



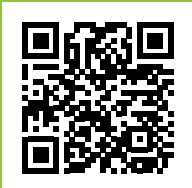
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
**BOARD OF EDUCATION
VOTER GUIDE**

2024

BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 2

Learn more about the candidates
running for Springfield Public
Schools board of education.

**SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
THIS YEAR'S CANDIDATES:**



USING AND UNDERSTANDING THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to serve as a resource for Chamber members evaluating candidates for the Springfield R-12 board of education election on **April 2, 2024**.

Candidate questionnaire:

The Chamber's Education Task Force developed a candidate questionnaire that was sent to all certified candidates for the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) board of education election. These questions align with the Chamber's board-approved Education Platform and focus on the qualifications for school board governance and issues most relevant to the business community, especially as it relates to our future workforce and capacity for economic growth. Candidate responses to the questionnaire are listed in the order the names will appear on the **April 2, 2024**, ballot.

Learn more about the Chamber's Education Task Force and the Education Platform on pages **21 and 22** of this guide.



A MESSAGE FROM BRIAN HAMMONS

Hammons Black Walnuts
2024 Chairman of the Board
Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

WHY QUALITY K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE MATTER TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

For more than 20 years, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce has prioritized a strong public school system due to its direct impact on the future workforce and community vitality. Quality education is fundamental to economic growth, with district governance and student performance shaping our region's economic potential.

Given the strong correlation between public education and economic vitality, district leaders must grasp evolving factors affecting student readiness for college and careers. As the largest district in the state with nearly 25,000 students, our R-12 school district plays a pivotal role in regional workforce development, necessitating ongoing consideration of business community needs by district leadership.

The Chamber advocates for academically excellent schools that are accountable, safe, visionary, and equipped to prepare students for the 21st century. Established in 1999 and reviewed annually, the Chamber's Education Platform sets strategic objectives and policy positions to guide decision-making.

The Chamber serves as a catalyst for synergy and connection across southwest Missouri. Aligned with our Education Platform and driven by member feedback, the Chamber provides transparent, volunteer-led member education that provides meaningful information about all Springfield Public Schools board of education candidates. These resources aim to help members evaluate all candidates through a business lens and to make their own informed decisions at the ballot box.

We encourage you to use these resources to help identify who you think is best positioned to lead our school district. The governance of the district matters and it's up to all of us to be informed and vote for the most qualified candidates on April 2!



CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Voters will be asked to select **three** of the seven certified candidates on the April 2, 2024, ballot.

Qualifications for school board members:

School board members must be a resident of the school district, have resided within the state for one year at the time of election or appointment, and be at least 24 years of age. The term of a member is three years. The primary function of the board of education is to oversee the education of children in the community.

Current members of the SPS board of education:

- Danielle Kincaid, Board President (*term ends in 2023 - seeking re-election*)
- Scott Crise, Board Vice President (*term ends in 2023 - seeking re-election*)
- Judy Brunner (*term ends in 2026*)
- Kelly Byrne (*term ends in 2025*)
- Steve Makoski (*term ends in 2025*)
- Dr. Maryam Mohammadkhani (*term ends in 2023 - seeking re-election*)
- Dr. Shurita Thomas-Tate (*term ends in 2026*)

For more information about the SPS board, visit sps.org



DANIELLE KINCAID

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Founded The Elder Law Group in 2019, focusing on the legal needs of the senior population – estate planning, long-term care planning, powers of attorney, advanced directives and estate administration after death

EDUCATION

- Juris Doctor, Creighton University School of Law
- Master of Business Administration, Missouri State University
- Bachelor of Science, Criminology, Missouri State University

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Greene County Estate Planning Council, Treasurer
- Community Foundation of the Ozarks, Professional Advisors Council, Member
- Legal Services of Southern Missouri, pro bono and judicare program
- HavaHeart Rescue, Foster Parent
- Springfield Metropolitan Bar Association (former Board member)
- Foundation for Springfield Public Schools (former Board member)

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- danielleforsps.com
- Facebook Page: DanielleforSPS



LANDON McCARTER

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Owner and president of Secure Agent Marketing, a digital marketing agency with approximately 40 employees
- 14 years of entrepreneurial experience, having previously built and sold multiple businesses
- Real estate investor with his wife Lindze McCarter

EDUCATION

- Bachelor's Degree, Marketing, Missouri State University
- Attended Springfield Public Schools, graduate of Kickapoo High School

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Missouri State University Marketing Advisory Board, Member
- Man Up and Go, Board Member
- Youth basketball coach for nearly a decade at The Fieldhouse

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- landonmccarter4sps.com
- Facebook Group: Landon McCarter for SPS School Board

CANDIDATE INFORMATION



SUSAN PROVANCE

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Archery Coordinator, Springfield Public Schools (2018-present)
- Athletic Administrator, Springfield-Greene County Park Board (2006-2018)
- Assistant Softball Coach and Teacher, Southwest Baptist University (2005-2006)
- Teacher and Coach, Springfield Public Schools (1979-2005)
- Teacher and Coach, Willard Public Schools (1975-1979)

EDUCATION

- Master of Education in Physical Education, Drury University
- Bachelor of Science in Physical Education, University of Tulsa

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Springfield Public Schools Hall of Fame Inductee, 2015
- The Bee Payne Steward Strut, The Turkey Trot, Fire Fall, Sister Cities, The Springfield Lasers, USA Olympic Softball
- Grant Beach Neighborhood Association
- Local, State and National USTA Tennis and ASA Softball Tournaments
- Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Saint Vincent DePaul Society, Cook's Kettle and The Life House

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- coachprovance.com
- Facebook Page: Susan Provance for SPS School Board



SCOTT CRISE

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Associated Electric Cooperative Inc (AECI)
 - Manager, Gas Plant Operations (March 2022-Present)
 - Manager, Technical Services (October 2019-March 2022)
 - Supervisor, Engineering Projects (December 2016-October 2019)
 - Principal Engineer (November 2006-December 2016)
 - Mechanical Engineer (May 1999-November 2006)
- CF Industries
 - Marketing Planner (May 1998-April 1999)
 - Manager, Process Engineering (November 1996-May 1998)

EDUCATION

- Master of Business Administration, University of Chicago
- Bachelor of Science degrees in Petroleum and Mechanical Engineering, University of Tulsa

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- One of three board liaison's on the Community Task Force on Facilities
- Missouri School Board Association Board of Directors
- AECI Excel Award – Community Advocate (2022)
- Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce School Board Endorsement Task Force (2005-2020)
- Ronald McDonald House of the Ozarks Board of Directors (2013-2020)
- Springfield Workshop Foundation Golf Tournament Board (2010-present)
- Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland Board of Directors (2006-2009)
- Springfield Public Schools Foundation Board of Directors (2000-2006)

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- scottcrise.com
- Facebook Page: Scott Crise for School Board

DISTRICT FACTS

MISSOURI'S
LARGEST PUBLIC
K-12 SYSTEM

SPS 4-YEAR
GRADUATION RATE
93.5%
(2022)

MISSOURI'S
ONLY K-12
INTERNATIONAL
BACCALAUREATE
PROGRAM



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Associate Professor of Sociology, Missouri State University (2023-present)
- Director, Health Equity Research Collective (HERC), Missouri State University (2021-present)
- Faculty Affiliate, Gerontology Program, Missouri State University (2017-present)
- Assistant Professor of Sociology, Missouri State University (2017-2023)

EDUCATION

- Ph.D., Sociology and Demography, Pennsylvania State University
- M.A., Sociology and Demography, Pennsylvania State University
- B.S., Human Development and Family Studies, Minor in Gerontology, Cornell University

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Missouri Council on Aging, Secretary
- NAACP-Springfield Chapter, Vice President
- Health Equity Collaborative, Springfield-Greene County Health Department, Member
- Missouri Foundation for Health, St. Louis, MO, Board of Directors
- GLO Center, Media and Community Liaison of the Board
- Midwest Sociological Society, Nomination Committee
- PRB, Washington, DC, Board of Trustees
- Policy Communications Training Program, PRB, Working Group Leader
- PROMO, Missouri's Statewide LGBTQ+ Advocacy Organization, Board of Directors

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- kyler4sps.com
- Facebook Page: Kyler Sherman-Wilkins for SPS
- Instagram: @kyler4sps



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Pharmacist In Charge and Facility Director, Health Direct Pharmacy Services (2003-present)
- Staff Pharmacist, QPS, LLC (2020-present)
- Served as an educator and preceptor for UMKC Pharmacy School

EDUCATION

- Doctor of Pharmacy, University of Missouri – Kansas City School of Pharmacy
- Bachelor of Science in Chemistry and Minor in Biology, Southwest Missouri State University
- Attended Springfield Public Schools, graduate of Glendale High School

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Brace for Impact Ambassador
- Spartan and Tough Mudder Ambassador
- Mudgear Ambassador
- Athletic Brewing Company Ambassador

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- chadrollins4sps.com
- Facebook Page: Dr. Chad Rollins 4SPS



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Pathologist at Pathology Services of Springfield & Director of Anatomic Pathology at Cox Health (2001-2017)
- Laboratory Instructor in Microbiology and Hematopathology, Harvard Medical School (1999-2001)
- Clinical Fellow in Cytopathology, Massachusetts General Hospital (2000-2001)
- Clinical Fellow in Surgical Pathology, Massachusetts General Hospital (1999-2000)
- Resident in Combined Anatomic and Clinical Pathology, Massachusetts General Hospital (1995-1999)

EDUCATION

- M.D. with Highest Distinction, University of Southern California School of Medicine
- B.S., Summa Cum Laude, University of California, Irvine – School of Biological Sciences

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- North Springfield Betterment Association, School Committee member and serve on the Association Board
- Council of Churches of the Ozarks Volunteer Program, Math Buddy at Weller Elementary

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

- maryamforsps.com
- Facebook Page: MaryamForSPS

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO RUN FOR SPS BOARD OF EDUCATION? WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE BEST CANDIDATE?



DANIELLE KINCAID

I am running because public education and our public schools matter for the success of our community. Like so many, I am a product of quality public education from kindergarten through college. My professional career would not be possible without that education and the time, energy, and efforts of the countless people who made and make our public schools great – teachers, administrators, staff, etc. I left Springfield to attend law school, but I always knew I would move back. When I returned, I wanted to do more than just call Springfield home; I wanted to serve the community that has been, and continues to be, such an important part of my life.

My interest and engagement in the School Board began with my service on the Board of Directors of the Foundation for Springfield Public Schools. I ran for the Board of Education in 2021 because I wanted to serve our community in a way that greatly benefited our public schools, especially the children that attend them and the teachers that give so much to them. I was honored to be elected president of the Board in 2023, and I continue to advocate for the needs of our students and educators. I look forward to continuing to serve, where I know I can make a larger impact during a second term. My current SPS Board of Education experience, my legal background, and my commitment to our teachers, parents, students, and community make me the best candidate for this position.



LANDON McCARTER

I decided to run for the school board driven by a deep dedication to Springfield and a personal connection to education. Raised by parents who collectively dedicated over four decades to teaching in the SPS system, I grew up with education at the core of my values. As a proud graduate of Kickapoo High School and a parent with three children currently enrolled in the SPS system (ages 13, 11, and 9), my commitment to Springfield and its public schools extends beyond familial ties.

With 15 years as a local business owner and entrepreneur, employing hundreds of Springfield residents, my proven success in business and leadership is a foundational qualification for my role on the school board. Beyond personal ties, it's about leveraging my experience to benefit the dedicated staff and students of SPS.

My goal is to contribute fresh perspectives and apply my entrepreneurial acumen to address the evolving challenges in education. As someone deeply invested in the community and armed with proven business leadership, I am confident in my ability to navigate the complexities of the contemporary education landscape. My ultimate aim is to ensure that SPS excels, offering quality education and unwavering support to both staff and students, thereby nurturing the foundation of our vibrant community.



SUSAN PROVANCE

My decision to seek a seat is a continuation of over 30 years of demonstrated commitment to SPS students and families. I believe a public-school district is the foundation of a community and caring for and educating a student is the greatest gift one can give to families.

I am a Champion for Kids. I understand the importance of advocating and supporting policies that focus on enhancing resources while promoting a positive, safe learning environment for everyone. I will support initiatives that improve academic achievement for all students.

From addressing the critical topic of student behavior and student code of conduct policy to ensuring all staff feel safe in their work environment, these are top priorities for me. In short, I will do what is best for kids - from budgeting to setting policy. I always have, and I always will.

I am a trusted advocate for educators and families. What differentiates me is my entire life's work reveals I've been an advocate for students, educators, and families. I know the importance of listening, collaborating, and focusing on policies and practices that support community involvement. Board members must listen with empathy while focusing on solutions. I am a team-player. I understand how to identify and work together in an effort to provide creative solutions to complex problems.



SCOTT CRISE

I love Springfield and am proud to have raised my daughters in this community. I was always involved in their education, and I have a passion for public education. In 2021, my daughters had graduated from Springfield Public Schools and my job had recently changed, requiring much less travel than before, so I ran for the school board and was elected. Now, I want to see that job through.

Nearly three years of experience on the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education better qualifies me to represent the diverse needs of SPS stakeholders. Since my election in April 2021, I have worked with a new superintendent and provided input to her initial entry plans. I was one of the Board liaisons to the Community Task Force for Facilities, and I helped update the five-year strategic plan.

As an operations manager with experience in construction management, budgeting and long-term, strategic planning, I am uniquely qualified to continue tackling the challenges faced by Springfield Public Schools. Our children need an advocate who has been invested in our district and has the know-how to make firm decisions to plan the next steps to move SPS forward.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

I am running for school board because my experience as an educator, researcher, and advocate for public schooling and all students make me uniquely qualified to contribute to the Board of Education's efforts to address the most pressing challenges facing our district. I believe that a robust public school system is the bedrock of a healthy, vibrant community and that for many Americans, a quality education system staffed by dedicated educators who make up said system is the key to achieving the American Dream. My own personal story starting as a child of a single mom living paycheck to paycheck to completing the highest level of education in my field and working as a tenured professor at a public university highlights the transformative power of public schools.

I am concerned that the quality public education that I was blessed to receive is becoming less accessible to many of our students. I am also increasingly concerned by the number of challenges facing our district. Whether it be issues surrounding student discipline, teacher retention and morale, or student safety and belonging (which are required for student's academic thriving), the school board will play a vital role in ensuring that the district addresses these challenges head on in a data-informed, solutions-oriented way. I do believe that my experience and expertise in analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data as a researcher, problem solving, consensus building, combined with my passion and commitment for educating our youth will be an asset to the board.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

I have 15 years of experience as a parent of children in SPS. Four of my seven children still attend SPS schools. Not only do I have my thumb on the pulse of our schools, I have eyes-on-the-ground at every level. I work extensively with the youth of Springfield in the areas of self-improvement, self-esteem, nutrition & physical fitness and have been met with success after success as these young individuals grow into adulthood. After witnessing this and knowing I'm committed to bringing personal excellence with clear guidelines to our students, teachers, and administration, I'm ready to serve. I set my own standards high and strive daily to inspire the same in others.

I'm primed and ready for a seat on the SPS R-12 School Board, eagle-eye focused on the needs of our Students, our Teachers, our Administrative & Support Staff, and our Community. As a member of the SPS R-12 Board, I would be an asset.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

As was true three years ago when I first entered the race for the Board, I still believe that SPS graduates can and should be unquestionably academically proficient, competent thinkers, persons of character and integrity, and engaged citizens. I am still willing to acknowledge what is broken and work to fix it. This willingness has marked my tenure on the Board, where I have been committed to prioritizing policies and plans that put students' educational needs first, standing strong in the face of the many challenges encountered.

The more familiar I become with the educational system, the more steadfast I am in my pursuit of improving student outcomes with respect to academic and social success, as they both contribute to the upward mobility of our citizens. It is in this way that the Springfield area can thrive and be the place where young adults work and contribute to the socioeconomic and cultural livelihood of the community, with lowering poverty and decreasing crime, where families come to flourish, and businesses come to excel – that is the ultimate return on investing in student achievement.

The need to support public schools has never been more urgent. It is my hope that the business community recognizes my service and the promises I kept, and then rally behind me to continue championing student success because, ultimately, that is what will benefit the system. I aim to continue as a transformative leader that will protect, support, and represent the taxpayers and businesses in attaining this goal.

WHAT ARE THE TOP ISSUES YOU WILL ADDRESS IF ELECTED? WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?



DANIELLE KINCAID

Among my highest priorities for my next term will be bridging the recent divide between members of the Board and outside interest groups, working to stem the recent increase in behavioral challenges among Springfield's student body, increasing the academic achievement of our students, and creating an environment of nonpartisanship in District Board meetings.

We know that today's students are not the same as their counterparts a decade ago; their challenges are different, and so too are the solutions to those challenges. We need a team approach, but I think the first step is to engage educators and staff at all levels to better understand the current challenges they experience and inquire about what immediate action is needed from the administration and the Board.



LANDON McCARTER

Issue 1: Classroom Safety and Behavior

Classroom safety and behavior require a proactive strategy, involving collaboration with similar districts facing similar challenges. Learning from successful models, we'll prioritize raising behavioral expectations and enforcing consequences. Working closely with stakeholders, we aim to create a quality learning environment.

Addressing Strategy: Collaborating with stakeholders and leveraging successful models, we'll implement evidence-based approaches to enhance behavioral expectations and consequences, fostering a safer learning atmosphere.

Issue 2: Teacher Attrition and Attraction

Teacher attrition and attraction are critical concerns. Valuing educators, listening to their concerns, and providing robust support through additional staff and behavioral frameworks are key to retaining valuable teaching staff.

Addressing Strategy: Prioritizing teacher appreciation programs, actively listening to concerns, and implementing robust support systems, including necessary behavioral frameworks, are essential for retaining experienced educators.

Issue 3: Budgeting and Financial Challenges

Financial challenges, compounded by federal funding reductions and a decrease in student enrollment, demand an innovative approach. My entrepreneurial background uniquely positions me to tackle this challenge. Adopting an entrepreneurial mindset in budgeting and resource allocation is crucial.

Addressing Strategy: Applying entrepreneurial principles to identify innovative funding sources, maximize existing resources, and develop strategic partnerships is essential. This approach allows us to navigate budget constraints while safeguarding the quality of education offered.



SUSAN PROVANCE

Teacher Shortage: A shortage of well qualified teaching applicants and candidates is real, and it should not be minimized. The teaching profession supports and creates all other professions: it begins first at home, and then in the classroom. Without quality educators, our economy will suffer. We must continue to recruit and retain the very best educators, but recruitment and salaries alone will not be enough. If policy changes are needed to improve working conditions and attract the best and brightest, that is what we must do.

Long-Range Master Facilities Plan: Aging facilities signaled a need for a comprehensive long-range master plan. That data was used to help inform the work of the Community Task Force on Facilities. Their recommendations brought forth priorities to the board that placed those issues on the ballot. The community has passed two bonds (2019 & 2023) to improve safer, quality learning environments that are essential for our students and staff. The board's fiscal and fiduciary responsibilities are critical matters that deserve oversight and consideration. Our word is our bond with the community. Promises made must be promises kept.

Funding Streams: Ensuring the state formula is fully-funded should remain a top advocacy effort. Monitoring threats to public-education, such as vouchers that divert public dollars to private schools, should be of concern. As we see ESSER dollars leaving our district, ensuring necessary teacher support continues to be pivotal for student success.



SCOTT CRISE

One issue facing SPS is discipline. The best approach to addressing student discipline issues is to create a positive and supportive school culture that promotes effective communication and provides fair and consistent disciplinary measures. Students and parents must understand the consequences of their poor choices. A good first step was to provide each student a student handbook and code of conduct. Parents were asked to sign a document stating that both they and their student had reviewed it. The district must also have an effective discipline plan in place

that ensures teachers and staff (e.g., principals) are trained and provided effective classroom management strategies, including de-escalation techniques and effective communication strategies that can prevent or manage disruptive behaviors. Furthermore, the board should direct staff to collect and analyze data on discipline incidents to identify any patterns and improve discipline strategies over time. This will also provide information to evaluate whether student discipline is consistent between sites, as it should be.

A second issue facing SPS is retaining high-quality teachers. There are many factors that contribute to attracting and maintaining quality teaching staff at SPS: salaries and benefits, support and mentoring, professional development, recognition, and student discipline as detailed in number 4 below.

A third issue facing SPS is addressing the long-term facility planning of the district. The district needs to update its 10-year facility plan as outlined in the strategic plan. My experience with construction management and long-term planning will benefit the district in these areas.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

In my view, I would say that attracting and retaining teachers, preparing students for long-term success, and addressing student discipline are top issues.

First, as it pertains to attracting and retaining teachers, I provide a more detailed response in my answer to Question 4.

Second, preparing students for long-term success is key. As a board member, I will carefully consider innovative strategies brought forward by our own SPS leaders with expertise in curriculum development and pedagogy while also taking note of strategies employed by other districts. I will not support any changes to curriculum without having confidence that it will enhance and not detract from student success.

Third, addressing student discipline issues should be a top priority for SPS. I had the good fortune of serving on the 2022 discipline review working team organized by SPS where I joined community stakeholders in examining discipline data and providing recommendations on how to best address student misconduct. To be sure, this working group which met over the course of one year was just one step in addressing the district's discipline issues. But it presents a model and an acknowledgment that any solution to this problem requires collaboration between multiple SPS stakeholders and data-driven solutions. If elected, I am committed to ensure that these collaborative efforts to address discipline are continued and prioritized.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

Issue #1, Academic Achievement - As board members, we must remain focused on implementing and monitoring the Strategic Plan. It's imperative we work towards improving the classroom environment and promoting attendance to empower our SPS graduates to meet their challenges as productive adults.

Issue #2, Lack of Non-Disruptive Discipline in the Classroom - In order to improve the classroom environment, we must keep it safe for both the students AND THE TEACHERS. They are not safe now. Lack of effective, consequential discipline has led to the safety issue and the safety issue leads to a classroom where learning is nearly impossible. This must stop. Evaluation of all current policies (such as those for cellphones, technology vs. textbooks and adequate support staff) require ongoing evaluation as potential contributing factors to the disciplinary concerns.

Issue #3, Teacher Retention - Missouri currently ranks 47th in the nation in average teacher salaries. I firmly believe that an increase in teacher compensation is just one opportunity SPS has to improve our teacher retention rate. An effective student discipline policy and recruiting adequate support staff are two additional opportunities I would pursue to attract and keep good teachers. I will advocate for collaboration between teachers and administrators as well as professional development for all educators.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

We face an ongoing challenge from the continually changing demographic composition of our community, as reflected in the transformation of many schools, once thought to be solidly middle class in neighborhood composition, into high-poverty sites. The effects of economic dislocation, rapid social and cultural change, and familial dysfunction have fundamentally altered the very purpose of public education here and beyond.

We are also confronting a phenomenon which is emerging as a core challenge. The competition for the enrollment and retention of large blocks of students is growing and will likely intensify, effectively siphoning off some of the most motivated students and parents and targeted at affluent and highly educated households. Additionally, homeschooling is also growing as another viable alternative to traditional public schools. While the creation of additional special focus or choice schools may be sufficient to attract and retain some prospective students, only by fundamentally altering the real and/or perceived relative position of measurable SPS academic and school disciplinary performance vis-à-vis these alternatives, can we substantially reverse the current course. Meeting this challenge is also critical to maintaining local support by patrons for levy and bond proposals.

Integral to each of the foregoing, SPS must indisputably be a coveted destination for the best teachers and building leaders available. Providing the necessary supports to maintain a disciplined learning environment, protecting staff and especially teachers from being overextended, and securing classroom resources necessary for success would go a long way toward securing the best personnel fundamental to meeting these challenges.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE CRITICAL WORKFORCE NEEDS FACING EMPLOYERS AND HOW WOULD YOU ENSURE THE DISTRICT IS WORKING TO MEET THOSE NEEDS?



DANIELLE KINCAID

As a member of the school board, I recognize the importance of preparing students for the workforce. Critical workforce needs include not only technical skills but also soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, and collaboration. To ensure the district is meeting these needs, I would advocate for partnerships with local businesses and industries to develop relevant curriculum, offer apprenticeships, and provide career readiness programs. Additionally, I would support expanding vocational and technical education opportunities within the district to equip students with the skills they need to succeed in the workforce. The only way to know the current needs of employers in our community and state is by directly communicating with them and working with them to ensure we are doing what we can to produce career-ready students.



LANDON McCARTER

Critical workforce needs facing employers include a demand for well-prepared, skilled individuals who can contribute effectively to the workforce. As someone with a deep commitment to education and a background in business and entrepreneurship for the past 15 years in Springfield, I understand the importance of aligning education with the needs of employers.

To ensure the district meets these workforce needs, I would focus on enhancing vocational and technical education programs, creating partnerships with local businesses, and involving employers in internship opportunities. By fostering collaboration between educators and employers, we can tailor educational offerings to align with the skills required in the local job market. This approach not only benefits students by providing them with practical, job-ready skills but also addresses the workforce needs of our community, promoting economic growth and sustainability. As a board member, I am dedicated to bridging the gap between education and employment, preparing students for success in the workforce while meeting the evolving needs of our local employers.



SUSAN PROVANCE

School boards and educators must listen to business and industry because workforce development is a necessary component of thriving economies. In the past few years, SPS has provided career pathway exploration and education to all middle and high school students. SPS should continue to encourage all students to explore options while exposing them to a variety of career pathways. I support efforts to develop talent by exposing students to career options while facilitating a continual dialogue between students, families, and counselors including awareness of the skills and education needed to obtain a desired position.

Recently, Missouri State University, Ozarks Technical Community College, CoxHealth, and Springfield Public Schools launched the Alliance for Health Care Education. The Alliance is a collaborative approach designed to develop the talent to address our region's health care workforce. This is one type of partnership I would support as a board member as it helps us meet local workforce development needs.

Good things may be accomplished by an individual, but great things can be accomplished by a team. As a board member, I will support partnerships that truly benefit and engage our students with learning to improve their self-confidence while gaining skills to succeed in life.



SCOTT CRISE

Employers are finding it challenging to attract, hire and maintain skilled workers. It is essential that Springfield Public Schools administration have relationships with businesses in the Springfield community to determine their needs. Springfield Public Schools need to continue to have successful programs like the Alliance for Healthcare Education, OTC Middle College, the Ag Academy, just to name a few, to prepare students to be college and/or career ready. My fear is that successful partnerships may go away due to partisanship on the board. If elected, I will continue to be nonpartisan and will work hard to protect those partnerships, especially the Alliance for Healthcare Education, which is a very unique program that benefits many, especially students from Springfield Public Schools.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

Workforce needs facing employers are varied and are conditional on the industry. Despite these varied needs, there are some common needs that employers often face, such as a skilled labor shortage, technological advancements requiring a digital-savvy workforce, and a lack of diversity and inclusion. To address these challenges, the first step is to continue to build effective partnerships with local employers to understand their specific workforce needs. Regular meetings, surveys, and forums can be organized to gather feedback and insights on the skills and talents they require. Additionally, the district should continue to prioritize providing high-quality education that emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity.

In addition to traditional education, we must strengthen practical training programs designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. Collaborating with local businesses and industries to offer internships, apprenticeships, and experiential learning opportunities will allow students to develop the skills demanded by employers while gaining valuable hands-on experience.

Moreover, the district should continue and actively prioritize supporting professional development for teachers. Teachers need to be up to date with the latest advancements in technology and industry practices to effectively prepare students for the workforce. Offering workshops, seminars, and access to educational resources will help teachers stay abreast of the changes in the job market and better guide students towards career success.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

At a young age, say K-9, the focus of our education should be to instill the basics, including reading, writing, math, civics, history, geography, etc. We should provide opportunities to use reasoning skills and develop social skills.

By the 10th grade, we should begin to provide support to identify potential career path aspirations, communicating with the student's parental figure(s) as this process progresses. This can be done via a combination of testing, career counselors and simply listening to the student.

As career interests surface, guide those in 11th & 12th grade toward coursework/apprenticeships in that area when & where possible. This could include entering the workforce, attending technical trade schools, obtaining certifications or degrees in conjunction with any other required classwork to graduate from SPS.

For students where a career path is a challenge to define, we need to at least provide enough of an education they are able to deal with financial transactions and maintain a budget as well as be able to read and analyze what is being read.

Overall, more investment in effective career planning and tertiary education guidance may be needed but once our students graduate, they will be prepared for the future as adults. That should be our goal as well as to prepare them for employment by such businesses as the members of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

While there is a workforce need across the board as pandemic recovery continues, the most critical shortage is likely to be entry level positions in various industries and across many sectors.

Although students are substantially more digitally savvy, they need sophisticated technology to develop and practice the skills necessary to compete in the emerging markets for years to come and to effectively relate to the world advancing around them. Meanwhile, we cannot overlook emphasis on basic educational subjects such as English and Mathematics, and we cannot lose sight of the importance of competency in verbal communication and the social and personal skills necessary for success. Whether vocational training, machinery, cutting-edge technology, or continuing with higher education, mastery of the basics in subjects as well as the basics of social engagement, work ethic, and personal responsibility are critical to ensure success in a career and opportunities for leadership.

I am intent on seeing Springfield students learn how to write and type, become proficient in verbal and written communication, as well as digital etiquette, so they are equipped with skills to enter the digital world with real world skills, whether to enter a career or postsecondary education. I will continue to promote the balanced approach to learning to ensure that our students develop strong bonds with their teachers, their peers, and their communities, so they are success-ready when they leave our buildings to become informed and engaged citizens who are determined and resourceful in the pursuit of their goals.

WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?



DANIELLE KINCAID

We must address the strain that student behavioral issues are putting on our teachers and staff. The mass exodus of educators is not unique to Springfield Public Schools, however, our solution can and should be unique. I welcome suggestions from educators, including unconventional suggestions to attract and maintain quality educators. Springfield Public Schools' priority must be to cultivate the best educators in our State and to ensure their safety in our classrooms. In 2019, I voted to increase teacher pay by a 3% cost of living raise plus a step on the salary schedule. In 2022, I voted to increase teacher pay by 4% (the largest percentage increase since 1991) plus a step on the salary schedule. I have, and will continue, to support higher wages for all SPS employees, though I recognize that salary is only part of the equation to attract and maintain quality educators. Effective lines of communication between educators, administration, and the Board of Education that are continuous, open, and flow in both directions are truly vital. Educators should feel their voice is being heard by those making decisions on their behalf and that work is being done to address those concerns. Improving the lines of communication between those in the classroom, the administration, and the Board is an area of opportunity for the Board in upcoming years. I will focus on providing additional supports for those employees in our classrooms and schools to ensure a positive and safe environment. I will also seek to increase communication between educators and administration.



LANDON McCARTER

To ensure SPS recruits and retains quality teachers, I would focus on creating a supportive work environment through competitive compensation, professional development opportunities, and recognition programs. Additionally, acknowledging the pivotal role of support professionals and ensuring their equitable compensation and opportunities for growth is crucial. Conducting proactive measures, such as exit interviews, to understand turnover causes and acting on feedback, demonstrates a commitment to staff satisfaction and wellbeing.

Addressing the root cause of teacher turnover, particularly the strain caused by student behavior, would be central. Teachers are burdened with multiple roles beyond teaching, including social work and behavior specialists. To mitigate this, prioritizing clear behavior expectations, consistent consequences, and providing necessary support services for students is paramount. By alleviating the burden on teachers and creating a disciplined yet supportive environment, we can attract and retain quality educators, fostering a positive learning atmosphere.



SUSAN PROVANCE

The current teacher shortage is critical, and universities are not producing the necessary number of education graduates to fill openings. Salaries and benefits are important, but those things alone will not be enough to encourage the best educators to remain in the profession.

Teachers want and deserve a work environment that teaches and ensures respectful behavior. School board members may address disruptive behaviors by monitoring disciplinary statistics and ensuring the student code of conduct is appropriately aligned to policies and procedures designed to reduce behaviors that disrupt the academic environment.

There is no perfect discipline policy that will be effective for all students. Solving the problem requires communication between the teacher, administrator, and families. Classroom management has always been a combination of positive and negative reinforcement. Every teacher and every principal should be working to solve the problem, but both need to be on the same page. Physical violence, threats and verbal abuse MUST NOT be tolerated.

Finally, it should be noted disruptive behaviors are often a way to divert attention from academic challenges. A district-wide emphasis on improving reading levels at all grade levels will help ensure academic success. Homework should be encouraged focusing on repetition and the responsibility to take it home and return it.



SCOTT CRISE

To have success-ready students, we must make it a priority to attract and maintain quality teacher and support professionals at SPS. There are many factors that contribute to attracting and retaining quality teaching staff at SPS. First, the district needs to continue to increase salaries and benefits. SPS's incentive for early notification of resignation or retirement is beneficial as it allows SPS to get to the market earlier than other districts to recruit the best talent. New teachers must have great support, including comprehensive, ongoing training and mentors assigned to support and nurture them. Additionally, the district must provide a robust assortment of leadership and professional development opportunities. Furthermore, the district must continue to recognize top teachers who excel, find ways for them to share their successful strategies with others, and provide meaningful incentives to help teachers reach their goals. SPS must also improve in addressing student discipline issues in a consistent manner.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

I trust that the district is already engaged in conversations on how to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and I am eager to join these conversations. That said, there are several strategies that I would support. First and foremost, we must ensure that our teachers are receiving competitive salaries and benefits. The job of teacher is vital for the functioning of our society. Teacher's pay should reflect their importance. Therefore, I would support examining the budget and prioritizing higher salaries for teachers. Second, we must ensure that teachers are afforded work-life balance. This includes consideration of flexible scheduling options and providing manageable workloads to lower the risk of burnout. Consequently, I would support examining ways to ease the burden on our teachers including providing more in-class support so that teachers can take time to plan and complete paperwork/reporting. Third, I would support strengthening existing mentorship programs where experienced educators work with new teachers and help them manage the early years. There is so much wisdom that our experienced teachers possess. We should leverage that wisdom. Fourth, I think prioritizing creating a positive and supporting school culture is important. Teachers should feel valued, supported, and have ample opportunities to advance through professional development opportunities and opportunities to take on leadership roles. Lastly, I would review existing communication channels by which our teachers are able to communicate with administration (and vice versa) and ensure that our teachers feel heard.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

As stated in my answers to question 2. I believe that an increase in teacher compensation along with an effective discipline policy and recruiting adequate support staff are strategies that would advance teacher retention for SPS. I also would suggest a strong relationship between administration and teachers with an emphasis on transparency and accountability by having scheduled meetings between the two groups promoting open discussion of issues and problems.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

Our principal means of procuring the services of the best, brightest, and most dedicated teachers is to make SPS an irresistibly attractive destination for such individuals on both a personal and professional basis.

While this does mean offering compensation and benefits which are competitive at the higher range of comparable opportunities, it is only the minimum requirement, and it is unlikely that SPS can outbid every district everywhere for every great proven or prospective educator.

What SPS can do is to ensure that classrooms are safe spaces for teachers, consistent with a dedication to discipline policies and practices which support and protect teachers.

What SPS can do is to ensure that teachers will be able to focus on teaching and not be asked to serve as clerks burdened with administrative obligations of tangential pedagogic purposes.

What SPS can do is to ensure that teachers receive differentiated professional development regardless of their education and experience level to maximize impact on classroom instruction and management as well as teacher morale.

What SPS can do is to ensure that teachers will be heard, and their input respected, when they raise concerns individually and collectively regarding policies and practices.

What SPS can do is to ensure that building leaders are also passionate teachers that serve as strong sources of support for the work of the classroom educators at that site.

These actions may not be sufficient to attract and retain everyone we desire, but they will significantly improve our chances of doing so.

WHAT WOULD YOUR APPROACH BE TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY? WHAT WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE AMONG COMPETING BUDGET DEMANDS?



DANIELLE KINCAID

Fiscal responsibility and accountability are paramount in ensuring the district's long-term success. As a board member, I will continue to prioritize transparency in budgeting processes, ensuring that resources are allocated efficiently and effectively to support student learning. I would advocate for regular audits and financial oversight to maintain accountability and identify areas for improvement. When faced with competing budget demands, I would prioritize investments that directly impact student achievement and well-being, such as hiring and retaining quality educators, reducing class sizes, and providing necessary resources and support services for students.



LANDON McCARTER

My approach to fiscal responsibility involves prioritizing budget allocations that directly impact the classroom. Ensuring financial resources reach the classroom is paramount, with a primary focus on supporting teachers and paraprofessionals. By directing funds towards teacher support, including competitive compensation packages, professional development opportunities, and necessary resources for effective classroom management, we enhance the overall educational experience. Striking a balance between competing budget demands involves meticulous consideration of their direct impact on classroom learning. This includes optimizing resources to provide a conducive learning environment, ensuring teachers have the necessary tools, and supporting para-professionals integral to classroom success. Ultimately, my commitment to fiscal responsibility centers on efficient resource allocation that maximizes the quality of education and classroom support for the benefit of our students and educators.



SUSAN PROVANCE

Public schools have limited funding, and a school board must ensure money is used to support the approved district Strategic Plan while providing accountability to taxpayers. The Strategic Plan goals of success-ready students, organizational efficiency, a collaborative culture, and quality learning environments should drive all funding decisions related to resource allocation.

The 2023 bond initiative was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and the public has a right to expect the board and district to be fiscally responsible. School board members have a fiduciary responsibility to closely monitor expenditures. A Treasurer's Report is distributed to board members at monthly meetings, and this practice provides board oversight. The majority of the budget is in salary and benefits leaving little discretion regarding funds for other necessary expenses. For a variety of reasons, the board must put people first.

It is ultimately the superintendent's role to ensure day-to-day fiscal responsibility, but the board must be aware of where expenditures are made and ask questions related to accountability. As a school board member, I will be a good steward of public funds.



SCOTT CRISE

I will ensure that we are being responsible leaders and stewards of district resources by reviewing and approving the SPS budget as well as contract, agreements, change orders and bids. I was elected by the taxpayers and am accountable to them. The board must also hold the superintendent accountable for developing the budget and staying within it once it's approved. The highest priority should be teachers' salaries and benefits because the district needs to continue to increase these to attract and retain quality teaching staff at SPS. The board should also prioritize funding for core academic subjects such as math and English, up-to-date technology that enhance learning opportunities and professional development for teachers and staff to enhance their skills.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

A good approach to fiscal responsibility and accountability involves effective management of financial resources, transparency in reporting, and ensuring decision-making aligns with long-term goals and objectives. Firstly, it is important to establish clear financial goals and create a budget that outlines expected revenue and expenditure. This includes accurately estimating income sources, such as taxes or grants, and developing a strategic spending plan that prioritizes essential services while minimizing waste.

Accountability is essential in maintaining fiscal responsibility. This can be achieved by regularly monitoring financial transactions and creating mechanisms for review and audit. By establishing checks and balances, it becomes easier to identify any irregularities or potential areas of concern. Clear policies and procedures should be in place to guide financial operations, ensuring that all transactions are conducted following ethical guidelines and legal requirements.

Lastly, transparency is key to fiscal responsibility and accountability. Governments or organizations should provide accessible and comprehensible financial reports to stakeholders, such as taxpayers or donors. These reports should present the financial position, performance, and activities of the entity in a transparent and understandable manner. Adopting standardized accounting practices and ensuring accurate and timely reporting helps foster trust and accountability.

In terms of my budget priorities, I will always prioritize spending that allows us to recruit and retain quality teachers. In terms of cuts, I believe the district must take a careful look at spending on administrative roles. There is such a thing as administrative bloat, and the district must make every effort to avoid said bloat.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

My approach with fiscal responsibility and accountability would be to ensure all entities involved are as transparent as possible. I would strive to avoid reducing funds for needs that directly impact the classroom environment, teachers' salaries, or support staff. I would prioritize spending on facility improvements & maintenance, safety measures for the schools (which includes discipline changes to protect the teachers), SPS employee development programs, and programs that increase parental engagement. Students' and teachers' needs would come first. They are my fiscal priority drivers. Other than that, without an actual list of budget demands, I hesitate trying to demonstrate using examples.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

As a result of declining federal support through the pandemic, the SPS Board will face the challenge of cutting 15 million dollars from its annual budget for the next three consecutive fiscal years. Ultimately, the Board must balance fiscal spending with learning outcomes. The Board should intentionally avoid cutting classroom personnel and the instructional and enrichment resources necessary for effective teaching. If funding becomes limited, classroom staff pay and positions should be prioritized over administrative pay and positions.

To economize and preserve services that we have been able to provide, we must encourage collaboration and partnerships between schools, businesses, and community organizations.

Individual site-based partnerships with businesses and faith-based institutions that have been in place for many years and provide additional investments in buildings, tutors/mentors, and volunteers are vital and must be recognized, applauded, and expanded.

Other relationships, such as those with local universities, not only provide educational and training opportunities for students, but also provide professional opportunities and support for teachers and administrators, which may help the district advance operational efficiency, without diminishing supports for student learning.

Regardless of how the budget is prioritized and accountability metrics are met, transparency is essential to the process. As promised, I have served with transparency and accountability, and if given the privilege of continuing to serve, I shall provide the same level of transparency and accountability.

SPS
STUDENT
FACTS

STUDENTS
24,821

10,788 ELEMENTARY
5,151 MIDDLE SCHOOL
7,140 HIGH SCHOOL

53 SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE RATE
91.82%

*As of 2/14/2024

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS? WHAT ROLE WOULD THE BOARD PLAY IN ENSURING THOSE COMPONENTS ARE IN PLACE?



DANIELLE KINCAID

A successful learning environment for all students includes factors such as access to high-quality instruction, a safe and supportive school climate, personalized learning opportunities, and resources to meet diverse student needs. The board plays a crucial role in ensuring these components are in place by setting policies that promote equity and inclusivity, allocating resources to support student well-being and academic success, and advocating for initiatives that enhance teaching and learning. Collaboration with educators, parents, students, and community stakeholders is essential in identifying and addressing barriers to learning and creating an environment where every student can thrive.



LANDON McCARTER

A successful learning environment hinges on two key components: academic achievement and a safe, conducive atmosphere. As a board member, I would prioritize policies that maintain classroom safety without compromising valuable learning time. This involves implementing evidence-based strategies to enhance behavioral expectations, ensuring consistent consequences for non-compliance. By collaborating with district stakeholders and drawing from successful models in similar districts, we can strike a balance between a disciplined yet supportive atmosphere.

The board's role is crucial in advocating for resources and policies that directly contribute to a safe learning environment. By directing resources efficiently, with a primary focus on the classroom, we can support educators and provide the necessary tools for student success. Recognizing the essential role of para-professionals and support staff, I aim to prioritize their well-being, acknowledging the challenges they face and ensuring equitable compensation and opportunities for professional growth.

My commitment to maintaining a conducive learning environment is underscored by proactive measures such as conducting exit interviews to understand staff concerns and addressing the root causes of turnover. By fostering open communication and partnerships with the community, the board can ensure that every decision reflects the values and aspirations of our neighborhoods, creating a strong, connected community for the future.



SUSAN PROVANCE

A successful learning environment is critically important if we are to provide the type of learning opportunity families, students, and teachers deserve. In my experience as an educator, I know classrooms must have clearly defined expectations and procedures as well as an environment free from unnecessary disruptions. Instructional methods should be designed to support students with a variety of learning styles and capabilities.

We have a changing landscape in terms of student needs, and educators must plan accordingly. All of us should insist upon an atmosphere of mutual respect while promoting a community where students feel valued. Positive student/teacher relationships as well as open communication with families are necessary components.

As a member of the school board, I will listen carefully while remaining acutely aware of what students, families, and educators need to succeed. The superintendent should listen carefully to all constituents' concerns and act accordingly, and there should be open and respectful dialogue where stakeholders are allowed to express concerns. It is then the board's responsibility to monitor the superintendent's response.



SCOTT CRISE

Safety and security has to be a top priority and the board must also ensure that teachers and students are in safe and secure environments. A successful learning environment includes positive and respectful relationships between teachers and students. The board must also ensure that fair and consistent discipline practices are in place. Furthermore, high quality curriculums should be offered and those should be assessed on a periodic basis. The board must also ensure that the superintendent is following the strategic plan that meets state standards.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

A successful learning environment is crucial for the success of students. It provides a conducive space where students can thrive, and teachers can effectively deliver their lessons. The following key components play a vital role in creating a successful learning environment.

First, a positive and supportive classroom climate is essential. This includes establishing clear expectations and rules, fostering respect and empathy among students, and promoting open communication between teachers and students. Second, student engagement is critical for effective learning. Students will not learn if they are not drawn in and invested in the work. Third, a successful learning environment encourages collaboration and teamwork. By providing opportunities for group work, peer teaching, and project-based learning, a school board can foster a sense of community and interpersonal skills among students. Fourth, an inclusive learning environment is essential for all students to succeed. This involves accommodating students with special needs, providing effective support systems, and promoting diversity and equity. And lastly, well-trained and dedicated teachers are the backbone of a successful learning environment.

To ensure these components are in place, a school board must: support policies that cultivate an inclusive atmosphere; work with teachers to provide a well-rounded curriculum that caters to the diverse interests of students; ensure that resources and programs are available to cater to the individual needs of every student; and invest in continuous professional development opportunities for teachers, provide resources and materials to support effective teaching practices, and encourage a positive and collaborative relationship between teachers and administrators.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

I see key components of a successful learning environment as one free of distractions and is safe from harm for both students and teachers/staff. This includes freedom from disruptive classroom/in-school behavior and freedom from technological distractions as well as from other outside factors in the classroom.

The Board can play a vital role by developing policies to address points such as effective guidelines to address disruptive behavior and restricting cell phone use/activation during classroom time.

There is a need for regularly scheduled meetings (possibly mandatory) between teacher representatives and administration with the goal of encouraging open communication that will result in a collaborative solutions to discipline and safety concerns in the classroom.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

I will continue to strive for the development and implementation of policies which facilitate a focus on the classroom, to create and cultivate learning environments throughout the district which are physically safe and nurturing, where order, decorum and pride in success are liberating, so that teachers are able to teach and students are able to learn, as we aim for the utmost in student academic and character achievement.

Escalating behavioral issues have become a massive barrier to learning, and impact safety, staff morale and building culture, further risking student and staff retention.

There are many factors that contribute to poor behavior, such as poor academic performance, poor social skills relating to decreased peer interaction, distractions, and poor behavior models in the home. I see the Board as the body that supports the efforts to address discipline issues with a can-do attitude and commitment to solving it through evaluation of all the factors that contribute to disruptive behavior, and the multi-pronged solutions put forth by the staff who serve in various capacities coming together in active and at times difficult dialogue to propose solutions. I see the solutions as a combination of proactive measures that strengthen peer interactions and develop soft skills with positive behavioral incentives, changes in the classroom environment to reduce distractions, ensuring that teachers are the authority that model good behavior and that the learning environment has the students' undivided attention, and appropriate reactive measures that are sometimes necessary to maintain an effective learning environment.

WHAT IS YOUR VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS IT PERTAINS TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT?



DANIELLE KINCAID

The role of the board of education in curriculum development is to establish broad goals and standards, provide oversight, and ensure alignment with state mandates and district priorities. While the board sets the direction, curriculum development is primarily the responsibility of educators and curriculum specialists who have the expertise to design and implement effective instructional programs. However, the board should seek input from stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and community members, to ensure that curriculum decisions reflect the needs and values of the local community while also meeting academic standards and promoting student success.



LANDON McCARTER

The board of education plays a crucial role in ensuring a successful learning environment through its oversight of curriculum development. I firmly believe that curriculum decisions should be driven by the expertise of teachers and administrators who are deeply involved in the educational process. As a board member, I would advocate for the establishment of teacher-led task forces to guide curriculum choices.

These task forces, comprised of educators with on-the-ground experience, would contribute valuable insights into the selection and development of curriculum materials. My role on the board would be to provide the necessary support and resources to empower these professionals, recognizing that they are best equipped to understand the unique needs of our students.

While endorsing the autonomy of these task forces, the board also has a responsibility to ensure that the chosen curriculum aligns with the values of the community it represents. By engaging in transparent communication with the community and respecting its values, the board can strike a balance between professional expertise and community expectations. This approach fosters a curriculum that reflects both the expertise of our educators and the shared values of the community.



SUSAN PROVANCE

The Missouri Learning Standards drive all content in Missouri public schools. School board members should familiarize themselves with the Standards, but it is ultimately the superintendent's responsibility to ensure they are taught with fidelity.

It is the board's responsibility to ensure policies and district goals align with the Standards. The superintendent should monitor progress and report to the board periodically. While monitoring progress toward obtaining the goals of the organization, the school board is not directly involved in the development of curriculum. When aware of concerns within the community, the board should share concerns of their constituents with the superintendent and expect the superintendent to reflect and consider what is shared.



SCOTT CRISE

One of the top priorities must be to focus on student learning and achievement, so when students graduate, they have reached their full potential and are college and/or career ready. For this to happen, strong initiatives and curriculums must be developed by a team of stakeholders including teachers, school staff (e.g., principals), and administration, not the board of education. The board is responsible for setting policies that guide curriculum development. The board is also involved in the approval of instructional materials and resources that align with the curriculum. The board should also support the training of teachers to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge to effectively implement the curriculum.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

The board is responsible for making decisions that shape the educational experiences of students, and curriculum development is a key component of this responsibility. I will note, that curriculum development should center the voices and experiences of career educators. Collaboration is key.

First and foremost, the board of education establishes the overall vision and goals for education within their jurisdiction. They consider the needs of the community, workforce demands, and future growth. Based on these considerations, the board sets the direction for curriculum development, ensuring it is aligned with these goals.

Second, the board plays a vital role in ensuring that curriculum development is a collaborative and inclusive process. They involve various stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and community members, in the decision-making process. This involvement ensures that the curriculum reflects the needs and aspirations of the community and provides a broader perspective on educational goals.

The board of education also monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the curriculum. They review student outcomes, test scores, and feedback from stakeholders to determine if the curriculum is meeting the desired goals. If adjustments or improvements are needed, the board will take the necessary steps to revise and enhance the curriculum.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

Currently the state approves curriculum standards which frame our local curriculum. The Board of Education's role in curriculum development is to ensure SPS adheres to those standards by having qualified staff choose curriculum materials for the Board to review and provide input to the final decision.

If there are issues with the curriculum, as presented by interested or impacted parties, the Board has the responsibility to respond, especially if the general community needs to be informed. Our overall focus must always be on what is best for the child and most effective instilling the hard skills of a basic education (*several of which are noted under question #3*).



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

Although the Board's duty is to guide and direct the district, rather than manage and operate, the Board also has a duty to represent stakeholders in SPS initiatives, and ultimately serves to represent the public interest. It is in this way that Missouri is distinguished as a local-control state, a concept grounded in the philosophy of government premised on the belief that individuals and institutions closest to and most knowledgeable about a school and most invested in the welfare and success of its students, teachers, and communities, are best suited to making decisions related to its operation and academics.

In my opinion, teacher input is most critical in the development of SPS curriculum; and stakeholder input is represented through its elected representatives on the Board. For instance, I had a particular interest pertaining to modes of instruction and learning. I promised the parents and staff of SPS to steer toward responsible technology use, and I worked with the administration to begin the shift to balanced digital consumption where Chromebooks are educational tools to enrich and maximize learning and no longer routinely go home with K-8 students. The district has instituted a digital citizenship curriculum, and with Board support, it is committed to an overhaul of curricula to improve the quality and utility of resources by offering both digital and print sources for students and teachers. I am very excited about the implementation of the new elementary English curriculum which will use phonics as the cornerstone of learning how to read.

SPS
LUNCH
FACTS

FULL PAY LUNCH
47.5%

REDUCED LUNCH
10.07%

FREE LUNCH
42.43%

*As of 2/14/2024

WHAT GOALS WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND HOW WILL YOU MEASURE THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE GOALS?



DANIELLE KINCAID

My goals for the school system include improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps, promoting equity, enhancing school safety and climate, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. To measure progress towards these goals, I would utilize a variety of metrics, including academic assessments, graduation rates, student attendance, discipline data, and stakeholder feedback. Regular monitoring and evaluation, along with data-driven decision-making, would enable the board to identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement, and to adjust strategies and allocate resources accordingly to ensure continuous progress towards our goals.



LANDON McCARTER

As a board member, my primary focus is aligning with the established objectives and goals outlined in the strategic plan. I believe in the power of a unified vision for the district, and I don't advocate for personal goals that deviate from the agreed-upon direction. My commitment is to work collaboratively with the board to implement and monitor the existing goals.

One area that deserves particular attention is classroom student behavior, as it has been consistently highlighted by district stakeholders as a top priority. I aim to ensure that the strategic plan allocates adequate resources and strategies to address this concern. Progress towards this goal would be measured through comprehensive assessments of classroom environments, feedback from educators, and data on disciplinary incidents. By aligning with the community's expressed priorities, I believe we can make meaningful progress and enhance the overall educational experience for our students.



SUSAN PROVANCE

Last year, our school board adopted a Strategic Plan with a 7-0 vote. This is an indication that all board members were united in the direction for the district. As part of this process, four goals were established.

1. Success Ready Students
2. Organizational Efficiency
3. Collaborative Culture
4. Quality Learning Environments

With these goals in mind, it is the superintendent's responsibility to update the board throughout the school year for the purpose of reviewing and monitoring the district's progress. Metrics for monitoring the goals are usually measured by graduation rates, standardized test scores, formative assessments, summative assessments, feedback from the community, Missouri's Annual Performance Report, individual student academic growth, and evidence of staff satisfaction. I firmly believe a district should not be judged by any one of the aforementioned metrics, but by a thorough review of each.



SCOTT CRISE

My goals would be related to the new strategic plan that I helped create. Improving academic achievement in a safe environment has to be a primary objective for teachers, staff, administration and me. I plan to review the data provided to the Board and will continue to be prepared to challenge those responsible for the development, implementation and execution of the tools, curriculum and processes used to grow our students and help them reach their full potential. I will also ensure that we are being responsible leaders and stewards of district resources by reviewing and approving the SPS budget as well as contract, agreements, change orders and bids. I will use my experience to ensure that we are building and maintaining safe and secure facilities within SPS.



DR. KYLER SHERMAN-WILKINS

All goals should align with the district’s mission, while addressing the unique needs of the students and community. Several key goals that could be pursued include academic achievement, equitable access, and community engagement.

Academic achievement is one of the primary goals for any district. This could involve aiming for higher standardized test scores, improving graduation rates, or increasing the percentage of students meeting grade-level expectations in core subjects. To measure progress towards these goals, the district can use quantitative data such as test scores, graduation rates, and attendance records.

Equitable access to quality education is another crucial goal for a school district. This involves ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have equal opportunities to receive an excellent education. To measure progress, the district can monitor factors such as enrollment and participation rates in advanced courses and the representation of diverse groups in gifted or specialized programs.

The well-being of students should also be a key goal for a school district, as it directly impacts their academic performance and overall development. Measuring progress can involve tracking indicators such as student attendance, disciplinary incidents, and mental health support utilization. Surveys or feedback tools targeting students, parents, and staff can provide valuable insights into students’ social-emotional well-being and engagement.

Lastly, community engagement is vital for a school district as it promotes collaboration, understanding, and shared responsibility in supporting student success. Measuring progress can be done through surveys, feedback sessions, community forums, or tracking participation rates in various engagement activities.



DR. CHAD ROLLINS

My umbrella goal is to continue focusing on the strategic plan of producing success-ready students, as measured by graduation rates, GPA and general/efficiency test scores. To do this:

I will strive for organizational efficiency via a collaborative culture with the objective of having quality, safe, engaging classroom environments.

I will focus on teacher retention which includes classroom safety and disruptive student behaviors as well as teacher compensation. Success will be measured by the evaluation of year-to-year employment statistics. The identification of trends will also be done to proactively address potential opportunities.

With focus in both areas, I know we will see improved test scores, higher graduation rates with successful, effective employable young adults.



DR. MARYAM MOHAMMADKHANI

Meeting the needs of students for educational success is always at the forefront, and I remain committed to research-based best practices and promising approaches which benefit our students. Accomplishing this aim requires a rigorous, high-expectations curriculum, the collateral maintenance of universal high-achievement standards, and allocation of the best personnel to those places where they are the most needed.

The institutional aspirations of the district should be inspirational. We certainly should do all that is possible to ensure that there is indeed “no child left behind” and that “every student succeeds.”

Progress and success can be measured broadly or in numbers, and sometimes in notable observations.

From a practical population-based perspective, student achievement is mastery of verbal and written communication and financial literacy. While there are arguably many benchmark parameters, principally the ability to advance in school or career, we invariably concede to the reality of testing, the traditional albeit imperfect way to get a snapshot of student success at various points.

The acceptance of a culture at a school, which placed academic proficiency at the very apex of its priorities and sought to accomplish that objective by means which included strict order and discipline, by the students who benefited from it, was exemplified by a striking encounter with a student recounted by a member of a recent SPS task force who asked that student what her reaction would be to a new student who misbehaved, and she replied that she would tell that student, “We don’t do that here.”

THE EDUCATION PLATFORM: DEFINING AND GUIDING CHAMBER ADVOCACY IN EDUCATION

Education has a direct connection to the future workforce and a thriving community. The Chamber's board-adopted Education Platform sets the vision for our engagement and establishes the strategic objectives and policy positions that guide our action in this area.

VISION STATEMENT

The Chamber supports schools that emphasize academic excellence within an education system that is accountable, visionary and equipped to prepare students for living and working in a global economy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that the region's school systems successfully prepare students for higher education and the local workforce.
2. To help Springfield Public Schools operate as Missouri's premier school district when measured by student achievement, graduation rates, resource utilization, and attendance rates.

Policy positions key to ensuring students are ready for college and/or careers include:

- **Workforce Development**
Schools must take a leadership role in developing a skilled workforce.
- **Career Exploration**
Programs that provide opportunities for students to "test drive" careers, especially those fields that are in high demand locally.
- **Technology**
The strategic use of technology to prepare students for life in a high-tech world.
- **Emphasis on Basics**
Continued emphasis on basic educational subjects such as math, science, communication and interpersonal skills that prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace.

Policy positions focused on effective, responsible management of resources and accountability:

- **Employee Attraction and Retention**
Attracting and retaining quality, experienced employees, including teachers, is a priority.
- **Staff Leadership and Development**
An emphasis on professional development and continuity of leadership strengthens the district.
- **Fiscal Responsibility**
Fiscal policies should align with the district's strategic plan.
- **Addressing Capital Needs**
Strategic planning for capital needs must be quantifiable, realistic and include community input.
- **Communication and Civic Involvement**
Clear communication with, and input from, the community regarding district goals and activities is critical to district success.
- **Safety and Security**
The board should prioritize safety of students, faculty and staff through resource allocation, building design, training and security features in facilities, policies and practices.
- **Progress and Transparency**
District progress including student graduation rates and test scores, among others, should be measurable and clearly articulated to all stakeholders.
- **Good Governance**
The board should provide transparency and accountability to stakeholders, in addition to working collaboratively with one another and the community in the best interest of the district, students and families.

To review the full Education Platform document, visit the Chamber's website: springfieldchamber.com/voter-education



A MESSAGE FROM SARAH HOUGH

Chairman
Education Task Force

The Chamber's Education Task Force is comprised of business leaders from around the community. The group was tasked by the Chamber board with creating resources for Chamber members to evaluate all candidates for the SPS board of education prior to the April 2 election.

The members of this task force are your highly engaged and experienced peers who care deeply about the quality and governance of the school district and its direct impact on students' ability to realize their full potential. They also are acutely focused on growing and shaping our region's future workforce. Task force members engaged in thoughtful consideration throughout this process to provide useful resources to evaluate candidates. Our efforts were guided by the Chamber's Education Platform and consideration of the role the board of education plays in overseeing child education in the community.

The survey questions were designed to elicit responses relevant to concerns of the business community related to public education. Our goal was to provide candidates with the opportunity to detail their own experience and skills that equip them well for the scope of duties of a school board member.

We are grateful to all SPS Board of Education candidates for their willingness to run and serve. We appreciate the time taken to participate in this educational process by responding to our survey questions, participating in video interviews, and for attending the networking event on March 5. To all those who currently serve on the SPS Board, thank you for investing your time and talent in this important and demanding responsibility.

It is our sincere desire that the above-mentioned resources are valuable tools for Chamber members and broader community. For those that live in the Springfield Public School district, we hope you'll use this guide to learn more about the candidates and their positions on issues relevant to the business community prior to exercising your right to vote on April 2.

EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Sarah Hough, Bass Pro Shops – Chairman
David Hall, Missouri State University – Vice-Chairman
Logan Aguirre, 417
Kevin Ausburn, SMC Packaging Group
Ann Marie Baker, UMB Bank
Trevor Crist, Nixon and Lindstrom Insurance
Jason England, Arvest Bank
Brad Erwin, Paragon Architecture
Brian Hammons, Hammons Black Walnuts
Sally Hargis, Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr Pepper Bottling Company
Beth Harville, Drury University
Heather Ramsey, Guaranty Bank
Shari Reaves, O'Reilly Auto Parts
Krisi Schell, SRC Holdings Corp.
Jaimie Trussell, Council of Churches of the Ozarks
Elizabeth Wentz, SRC Holdings Corp.
Bryant Young, Insurors of the Ozarks



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