ (juvenile, jail and justice) project.

Although Williamson County carries a significant amount of debt, its net direct debt ratio has steadily declined over the past three decades (from 2.77% to just 0.89%) demonstrating a long-standing commitment to responsible fiscal management. As a County Commissioner, I remain focused on reducing debt while preserving the high-quality education, public safety, and county services that make Williamson County one of the most desirable places to live. Looking ahead, ensuring uninterrupted emergency services for all of Spring Hill is an immediate priority that must be addressed before the end of the year. Continuing to support a strong and efficient judicial system also remains a key priority for our growing community.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

One of the most significant issues facing Williamson County is the ongoing discussion surrounding debt management. Equally important is the future of Williamson Health. If the hospital is sold, the newly elected County Commission will be responsible for determining how to allocate the estimated $475 million in proceeds. While using those funds to reduce debt is an appealing option, the Commission must also balance its responsibility to invest in essential county priorities, including emergency medical services, public health, law enforcement, and critical road infrastructure. The challenge will be making fiscally responsible decisions that address both our long-term financial obligations and the needs of our rapidly growing community.

EARLY VOTING

FRIDAY, JULY 17 THROUGH SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2026

8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Weekdays
8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays

Christina Rosato

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission - District 3

Have you ever held public office? No.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 16 years – I've lived in Franklin, Thompson's Station, and now Spring Hill. I've been a Middle Tennessee resident for 26 years.

Age (optional): 48

Occupation: Senior policy and design specialist at the Center for the Helping Professions. I've worked in child welfare for the last 25 years. What started as a passion for working with children and families has evolved into working to improve the systems that serve them.

Education: M.S. Social Work from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, B.A. Human Development from the State University of New York at Oswego

Family: My spouse, Jordan, and I have been married for eight years. Jordan is also a social worker with a passion for working with families and the community. My daughter, Sofia, is a graduate of Independence High School and is currently studying broadcasting and political science at Western Kentucky University. Our dogs, Beau (black lab/mix - 8 years) and Stella (chihuahua – 8 months), are quite the pair with a 60-pound weight difference between them – Stella is the boss! My dad, sister, and her husband and three nephews live here in Franklin.

CHRISTINA ROSATO

And my brother, sister-in-law and three nieces live in Virginia. I lost my mom in 2017 to cancer; no one prepares you for that kind of grief.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): My work has always centered on community: 20 years of service with the Tennessee Department of Children's Services, and today as an adjunct professor at the University of Tennessee College of Social Work, training the next generation of social workers. When my daughter was in school, I was a member of the PTO.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

My top three priorities for District 3:

Growth and infrastructure: Williamson County is approving development faster than our roads, sewers and utilities can keep up, and residents feel it every day in traffic and strained infrastructure. I'll push for infrastructure to be in place before new development is approved.

Schools: Williamson County Schools are the best in the state, and we want it to stay that way. School construction is running years behind growth, especially in the Spring Hill corridor. Our schools need to be funded to ensure teachers have the resources they need to provide a quality education to our children. With teacher starting salaries around $53,000-60,000 against an average home price of $700,000-800,000 while nearby counties pay more, we're at risk of losing the teachers who make our schools excellent. Teacher pay and housing affordability have to be part of the same conversation.

Williamson Health: As the county considers a sale of our publicly-owned, taxpayer-built hospital, a $700 million asset to Ascension, residents deserve full transparency and a real voice in the process, not a decision made around them.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County is that growth has outpaced our ability to pay for it. We're approving new development faster than roads, schools and infrastructure can keep up, and the county has taken on significant debt trying to catch up. Our current budget isn't sustainable, and residents shouldn't keep absorbing tax increases while other funding streams go untapped. I'll push to require infrastructure capacity before new development moves forward, and to make sure developers pay their fair share of the costs their projects create, rather than shifting that burden onto existing taxpayers.

Christine Vertucci

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission - District 3

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? Three years

Age (optional): 57

Occupation: Registered dietitian and nonprofit professional.

Education: B.A. English from The Ohio State University, and post-baccalaureate certification in human nutrition from University of Illinois Chicago.

Family: My husband, Phil, and I are proud to call Williamson County home.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): I am active in our community through volunteer service, local events and supporting organizations that strengthen the health and well-being of our neighbors. I have volunteered with Williamson County Animal Center, Maury County Animal Services and Organize Tennessee.

CHRISTINE VERTUCCI

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

My priorities are responsible growth, transparent government and protecting the services that make Williamson County an exceptional place to live. I will work to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth, support responsible fiscal management that protects taxpayers and preserve high-quality public services, including Williamson Health. I believe residents deserve open, accountable government that listens before making major decisions.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The greatest challenge is managing rapid growth while preserving the quality of life that attracts families and businesses to Williamson County. We need thoughtful planning that balances new development with investments in roads, schools, public safety and essential infrastructure. I will advocate for data-driven decision making, transparency and collaboration with our cities and residents so growth is managed responsibly rather than simply reacting after problems develop. As commissioner, I will be accessible, listen to constituents and work to find practical solutions that reflect our community's values.

ELECTION 2026

WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 5

Greg Sanford

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 5

Age and occupation: 49, real estate agent

Education: Graduated from Brentwood High School and Nashville State Community College with a degree in police science.

Family: No information given

Community/civic affiliations (church, nonprofits, etc.): Member of Brentwood Baptist church and volunteer with the Arrington Volunteer Fire Department for the past 10 years.

Have you ever held public office? Yes, current county commissioner.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

1. I will use my experience as a successful businessman to evaluate and eliminate the wasteful spending that has accrued over $1 billion in debt. I will always treat hard-earned taxpayer funds with ultimate respect. I will always oppose tax increases.

2. Paid fire service - Citizens are underserved in this county, it is time for the county to hire full-time fire-

GREG SANFORD

fighters.

3. We must fund our priorities first, especially our emergency responders. They must have the tools and resources to keep us safe, especially our seniors and children. Also, with respect to District 5, we must ensure that the rural areas are sufficiently covered by the police, fire and EMS. Nationwide, violent crime is rampant, and it's at our doorstep. I will always vote for a zero-tolerance stance on violence, gangs and drugs.

My other priorities include roads and water/sewer infrastructure. With approximately 45% of the population growth since 2010, District 5 must have equal consideration for new, improved roads as its more urban, established counterparts. Road projects take years to break ground, and our current leaders have not been prepared for the vast numbers of new residents. As commissioner, I will be and have been a voice and vision toward the future and work tirelessly to help meet the challenges. It's time to review and modernize all of our growth plans.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County? How would you solve it?

Currently, our county is 250,000 people and all models show we will be at 500,000 in fourteen years. We need responsible planning to get ahead of the problems that we will see with growth. Every priority in my platform is a needed correction to flawed leadership and policy.

Our county has experienced massive growth over the last decade, and with growth comes the associated pains. A county this size cannot afford to be reactive but instead must be proactive.

We cannot afford to continue governing with aged policy. I will combat the issues with a fiscally conservative approach. It starts with running government like a business. Never spend more than revenues support, and fund the "needs" first.

Find and eliminate wasteful spending. Cut regulations and fees for businesses to grow our local economy to increase sales tax revenues. Encourage school board members to look closely into the education budget to find ways to save.

It's time to get aggressive in protecting taxpayer dollars and at the same time reduce the debt we are leaving for future generations.

Rob Verell

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 5

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 21 years

Age (optional): 47

Occupation: IT Management/Data Engineer

Education: Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems from MTSU

Family: Wife Lisa, Hailey (12), Jasper (10)

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):
-Worship Team for Rolling Hills Community Church
-Treasurer for Nolensville Lions Club
-Assistant/Head Coach for Nolensville youth sports

ROB VERELL

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

• Prioritizing road & park infrastructure for eastern Williamson County

• Managing our budget & finances responsibly

• Maintaining the highest quality public schools

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing our great county are the symptoms of growth we have faced in the last 15 years, but most recently the heavy growth in the last 5-6 years. Residents are frustrated with traffic patterns and are concerned with debt obligations from school construction. We are way behind with road infrastructure, and I plan on partnering with state and local officials to resolve these issues, and act fiscally responsible while working on paying down our existing debt.

David O'Neil

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 6

Have you ever held public office? Yes. Current District 6 Williamson County Commissioner.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? I've lived in Williamson County for seven years and served the people of Williamson County in law enforcement from 1994 to 2024.

Age: 56

Occupation: Attorney; retired Brentwood Police Department criminal investigations captain

Education: B.S. Management, Trevecca Nazarene University; J.D., Nashville School of Law

Community Activities: Youth boxing coach and supporter of Special Olympics Tennessee.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

DAVID O'NEIL

1. What will be your top three priorities during your four-year term?

My top priorities are supporting our schools, keeping Williamson County financially responsible, and supporting public safety and first responders. Excellent schools, safe communities and responsible government are what make Williamson County one of the best places to live and raise a family. I believe we must continue investing in our students and teachers while making sure taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. I will continue supporting our Sheriff's Office, emergency services, and the men and women who keep our communities safe, while ensuring county government remains focused on its core responsibilities and lives within its means.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County is managing growth while preserving the quality of life that attracted so many of us here. Growth is inevitable, but it must be planned responsibly. We need to invest wisely in roads, schools and infrastructure while protecting taxpayers and making sure new development contributes its fair share whenever possible. My background in law enforcement and the legal profession has taught me to gather the facts, ask questions and make decisions based on evidence instead of politics. I believe county government should always look for ways to deliver services more efficiently and effectively before asking taxpayers to pay more. That is the approach I will continue to bring to the County Commission.

DISTRICT 6

Mark Thompson

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission District 6

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 10 Years (+10 more in southern Davidson)

Occupation: Data & Analytics Consultant (25+ years)

Education: Masters in International Business – Specialization Finance & IT

Family: Married, 2 kids at Brentwood HS (1 recent grad, 1 current), 1 dog, 1 cat

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):
Youth Soccer Coach 10 yr,
Founded Nashville Whitewater kayaking group; certified instructor,
Wife: Brentwood Tree board

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

MARK THOMPSON

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

a. Transparency of budget/money, particularly the funds from the Williamson County Medical Center sale. It needs to be crystal clear that the funds support the entire county and not just pet projects.

b. Growth & Infrastructure. It's critical we shape the continued growth of Williamson County. We must arrive at decisions for the entire county and not prioritize disjointed pieces.

c. Prioritizing the quality of our county schools. A majority of county property tax goes to schools. It's important that those funds ensure the continued high quality of education that drew so many people to our county.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge is trust in how big financial decisions get made. Take the hospital sale: state law just changed in April to let proceeds skip the usual public-health trust, thanks to SB2194, pushed through right as this deal was closing.

Sitting commissioners have publicly said they don't even know who's bidding or how the money will be used.

We saw the same unclear priorities with the jail project, built far beyond what the county's own numbers justified, while a cheaper option got voted down. That's the public record, not hearsay. As commissioner,

I'll push for that kind of process to happen in the open, before votes, not after.

Paul L. Webb

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 6

Have you ever held public office? Yes. Currently serving as District 6 commissioner. Previously served on Brentwood City Commission including terms as Mayor and Vice-Mayor

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 43 years

Age (optional): 73

Occupation: Accountant-CPA

Education: BS – Accounting, Tenn. Tech. Univ.

Family: Married, three children, two grandchildren (both attending Williamson County public schools)

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Williamson Health Board of Trustees, Williamson County Fair-chair, Williamson County Sports Authority, member-Franklin First Presbyterian Church, Friends of Brentwood Library, Viet Nam Veterans. Prior service: Brentwood Library Board (chair), Williamson County Library Board, Regional and state library boards, Brentwood Morning Rotary (President), Brentwood Civitan Treasurer and ball coach, YMCA soccer coach, Williamson County Convention Bureau (chair).

PAUL WEBB

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

a. I have always placed our public schools as my top priority. I will continue to work with the school board and staff to make sure we have the best public schools in TN. It is very important to pay our teachers a salary that recognizes how important and valuable they are to our community.

b. It is important to work with our public safety teams so they can provide quality and effective law enforcement, fire protection and ambulance services for our residents.

c. Our traffic congestion needs more attention. I will work with our city, county and state officials to find ways to deal with overburdened roadways through road improvements and proper funding.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

Our biggest challenge will be to determine what services are important for the taxpayers and apply the limited revenue available to improve those services. All elected officials in our county and cities will need to work with our state partners to jointly provide the services and the funding for them.

Chas Morton

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 9

Have you ever held public office? Yes. 9th District County Commissioner 2018-present.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 52 years.

Age (optional): 55

Occupation: Attorney - Puryear, Newman & Morton, PLLC

Education: Battle Ground Academy, Stanford University 1993 (B.A. Public Policy), Vanderbilt University 1996 (J.D.)

Family: Wife - Christa, children - Chase and Lily

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Franklin Noon Rotary (past president), Williamson County Bar Association (past president), Leadership Franklin, Battle Ground Academy (current trustee), The Westhaven Foundation (past board member), Youth Leadership Franklin (past day chair), Williamson County Growth Plan Coordinating Committee.

CHAS MORTON

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term? My top three priorities during the next four years will be managing growth responsibly, planning for a new courthouse, and making thoughtful decisions about any proceeds from the potential sale of Williamson Health.

First, Williamson County must continue to grow in a way that protects our quality of life and maintains the services our residents expect. That requires close coordination with our six municipalities on roads, schools, public safety, infrastructure and land-use planning. I was proud to serve on the committee that pioneered this collaborative process as well as limiting growth in our unincorporated areas to preserve our rural spaces. I will continue working to strengthen communication and cooperation among county and municipal leaders.

Second, we must move forward responsibly with plans for a new courthouse. Our current courthouse lacks the capacity to serve our growing population, and we need facilities that are secure, efficient, accessible and capable of meeting the county's long-term needs. This will require careful planning, transparency and fiscal discipline.

Third, if the sale of Williamson Health moves forward, the county will then need to determine how those funds can best serve current and future generations. We must also address the services the hospital has historically provided and consider those needs within the broader context of public safety, emergency response, behavioral health and access to health care. These decisions should be made cautiously with a clear long-term strategy.

>>>MORTON, Cont. on Page A9

ELECTION 2026

WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES

Emily F. Paisley

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commissioner - District 8

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 23 years

Occupation: Real estate affiliate

Education: University of Central Florida, marketing/business

Family: Married, coming up on 25 years, to husband, Chris. Mother to three college students, Eliza, Canon and Thatcher.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Multiple positions supporting children in the community as a coach, a destination imagination manager, a Girl Scouts troop leader, a PTO board member, an Athletic Booster Club president and an event coordinator. Has fulfilled several volunteer opportunities supporting natural disasters,

EMILY F. PAISLEY

educational/tutoring needs and community concerns. Member of Woodmont Christian Church.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term? Affordable housing, people who make this county so strong—our educators, first responders, law enforcement officers, healthcare workers, public service employees and support staff, to name a few—should be able to afford to live in the community they serve, without that feeling financially burdensome. Community

DISTRICT 8

needs, need to be addressed in a timely and effective way for the greater good versus what is convenient. Education goals, should be one of the biggest concerns of this community considering they determine the success of our youngest community members as well as our property values.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

Building for today and not thinking about tomorrow. Williamson County has had opportunity to grow, it just needs to be done in a thoughtful and responsible way. The way to do this is to put people in decision-making roles who understand how to work with others, think outside of the box, remember that their first obligation is to the residents of the community and are efficient, effective and thoughtful with solutions where the community comes out as the winner!

Barb Sturgeon

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 8

Have you ever held public office? Yes, 12 years as the Williamson County Commissioner of District 8

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 16 years

Age (optional): 66

Occupation: Retired realtor, empty nester, grandmother and previously a chemical engineer.

Education: B.S. Chemical Engineering plus coursework in biomedical engineering.

Family: Married for 42 years to Rob who is a cyber security executive, with four children who live locally. My son and eldest lives with his wife in Fairview and their five children. He also works as a cyber security executive. My three daughters live in Brentwood. My eldest daughter works editing books, the next eldest works as a baker at The Butter Milk Ranch on 12 South and my youngest daughter is an architect at a firm in downtown Franklin.

BARB STURGEON

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Parishioner of Saint Henry Catholic Church. I am a eucharistic minister and lector. I have also volunteered at the Hope Clinic in Nashville, a clinic that helps and supports pregnant women with unplanned pregnancies.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term? • Continue to meet constituents in their needs, facilitating help and answers to their questions and concerns when they reach out to me.

• Protecting the character and quality of life for District 8 and Williamson County as a whole.

• Exercise fiscal stewardship with county taxpayer dollars, capitalizing on cost savings and keeping our

DISTRICT 8

property taxes as low as possible.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

I believe the biggest challenge facing Williamson County is to control growth and maintain the beauty and history of our landscapes and character of our villages, municipalities and rural areas. We need to grow but to slow the pace of development until the infrastructure can catch up to prevent traffic congestion, crowding of schools, pollution of our water ways and to minimize increasing debt or tax rate increases. We need to preserve our history and pastoral character or the Williamson County people love will be lost, and once it is lost it doesn't come back.

The how is more complicated. It requires prudence, self-control and creativity, and a willingness to assess impact of development more accurately. In some cases, the answer is a state-level solution to give localities the tools to better assess development impact during the approval process and then to require stakeholders to come up with and infrastructure improvement plan.

Cheryl Brown

Republican

Office being sought: County Commissioner

Have you ever held public office? Yes
How long have you lived in Williamson County? 2 5 years

Occupation: President/ CEO

Education: Doctorate in Professional Business Development and Humanitarian

Family: Married for 37 years, three children, four grandchildrensCommunity Activities (church, civic, etc.): Currently serving as HOA Board member Cheswicke Farms, Area 6 VP TN Federated Republican Women, City Leader for TPUSA

CHERYL BROWN

Rise, Board Member Williamson County Animal Shelter, Williamson County Foster Care Review Board, 2026 Leadership Middle Tennessee, Past Williamson County Republican Party Chairman, Past GraceWorks Board Member, Past Board Franklin Christian Academy, so many more over 20 years.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Com-

>>>BROWN, Cont. on Page A11

DISTRICT 10

missioners candidates:

1. What will be your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

1. Provide valuable oversight of the county agencies, properties and tax assessment

2. Provide practical solutions that follow state law

3. To be conservative in adopting the annual budget for schools, highway and general government.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge is managing rapid growth without losing affordability, mobility, and quality of life.

Williamson County's biggest challenge is growth,

Jody L. Todd

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission - District 10

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 18 Years

Age (optional): Young enough to keep asking questions, old enough to know which one's matter.

Occupation: Fractional Executive in Strategy & Marketing

Education: BBA, Business Administration; Majors: Marketing & Economics

Family: Bill Todd (husband) Kaleigh Todd, Hannah Smith, Liam Todd (grown children)

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):

Downtown Franklin Association; serving my 4th year on the DFA Advisory Board

Advisory Board Franklin Pride; Volunteer Coordinator

Sister Cities Committee

Advocate & Volunteer: Hard Bargain Association, African American Heritage Society, Better Options TN, Unite Williamson, and several community events including Juneteenth, PrideBig Backpack Giveaway, and others.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

JODY L. TODD

Restore trust in how decisions are made. Major votes should not be rushed to beat public awareness. Good decisions can withstand public scrutiny, honest questions, and a transparent process. Let's get the right people at the table, ask better questions, and lead with integrity.

Protect public assets and taxpayer dollars. Decisions about Williamson Health, the Judicial Center, county land, and long-term debt require independent review, clear information, understanding the cost, and transparency on who benefits from the outcome before we vote.

Plan responsibly for growth. That means funding our public schools, protecting historic places, and making sure development does not outpace the infrastructure and services our community depends on.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

Williamson County's biggest challenge is how we support our public schools.

DISTRICT 10

This is more than a campaign talking point. I'll tell you why. I grew up in a small town in Kansas where the high school had closed and the grade school met in the shell left behind. My graduating class had 13 students! The town is still waiting for rescue, or more likely, an ending. When I go back, I wonder what might have happened if its leaders had done things differently. (More at toddfordistrict10.com.)

Eighteen years ago, we moved to Franklin with two teenagers and a kindergartner because so many people recommended Williamson County Schools. The schools brought us here, then we found Franklin's charm. Franklin did not become what it is by accident. Starting in the late 1960s and gaining momentum in the 1980s, local leaders did the work, had hard conversations, and fought to bring Franklin back. We benefit from that work, but it can be lost if we don't do better.

When our schools are healthy and thriving, our community follows. The County Commission must make budgets that keep pace with growth, support teachers, and give schools the resources they need. We should also expect a School Board that puts teachers and students first.

Young people are visible evidence of a healthy community. Protecting their future requires leadership with integrity, planning, and courage to act before warning signs become a crisis.

Bill Petty

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 10

Have you ever held public office? I am currently one of the commissioners in District 10.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? Four years

Age (optional): 80

Occupation: Retired

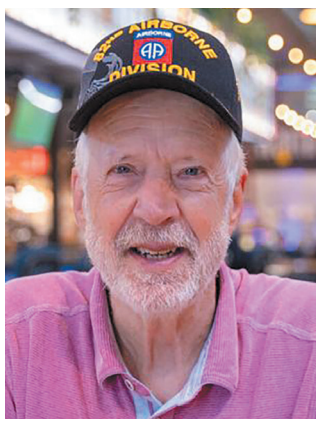
Education: College with degrees in psychology and education.

Family: Married with two children and four grandchildren.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Volunteer at GraceWorks, teach Guitars 4 Vets.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What are your top priorities for Williamson County over the next four



BILL PETTY

years?

Sale of Williamson Health

Successfully completing the Williamson Health transaction is one of the most important responsibilities facing the County Commission. The Commission has the legal authority—and the fiduciary responsibility—to ensure that any agreement serves the best interests of the residents of Williamson County.

If the transaction is completed, the county could receive several hundred million dollars in proceeds. Those funds represent a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in long-term county needs. My priority

>>>PETTY, Cont. on Page A11

DISTRICT 10

is to ensure those dollars are invested in long-term capital improvements that benefit future generations while reducing the need for additional county debt. One-time proceeds should be used for one-time investments—not ongoing operating expenses.

Infrastructure

Managing growth and improving infrastructure remain urgent priorities. Traffic congestion affects every corner of Williamson County, and the challenges extend beyond any single jurisdiction. Because our transportation network includes city, county and state roads, solving these problems requires cooperation among Williamson County, the six municipalities and the state of Tennessee.

Growth in one part of the county often impacts another. We need long-term planning, regional coordination and thoughtful investment to improve mobility while preserving the quality of life that makes Williamson

DAVID STEELE

David Steele

Democrat

Office being sought: Williamson County Commission, District 10

Have you ever held public office? No.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 42 years.

Occupation: Ophthalmic Technician

Family: Married, no children. Community Activities: Member of the Ameri-

DISTRICT 10

can Optometric Association.

What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

Managing growth responsibly while preserving the character and quality of life that make Williamson County a great place to live

2. Ensuring fiscal responsibility through transparent government and careful stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

3. Improving infrastructure and transportation planning to address traffic congestion and support future growth.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The greatest challenge facing Williamson County is balancing rapid growth with preserving the quality of life that residents value. Having lived in Williamson County for 42 years, I have witnessed tremendous growth and understand both the opportunities and challenges it brings. We must take a proactive approach to planning by coordinating infrastructure, public safety, and county services with future development.

Growth should be guided by sound planning and fiscal responsibility, ensuring that taxpayers receive value while protecting the character of our communities.

As your District 10 Commissioner, I will be accessible, listen to residents, and focus on practical, common-sense solutions. My goal is to help Williamson County remain a place where families, businesses, and future generations can thrive while maintaining the values and strong sense of community that have made our county one of the best places to live in Tennessee.

Steve Atkinson

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission – District 11

Have you ever held public office?

No. As a former journalist I could never run for public office. Yet, because of my career I developed a keen understanding of city, county, and state politics and the positions that have a real impact on the community.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 4 years

Age (optional): 60

Occupation: SVP Earned Media / Spectrum Science

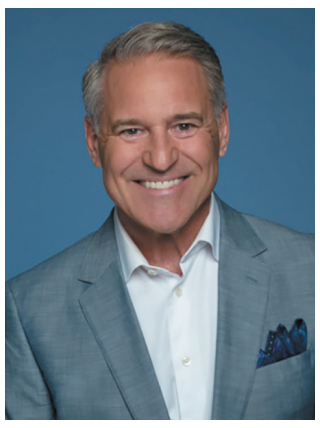
Education: BS in Digital Audience - Arizona State University - The Walter Cronkite School of Journalism

Family:

Wife – Katherine, Daughter – Veronica, Son – Christopher, Granddaughter – Kennedy. I come from a family of educators. Both of my parents taught high school for over 40-years, my sisters, and in-laws are also teachers—which has instilled in me a deep commitment to education and community service.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):

As a journalist I was unable to serve on boards or formally align with organizations, particularly political ones. However, for over 30-years I had a strong commitment to community service through volunteer work with nonprofits dedicated to serving those in need. Prior to moving to Franklin, I volunteered with Feeding America San Diego, the Center for Community



STEVE ATKINSON

Solutions (focused on ending relationship and sexual violence), and the National Sports Center for the Disabled in Colorado—one of the world's largest adaptive sports and therapeutic recreation organizations. I currently serve as Secretary of my neighborhood HOA.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

Leave a Legacy: Our children are our greatest priority, and that begins with supporting our exceptional public schools. I come from a family of teachers, and I understand firsthand the invaluable role educators play in shaping our children's futures. Teachers are the backbone of our schools, yet they often face challenges that make it difficult to remain in our district. That's why I'm committed to two critical initiatives, competitive teacher compensation that reflects the importance of their work and allows them to thrive financially. Affordable Housing for teachers, as well as first responders, and service workers to afford to live here should always be our priority. When we invest in our teachers and those who bolster our community, we invest in our children's futures.

Responsible Growth: Williamson County is growing rapidly, so ensuring development is thoughtful and intentional is paramount. I bring a unique perspective to this challenge—I've lived through rapid growth in San Diego, Dallas, and Austin, and as a journalist, I documented both the mistakes and success stories from those communities. That firsthand experience has given me valuable insights into what works and what doesn't when managing growth. I'm committed to balancing smart infrastructure planning with preservation of our community's character, green spaces, and historic areas. Growth should enhance our quality of life, not compromise what makes this county special.

Community Through Compromise: I believe we're stronger when we listen to one another and work collaboratively to find solutions. As a journalist, I have a history of listening to varying opinions and providing a balanced view. Whether it's housing, infrastructure, or economic development, compromise and consensus-building will guide my decision-making.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

Managing our rapid population growth in a way that strengthens our community rather than compromises it. Thousands of families move here each year drawn by our excellent schools, strong economy, and unique character. But without thoughtful planning and intentional leadership, growth can overwhelm our infrastructure, strain our services, and erode the qualities that make Williamson County so special in the first place.

Morton

Continued from Page A7

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County is communication during a period of rapid change. Growth, major capital projects, health care decisions and the transition to a new county mayor will require leaders who listen, build relationships and bring people together. I believe my experience and collaborative approach will help provide stability during this transition. I will continue to listen carefully to residents, work respectfully with our municipalities and fellow commissioners, and focus on practical solutions that preserve what makes Williamson County such a special place.

John E. Haynes

Democrat

Office being sought: County Commission - District 11

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 60 years

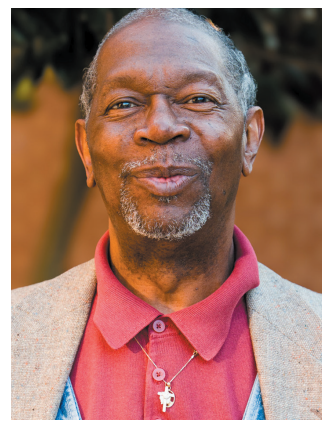
Age (optional): 71

Occupation: Pastor, Burns Tabernacle Primitive Baptist Church for 27 years

Education: Associate degree in Christian and Pastoral Education

Family: Wife Julia. Five children

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Graduate of Leadership Franklin. Co-founder of United Community Resource Foundation. Board member African-American Heritage Society of Williamson County.



JOHN E. HAYNES

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. **What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?**

a. Ensuring low-income families have a place to call home in Williamson County

b. Expanding opportunities for underprivileged students through support of the Williamson County School System and Board of Education

c. Guiding the development of Williamson County while preserving its rich, inclusive history-focusing on smart growth and infrastructure support.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

As both a servant and a leader in Franklin it will continue to be my priority to hear all voices and bring our community together. We have seen many changes in Franklin over the years, and I believe it will be an ongoing challenge to preserve what makes our city and county a place for everyone, for families.

Affordability is a crisis for many folks here, and along with supporting our public schools and teachers, smart growth focused on building infrastructure and affordability will be challenging but very worthwhile priorities of serving as County Commissioner.

Eric McElroy

Republican

Office being sought: County Commission - District 11

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 44 years

Age (optional): 44

Occupation: Transportation engineer

Education: B.S. Civil Engineering from The University of Alabama, alumnus Battle Ground Academy

Family: Whitney (wife of 14 years), two daughters (Lily and Margot)

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Franklin First United Methodist Church member, American Society of Highway Engineers (past president of Middle Tennessee section and Southeast director), Franklin Transit Authority (vice chair and board member), Building and Street Standards Board of Appeals for City of Franklin (board member), Leadership Franklin graduate (Class of 2018-2019), Sustainability Commission for City of Franklin (past board member), Franklin Tomorrow (past board member), Battle Ground Academy alumni board member, Franklin Rotary at Breakfast (past member).

ERIC MCELROY

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term? My top three priorities are intentional growth, traffic and infrastructure and fiscal responsibility.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County is our growth. Williamson County is one of the fastest growing communities in Tennessee and that growth is a testament to everything we have done right.

But if we don't manage growth now, then it can outpace the very things that made our county so special in the first place.

It is not about whether or not we continue to grow, it is about how we grow. Intentional growth means aligning development with infrastructure.

If we use smart transportation planning and engineering now then it will help to guide how we view our growth.

Intentional growth also means preserving and protecting what matters most to us.

Marie Fellhauer

Republican

Office being sought: Williamson County Commissioner, District 11

Have you ever held public office? Yes.

I retired from the Los Angeles Police Department as a Lieutenant II with over 25 years of sworn law enforcement experience serving as a Police Officer, Detective, Sergeant and Lieutenant.

I was an appointed Planning Commissioner in the City of El Segundo for 8 years.

I was an elected City Councilmember in the City of El Segundo for 4 years.

I was elected (by other elected officials) as President of Independent Cities Association representing Southern California's Independent Cities.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? I have lived in Williamson County for a little over four years. My husband, Justin, and I bought properties here in 2020 and moved here in 2022 when I retired.

Age (optional): 53

Occupation: Small Business Owner. After retiring from the LAPD, I started a

MARIE FELLHAUER

jewelry design business specializing in one-of-a-kind designs for private clients. I'm also creating a line of high-end pieces for retail jewelry stores. In 2025, I was honored to receive two prestigious awards from the American Gem Trade Association for one of my designs honoring women survivors of breast cancer.

Education:

California State University, Humboldt—Campus Republican Club President

Bachelor of Science Degree in Mathematics, Minor in Physics/Astronomy

West Point Leadership Program Graduate (hosted by Los Angeles Police Department)

Family: Married for 25 years to Justin Fellhauer and we have one 10-year-old son, Klaus, who is a student in the Williamson County Public School system.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): We have explored many churches in the area and lately have been attending Rolling Hills Church in Franklin. I have been attending Rotary meetings for the last couple of years and was recently inducted into the Franklin Evening Rotary Club. In 2022, I became the Williamson County Group Leader for Moms for America. Being a small business owner, I am also a member of Williamson Inc and recently joined Brentwood Up.

Questions for Williamson County Board of Commissioners candidates:

What will be your top three priorities during your four-year term?

My top three priorities are Public Safety, Responsible Growth, and Fiscal Conservativeness--all while remaining transparent and responsive to the people of Williamson County.

Public Safety is the first responsibility of government. With nearly 26 years in law enforcement, I understand both the needs of our community and the realities faced by those who protect us. I will ensure Williamson County continues to support law enforcement and proactively plan for the needs that come with growth. Safe communities do not happen by accident; they require leadership, planning, and accountability.

Responsible Growth is essential to preserving the quality of life in Williamson County. Growth is inevitable, but it must be aligned with infrastructure capacity—not ahead of it, and not at the expense of current residents. Roads, schools, and public safety resources should be in place before major developments are approved. Growth should not place a burden on existing residents, and expansion must be handled in a fiscally responsible way that protects the character of our communities.

Fiscal responsibility means respecting taxpayers and ensuring government lives within its means. The county does not have its own money—it spends your hard-earned money. With over $100 million in annual debt service, we must prioritize essential services, reduce long-term obligations, and avoid unnecessary tax increases or spending that burdens future generations. Government exists to serve the people, and that begins with being a responsible steward of their tax dollars.

I will lead with discipline, transparency, and a commitment to protecting both the safety and the future of Williamson County.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County is managing rapid growth while protecting taxpayers, preserving our infrastructure, and maintaining the quality of life that makes Williamson County special. Williamson County is facing several major decisions involving debt, the Williamson Medical Center, a dilapidated jail, courthouse capacity, and county employee pay—issues that will have long-term impacts on our community.

Government exists to serve the people, and decisions of this magnitude demand transparency, accountability, and public input. When those decisions impact generations, they must be approached with care and diligence--not rushed or driven by short-term thinking. The voices of our citizens must be part of the process.

My approach is straightforward:

Protect taxpayers by prioritizing innovative, fiscally responsible ways to meet our county's needs without increasing the property tax burden on our citizens.

Reduce and responsibly manage long-term debt so future generations are not burdened.

Ensure infrastructure keeps pace with development so growth does not outstrip our roads, schools, and public safety resources.

Demand transparency and strong oversight in major financial decisions involving taxpayer dollars and public assets.

Identify and implement efficiencies in government spending to ensure every dollar is used effectively.

When decisions are made that place unnecessary strain on taxpayers or infrastructure, they must be re-evaluated and corrected. Leadership requires making responsible choices even when they are difficult.

Williamson County is not strong because of government—it is strong because of its people, and government should never lose sight of that. I am running to ensure Williamson County remains strong, safe, and financially sound—for the families who call it home today and for generations to come.

EDITORS NOTE: THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES DID NOT SEND IN A CANDIDATE PROFILE AS OF PRESS TIME: AARON SMITH, BOBBI SALTSMAN, CHRISTINE VAN CLEAVE, DONNA CLEMENTS, DREW TORRES, MATT WILLIAMS, AND TRACI ANDERSON.
WE WILL ACCOMMODATE CANDIDATE PROFILES NEXT WEEK FOR THESE CANDIDATES IF THEY ARE PROVIDED BY DEADLINE.

ELECTION 2026

WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES

Randy Allen

Republican

Office being sought: Williamson County School Board District 2

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 23 years

Age (optional): 55

Occupation: Pharmacist

Education: BS in Pharmacy; PharmD in Pharmacy both from Samford University 1995/1996

Family: Wife Suzann (married for 30 years); Reagan (24 years), Jackson (20 years), Gavin (19 years). All three kids graduated from Independence High School

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Elder at Cornerstone Presbyterian

RANDY ALLEN

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

What will be your top three priorities during your four-year term?

1. Working alongside the other board members in hiring a new superintendent of schools that will make Williamson County Schools even better than what it is today.

2. Examining the school budget of approximately $700 million making sure our money is being spent in the right way in supporting our teachers and students.

3. Decreasing students' use and dependence on technology to fully develop their critical thinking and social skills

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

1. Not having a superintendent, a leader of administration and teachers, will be a challenge for the new school board. Dr. Leigh Webb will do a great job in the acting role of superintendent this year.

It will be a process, perhaps lengthy and thorough, but it will need to be in order for the new board to have the best discernment in hiring the right candidate for the job who will respect the views and values of our community, and who will understand the elected school board is the governing body of the county's schools, not just an advisory board.

Kristi Bidinger

Independent

Office being sought: Williamson County School Board District 6

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 22 years

Age (optional): 51

Occupation: Senior Administrative Assistant

Education: Bachelor of Science from Middle Tennessee State University

Family: Daughter, Rachel, 15, Sophomore at Brentwood High School

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Board member of Williamson County Homeless Alliance

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

KRISTI BIDINGER

What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

My top priorities are supporting and retaining excellent teachers and staff, keeping students at the center of every decision, and ensuring responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

I will work collaboratively with parents, educators, the superintendent, and the County Commission to address growth while maintaining the high academic standards, safe learning environments, and strong community trust that have made Williamson County Schools one of the best districts in Tennessee.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools is maintaining the high-quality education our community expects while balancing continued growth and limited financial resources. One of the first responsibilities of the next School Board will be selecting a permanent superintendent who can lead our district into the future.

I will work collaboratively to choose an outstanding leader while continuing to support our teachers, invest in student success, and make thoughtful, transparent decisions that are responsible to both students and taxpayers.

Kimberly Calcote

Republican

Office being sought: Williamson County School Board District 6

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? Almost 8 years (almost 10 in Tennessee)

Age (optional): 43

Occupation: Realtor with Benchmark Realty

Education: Bachelor of Science in Management with a Concentration in Human Resources

Family: Husband (Brian) and 4 children (Annabelle-18, James-16, Michael-14 and Brennan- 10)

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): I attend Fellowship Bible Church in Brentwood, where I volunteer in the children's church, I'm a member of the Brentwood Noon Rotary Club, and I'm on the board of the Republican Women of Williamson County as the 1st Vice President.

KIMBERLY CALCOTE

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

My first priority is to keep Williamson County Schools #1 in the state. As a mom of 4 children that have attended Williamson County Schools and as a local Realtor, I know how important our schools are both personally and professionally.

I also want to make sure our schools are safe, so that students can learn and teachers can teach. We want to make sure that the culture in our schools is advantageous to our children's development, which means we need to make every effort to reduce bullying and harassment. Lastly, it's important our students and teachers have quality instructional materials. I believe we should be choosing high caliber curriculums with a body of evidence indicating positive student outcomes.

What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools is preparing our students to adapt to the ever-changing job market. Because we are a high-performing district, we want to continue to find ways to offer innovative models and community partnerships that offer our students experiences and opportunities that teach our students to both think and adapt, which will set our students apart for both college and their future careers.

Jason Greathouse

Democrat

Office being sought: County Board of Education (School Board) District 2

Have you ever held public office?

This is my first time running.

How long have you lived in Williamson County?

A little over 20 years now.

Age (optional): 47

Occupation: Director of Infrastructure for Sentz Global

I manage a team and help design and maintain cloud infrastructure for a global financial provider. We focus on consumer privacy technology while working in regulated financial networks.

Education: High School Diploma, vocational training and certificates.

Although I don't have a college degree, I have taken numerous IT and security-focused courses, received multiple professional certifications, and attended various management training programs over the years.

My career started at a time in IT where practical experience in the tech was more important than formal education. I started by turning screws on a computer assembly floor and advanced through hard work, informal apprenticeships, self-learning, and keeping up to date with technology advancements.

I'm a proponent of expanding access to vocational education in Williamson County Schools. There are plenty of well paying and fulfilling careers that don't necessarily require a college degree, and I believe that some of the best leaders are those who came up through the ranks.

Family: I am 47 years old, married to Kendra, and a proud father of two Williamson County Schools graduates Amelia (2020) and Zachary (2024). Our family has called Spring Hill home for the last 20 years. This community has shaped who we are.

My motivation for running for the School Board is directly related to the success my children have experienced. Amelia has gone on to graduate Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor in Physics from ETSU and is now pursuing a Masters/PhD in Physics at McGill University in Montreal. Zachary is studying Biology at MTSU while following his passion for music and marching band. He is currently on the road marching DCI with Carolina Crown this summer.

JASON GREATHOUSE

I share these accomplishments because they reflect what's possible when a school system gets it right. Williamson County Schools helped shape my children into curious, driven, passionate young adults. I am deeply grateful for that.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):

My family has been active in scouting over the years. Amelia received their Gold Award in 2019 and Zachary made Eagle Rank in 2024.

My wife Kendra has been a regular volunteer at The Well food pantry in Spring Hill and a volunteer uniform lead for the Summit High School Marching Band.

I've been an active contributor to Nashville's technology community for well over a decade. I have been organizing and volunteering at community events like DevOpsDays, Nodevember, and TWISTER (Tennessee Women in Science, Technology, Engineering & Research), and speaking at tech conferences from Nashville to Boston and Washington D.C.

I've long believed that sharing knowledge and lifting others up makes our whole community stronger. That same spirit is what draws me to public service.

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

Teacher, Staff, and Administrator Retention

Our teachers cannot afford to live in the county in which they work. The 3rd party salary survey WCS released found that Williamson is LAST of 8 peer districts for compensation when you take into account cost of living.

I know from experience that pay gets people in the door, but it's the environment that keeps great people working for your organization.

Cost of living: affording to live where you work

Workplace: an environment that supports doing the job well

Voice: room to raise concerns and be heard

Resources: tools and funding to teach effectively

Growth: ongoing training, support, and development

Respect for Expertise

In 2025 the School Board voted to approve a science curriculum over the recommendation of teachers and the review committee. Teachers are our experts. I will trust our experts when it comes to curriculum decisions and my vote will align with their recommendations.

Teaching Our Full History

You cannot prepare students to be responsible citizens while sanitizing the history that shaped this country. I oppose book bans and filtering curriculum to scrub our history of its struggles and hard-won progress.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

In my top three I talk about teacher, staff, and administrator retention. Here are some of my ideas.

Correct our teacher salary shortfalls: the recent salary survey gives the School Board powerful data to show the County Commission that we need proper salary adjustments.

Teacher/Staff school performance bonuses: for the 25/26 school year, 33 of our schools received an "A" grade from the state. This came with $4m in additional funding that could be redirected to performance bonuses for teachers and staff.

Allocating funding for classroom supplies: $1000 teacher expense accounts for classroom supplies. Cost: ~$4.2m, only 0.75% of the budget.

Workplace: we don't suddenly lose a successful leader when everything is healthy behind the scenes. There are board members creating a toxic environment for administrators, staff, and teachers in WCS. It will be my job to question, challenge, and at times disagree with board members and administration, but that can be done in a professional manner.

Cory Martin

Independent

Office being sought: County School Board - District 8

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? 20 years

Age (optional): 47

Occupation: Software developer

Education: B.S. Math and Computer Science from Pepperdine University, 2001.

Family: My wife, Erin, grew up in Brentwood. We got married in 2013. We have two daughters, Audrey and Ruth, who are 10 and 8. They attend Grassland Elementary School.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.):

CORY MARTIN

I volunteer weekly at my daughters' school and have attended most school board meetings over the past four years, sharing updates on local education policy through my Substack. I have served on the board for a nonprofit that combats bullying in Williamson County Schools. I have served my neighborhood on the HOA and in our ongoing struggles with the company that owns our water treatment facility. And in our church, I have worked in the nursery and served on the leadership team.

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

First, recruiting and retaining the best teachers and staff. Williamson County's reputation was built by excellent educators, and retention is as much a culture issue as a compensation one. I'll push the board to treat teachers as the professionals they are, respecting their recommendations, fighting for their funding and keeping partisan pressure out of the classroom.

Second, responsible stewardship of public dollars. Families deserve a board that engages seriously with the budget and shows its work, not one that votes

>>>MARTIN, Cont. on Page A11

ELECTION 2026

WILLIAMSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 10

Elliott Franklin

Republican

Office being sought: School Board – District 10
Have you ever held public office? Yes, Alderman in Bulverde, Texas
How long have you lived in Williamson County? 8 years
Age (optional): 50
Occupation: Cyber Security
Education: BA, Management, MS, Technology
Family: Married with 6 kids.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Security Team Member at Fellowship Bible Church, 2nd Vice Chair, Williamson County Republican Party, CISO Advisory Chair, Middle Tennessee Information Systems Security Association, Public Speaker – Internet Safey, Protecting your family online.

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

1. What will be your top three priorities during your four-year term?

Fiscal Stewardship & Transparency

Williamson County Schools operates on a $608 million annual budget, funded largely by local taxpayers. Under the current TISA funding formula, the state covers only about 33% of school funding, leaving Williamson County taxpayers to fund roughly 67% locally. Elliott supports working with state leaders to pursue a fairer return on local tax dollars and ensuring spending prioritizes classrooms and teachers. Elliott supports school choice but opposes the Tennessee Education Freedom Scholarship Program, which redirects public school funding without addressing academic gaps within the system. Strong schools require financial discipline, transparency, and accountability.

Academic Excellence: Back to Basics

ELLIOTT FRANKLIN

While Williamson County Schools performs well overall, the data shows clear gaps: 31% of students are not proficient in reading and 36% are not proficient in math. Elliott believes those numbers demand action. He supports a strong focus on early literacy through Science of Reading (phonics-based instruction), improved math fluency standards, and measurable progress tracking. Before expanding programs or adopting new trends, the district must ensure every student masters the fundamentals.

Real-World Readiness (with Disciplined Technology)

Williamson County Schools' vision is to provide a supportive environment where students are challenged to pursue excellence in academics, athletics, and the arts. Elliott supports strengthening that mission by ensuring curriculum, instructional materials, and technology are age-appropriate and aligned with high academic standards. He believes classroom technology should be purposeful and limited in early grades, with digital tools regularly evaluated for effectiveness and AI introduced thoughtfully as a support tool — not a replacement for critical thinking. Excellence requires clear standards, strong fundamentals, and sound judgment at every grade level.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

Williamson County Schools faces a growing enrollment challenge — particularly in the younger grades — driven by two converging pressures: the rising cost of living that makes it increasingly difficult for young families to put down roots here, and a sharp increase in families choosing alternatives to traditional public school. Last year, the number of homeschooling families in our county doubled. That is not a statistic we can ignore.

As a parent who has had children in public, private, and homeschool settings, I understand that the decision to leave traditional public education is rarely made lightly. Parents who opt out are sending a message — and our job as a board is to listen, not dismiss. We need to conduct honest, structured outreach to understand why so many Williamson County families are making that decision.

My belief, grounded in conversations across District 10, is that the answer connects directly to all three pillars of my campaign. Fiscal Stewardship & Transparency means parents deserve to know how their tax dollars are being spent and that the board is making sound, accountable decisions. Academic Excellence: Back to Basics means families should never feel they need to leave to get a rigorous, fundamentals-focused education. And Real-World Readiness with Disciplined Technology means we prepare students for life beyond graduation — not just standardized tests — while being thoughtful about how and when technology enters the classroom.

When parents feel that schools have drifted from academics, that spending lacks accountability, and that their children aren't being prepared for the real world, they find alternatives. The solution is to rebuild that trust — and when WCS earns it back, enrollment follows.

Jennifer Parker Konyn

Democrat

Office being sought: County School Board - District 10

Have you ever held public office? No

How long have you lived in Williamson County? Four years, with lifelong family ties to Franklin

Age (optional): 38

Occupation: Nonprofit Professional (Kymari House)

Education: Bachelor of Science in Child Development from Vanderbilt University, 2011

Family: Husband (Matt) and two children ages 3 and 6.

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): Seventh-year active member of the Junior League of Nashville, adoption and foster care advocate, former member of the Davidson County Foster Care Review Board, former board president of Daybreak Arts, former interim board chair of Advocates for Women's and Kids' Equality (AWAKE) Tennessee, member of the Episcopal Church, parent volunteer at Poplar Grove Elementary School.

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

1. What will be your top three priorities during your four-year term?

- Advocating improvements to the teacher pay matrix to ensure that we are not losing experienced teachers' mid-career due to the inequities in our pay matrix as compared to surrounding districts. Along with teacher pay, I will advocate for improved compensation for support staff.
- Accountability around special education services.
- Selecting curriculum that will set our students up for success, within and beyond Williamson County, no matter what it is they choose to pursue after high school.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

Williamson County Schools has a long-standing reputation for excellence but maintaining that standard is becoming increasingly difficult. One of our biggest challenges is ensuring we have the resources to meet the growing needs of our students. Tennessee consistently ranks among the lowest-funded states for public education, and under the TISA funding formula, Williamson County is expected to shoulder a disproportionately high share of our school funding compared to many other counties.

JENNIFER PARKER KONYN

Resources will always be limited so the challenge becomes one of setting the right priorities. We hear concerns about student safety, yet we must ask whether we are investing enough in counselors, school psychologists, support staff, and other services that help students succeed. We hear concerns about excessive screen time, yet the board approved a science curriculum that is primarily virtual. We have also spent valuable time debating whether to replace outdated textbooks, even though asking students to learn from old editions does not set them up for success in a rapidly changing world. These kinds of decisions illustrate why thoughtful governance matters.

A school board cannot solve every funding challenge on its own, but it can ensure every dollar is spent strategically and in ways that directly support students, educators, and academic excellence. That requires board members who are focused on student outcomes, fiscal responsibility, and evidence-based decision-making rather than political distractions.

Martin

Continued from Page A10

against a negotiated budget with no alternative offered and no explanation given. That same principle extends to school choice: I oppose voucher programs that redirect taxpayer dollars to private institutions with no common performance standards to measure results. If public money is being spent, the public deserves to know what it's buying. Public funds should support the public schools that have made this county a place families want to move to.

Third, preparing our students for the workforce they're actually entering. As a working software developer, I use artificial intelligence tools every single day; if I didn't know how to use them well, I wouldn't last long in my field. The district's current AI policy is focused almost entirely on guardrails: approval requirements, data privacy and academic integrity. Those are incredibly important, but guardrails are not a strategy. Our students will enter a workforce where AI literacy is a baseline expectation, not an elective skill. Williamson County earned its reputation by staying ahead of the curve, and I want a board that does the same.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

The biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools is recruiting and retaining the best teachers and staff, demonstrated in the recent departure announcement of our superintendent. Teacher and staff retention is critical for our schools to remain amongst the top school districts in the state.

Teachers leave when they feel disrespected, overruled and politically pressured. A board that treats educators as the experts they are, that fights for their funding, respects their professional recommendations and keeps partisan interference out of the classroom is a board that keeps great teachers in our district.

The recent science textbook adoption process is a clear example. Many WCS educators spent months evaluating curriculum options, only to have the board override their recommendation. As one Williamson County educator said, "If anyone on the board ever questions why teaching positions are so difficult to fill, please look directly at this science textbook adoption cycle to get your answer."

That is not a policy disagreement. It is a culture problem.

We risk our district's reputation and legacy of excellence when we override our teachers' professional judgment and make them feel like outsiders in their own schools.

The solution starts with listening. I will work to rebuild a culture that values, supports and respects our educators. That is how we keep the best teachers in Williamson County.

Brown

Continued from Page A8

and the solution is managing it responsibly. Which means requiring infrastructure before development, so that growth pays for growth and not taxpayers.

We should consider targeted traffic improvements while planning long-term with the state. I suggest we focus growth in the right areas to protect our rural character, while also creating housing options so teachers and first responders can live here as well as our adult children's if they so choose.

Workforce/Affordable/Sustainable/Tiny Houses/Mixuse development housing or whatever we desire to name it, doesn't mean Projects or The Hood. Actually, the city of Franklin just approved 44 affordable and workforce housing units. Also, we must stay ahead of school capacity. I believe, that if we can do this with fiscal discipline and conservatively with common-sense collaboration, we can grow without losing what makes Williamson County the special place we call home.

DISTRICT 12

Jessica Lucyshyn

Democrat

Office being sought: Williamson County School Board District 12 Representative

Have you ever held public office? I have not held an elected position. I have served on the Williamson County Planning Commission since fall 2020, which is a position appointed by the County Mayor.

How long have you lived in Williamson County? Thirteen years; we moved here in July 2013.

Occupation: Market Vice President of Land Planning at Gresham Smith, a full-service architecture and engineering firm

Education: Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from University of Central Florida in Orlando, Florida

Family: Andy, husband of nearly 30 years; Alexander, son; Julia, daughter-in-law; Madeline, daughter; Anna, daughter, and Natalie, daughter

Community Activities (church, civic, etc.): I have volunteered with various non-profits including Our Savior Church, Trinity Elementary PTA, Page High Athletic Booster Club, PHS boys' basketball scorer, and One Gen Away. I am also a Leadership Franklin graduate and currently serve on the board of Franklin Tomrrow.

JESSICA LUCYSHYN

Questions for Williamson County School Board candidates:

1. What will your top three priorities be during your four-year term?

As a member of the WCS board my primary goal will be to make informed decisions grounded in data and research to best serve our students and community. My priorities include:

- Emphasizing mastery of fundamental skills to establish strong academic foundations for all students
- Thoughtfully evaluating screen time and device usage to balance technology benefits with the developmental needs of different grade levels
- Focusing on the recruitment, support, and professional development of enthusiastic teachers who inspire students to engage deeply with their subjects.

It is crucial that our educators foster essential lifelong skills such as tenacity, problem-solving, and critical thinking. These competencies will equip students for success beyond graduation - whether their path leads to college, vocational school, or directly into the workforce.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County Schools and how would you propose to solve it?

One of the biggest challenges facing WCS is finding creative ways for the allocated funding to support the level of excellence expected by the residents. One solution is reducing the amount spent on devices and learning platforms to allocate those funds toward evidence-based methods that improve learning. I am committed to working alongside the other board members and WCS administration to set policies that guide our schools to prepare students for success beyond the classroom.

Petty

Continued from Page A8

County such a desirable place to live.

Planning for future needs

As our county continues to grow, we must prepare today for tomorrow's needs. One example is fire protection in our unincorporated communities. Our volunteer firefighters provide outstanding service, but continued residential growth will eventually require transitioning to some level of full-time professional staffing.

Education also requires careful planning. We must continue building schools where growth demands them while addressing changing enrollment patterns in more established communities. Responsible planning means anticipating future needs before they become crises.

2. What is the biggest challenge facing Williamson County, and how would you propose to solve it?

The greatest challenge facing Williamson County is managing continued growth while preserving the financial strength and quality of life that have made our county successful.

That means making sound decisions regarding the Williamson Health transaction, investing strategically in infrastructure, planning responsibly for future public safety and educational needs, and ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

The next commission will include at least nine new commissioners and a new county mayor. That level of change presents both challenges and opportunities. My role will be to help new members understand county government, encourage thoughtful debate, and keep our focus on making informed decisions that serve the long-term interests of Williamson County.

Throughout my service on the commission, I have believed that good government is built on fiscal responsibility, transparency, collaboration and long-term planning. Those principles will continue to guide every decision I make on behalf of the citi-