

“School Board Candidate? Who? *Me?*”

An Informational Guide to
Becoming a School Board
Member for Metro Nashville
Public Schools

Written and distributed for potential Metro Nashville
Board of Education candidates in Davidson County General Elections which
occur in even numbered years by:



Nashville Public Education Foundation

Introduction

The nine members of the Metro Nashville School Board make critical policy decisions which guide the public schools in Metropolitan Nashville Davidson County, Tennessee. Members serve for four-year terms and may be reelected.

Terms expire for four of the nine School Board members in 2006 and for five members in 2008. Thus, a crucial election will be held on August 3, 2006 for four members in districts 2, 4, 6, and 8. The choices the community makes at the polls will be important in determining the caliber of schools its children will attend in the future.

As part of its commitment to quality public education in Nashville, the Nashville Public Education Foundation compiled the following information for potential School Board candidates in 2004.

Nothing in this information should be construed as endorsement of or support for any individual candidate. The goal of this booklet is solely to provide vital information to all interested candidates and voters in Metro Nashville.

This publication was updated by the League of Women Voters of Nashville in March, 2006.

Criteria for Effective School Board Members

There are many traits an individual should possess to be successful in the demanding position of elected School Board member. The following 13 criteria are based on characteristics identified by Dr. Terrel H. Bell, former United States Secretary of Education (1981-84), as essential elements for effective School Board members.

1. A School Board member needs to have good common sense.

As Dr. Bell commented, “Common sense is very **un**common these days. If I were assessing the candidates in the district where I live, based on what I know of them, the first of all traits to expect is good common sense.”

2. A School Board member needs to know about money, taxation, and priorities in spending financial resources.

Knowing how to read and interpret financial reports, and understanding the fiscal responsibility of the School Board are critical. Many hours of Board time are spent on financial decisions.

3. A School Board member needs to know the community - the *entire* community.

Each School Board member represents a geographic district in Davidson County, but each also represents the needs and the interests of everyone in the community as a whole. Individuals need to understand and respect the diversity in the county-wide school system, and be willing to develop policies to respond to the needs of all segments of the community.

4. A School Board member needs to know politics - local, state and national.

Each School Board member needs a good understanding of politics and governmental function, and, in the words of Dr. Bell, “how to get things done inside the system.”

5. A School Board member needs to know the power structure in the community.

Good public policy does not develop in a vacuum. School Board members need to understand how their work is related to organizations and governmental entities on the local and state level, and they must be willing to work along-side those entities to meet the educational needs in the community.

6. A School Board member needs to be articulate.

Each School Board member must be capable of serving as a spokesperson for the entire Board about policy issues, and advocating for high standards in education for Nashville's schools.

7. A School Board member needs to have maturity.

Elected Board members must be able to disagree without being disagreeable, and to separate personal issues from policy-making decisions.

8. A School Board member needs to be absolutely honest.

The individual must have a strong personal code of ethics, and be free from conflicts of interest which would influence or impede the decision-making process.

9. A School Board member needs to be able to make thoughtful decisions.

Members should be willing and able to assess information objectively and carefully before formulating policy decisions.

10. A School Board member needs to be a good team player, not a "lone ranger."

Participation in group decision-making as a member of a board or other governing body is important background experience.

11. A School Board member needs to have the time and the willingness to spend in service.

Serving on a School Board is a time-consuming task which requires an ongoing commitment. The School Board has regularly scheduled meetings on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Additional special sessions and committee meetings are scheduled as needed.

12. A School Board member needs to be open to learning about new ideas in education, and able to evaluate beliefs objectively based on the data presented.

In our rapidly changing world, it is crucial that School Board members neither automatically reject nor accept educational practices or school environments which are “just the way they have always been.” They need to stay current on new approaches to education and the documented results of their impact on students.

13. A School Board member needs to be absolutely and unequivocally committed to quality public education.

A board member must possess nothing less than a firm belief that excellence in public education is the **right of every student** in the school system.

Requirements for Office

Requirements for candidacy for the Metro Nashville School Board are established by the Tennessee Annotated Code (49-2-202), and by the Metro Nashville Charter (Article 9). An applicant must:

- have resided in Metro Nashville/Davidson County for a minimum of five (5) years
- have resided within the School Board District he or she wishes to represent for a minimum of one (1) year
- be a qualified, registered voter in Davidson County
- be a high school graduate or have a GED diploma
- not hold any other elected or appointed public office
- be willing to serve a four-year term of office with minimal compensation (\$14,000/year plus benefits)

Becoming a Candidate

Interested candidates must go *in person* to pick up a Candidate Nominating Petition from:

Davidson County Election Commission
Howard Office Building
700 Second Avenue South,
Nashville, TN 37210
Phone: 862-8800

Petitions are available between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, beginning January 6, 2006. Candidates must have the signatures of a minimum of twenty-five (25) registered voters who reside in the same School Board district as the candidate. (It is to the candidate's advantage to collect more than the minimum of 25 signatures in case some of the signatures are deemed ineligible by the Davidson County Election Commission.) Petitions must be returned *in person* to the Election commission no later than 12:00 noon on April 6, 2006. At that time, the candidate must submit a copy of his or her high school, GED, or college diploma.

Obligations of the School Board

The Metro Nashville Public School Board has responsibility for a wide range of policy issues which affect every aspect of the school system. While the day-to-day operations of the school district are supervised by Dr. Pedro Garcia, Director of Metro Nashville Public Schools, the School Board actually defines the framework for how the community's schools operate. The Board's mandatory duties are specified by state legislation (Title 49-2-203 of the Tennessee Code) and by the Metro Charter, and are as follows:

Fiscal Obligations:

- After review and/or revision, adopt annual operating budget recommended by Metro Schools personnel
- After review and/or revision, adopt capital improvements plans (new and renovated buildings) recommended by Metro Schools personnel
- Authorize annual audit
- Approve the purchase of supplies, furniture, and materials

The School Board does not have the authority to:

Raise money through either taxes or bond issues. That authority is given to the Metro Council as stated in the Metro Charter.

Legal Obligations:

- Enter into labor contracts with teachers' union representatives
- Adopt salary schedule for all Metro Schools personnel
- Approve tenure for certificated teachers upon the recommendation of the Director of Schools
- Hire tenured teachers and contract for employment
- Request and receive advice from the Metro Department of Law
- Approve purchase, rental, or lease of property

Management Obligations

- Set policies for management and control of all Metro Schools
- Set student discipline policies
- Set standards and policies governing school attendance
- Set personnel policies
- Compile and publish an official policy manual
- Select and hire the Director of Schools

The School Board does not have the authority to:

Act as an administrative board. Day-to-day management responsibilities are delegated to the appointed Director of Metro Public Schools.

Curriculum Obligations:

- Meet standards established for public schools by the State of Tennessee
- Adopt curriculum frameworks
- Adopt textbooks
- Approve school calendar
- Establish graduation requirements

The School Board does not have the authority to:

Make curriculum decisions which do not meet standards mandated by the State of Tennessee.

Other Obligations: Mandatory Tennessee School Board Training

- All new School Board members in Tennessee must attend a two-day Orientation Session in Nashville sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education.
- Every School Board member in Tennessee is required to attend seven hours of annual training provided through the Tennessee School Board Academy. Failure to attend is grounds for a Board member to be removed from office.

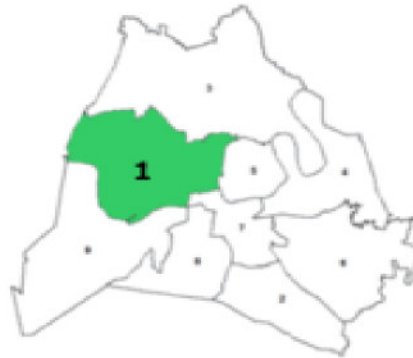
Determination of School Zone Representation

The Metro Nashville Public School System is divided into nine districts, each represented by one School Board member. Interested parties should refer to the charts below to determine in which School Board District they reside.

District 1

Council Districts:

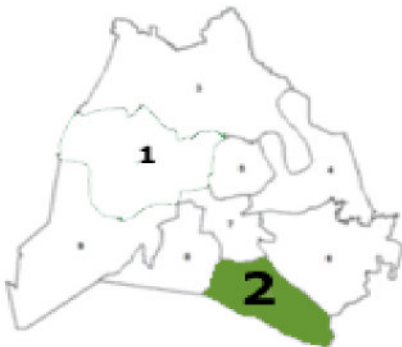
- 1 Brenda Gilmore
- 2 Jamie Isabel
- 3 Vacant
- 19 Ludye Wallace
- 20 Billy Joe Walls
- 21 Edward Whitmore



District 2

Council Districts:

- 26 Greg Adkins
- 27 Randy Foster
- 30 Michael Kerstetter
- 31 Parker Toler
- 32 Sam Coleman



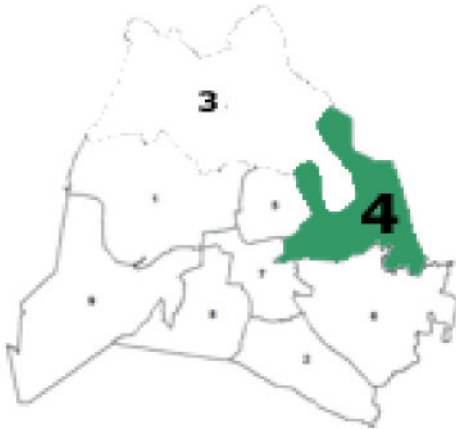
District 3

Council Districts:

- 1 Brenda Gilmore
- 3 Chester Hughes
- 4 Michael Craddock
- 9 Jim Forkum
- 10 Rip Ryman



All School Board members represent residents in more than one Metro Council district. With the setting of new Metro Council districts boundaries, school board districts boundaries may change. Call the Election Commission - 862-8800 - to determine which School Board zone applies.



District 4 Council

Districts:

- 11 Feller Brown
- 12 Jim Gotto
- 14 Harold White
- 15 J.B. Loring

District 5

Council Districts:

- 5 Pam Murray
- 6 Mike Jame son
- 7 Erik Cole
- 8 Jason Hart



District 6

Council Districts:

- 13 Carl Burch
- 28 Jason Alexander
- 29 Vivian Wilhoite
- 32 Sam Coleman
- 33 Tommy Bradley



District 7

Council Districts:

- 13 Carl Burch
- 16 Amanda McClendon
- 17 Ronnie Greer
- 19 Ludy Wallace
- 21 Edward Whitmore
- 26 Greg Adkins



District 8

Council Districts:

- 18 Ginger Hausser
- 19 Ludy Wallace
- 21 Edward Whitmore
- 25 Jim Shulman
- 34 Lynn Williams

District 9

Council Districts:

- 22 Eric Crafton
- 23 Vacant
- 24 John Summers
- 35 Charlie Tygard



Important Dates to Remember:

January 6, 2006	Petitions available from Election Commission
April 6, 2006	Deadline for filing petitions, 12:00 noon
July 3, 2006	Last day to register to vote
July 14 - July 29 2006	Absentee/Early Voting by Personal Appearance
August 3, 2006	Davidson County General Election

For more information contact:

Davidson County Election Commission
Howard Office Building
700 Second Avenue South, Room 153
Nashville, TN 37210
Joan Nixon, Petition and Financial Disclosure Coordinator
862-8800
www.nashville.gov

Tennessee School Board Association
101 French Landing Drive
Nashville, TN 37228
1-800-448-6465
<http://www.tsba.net>

Metro Nashville Public Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204
Dr. Pedro E. Garcia, Director of Schools
259-8400
www.mnps.org