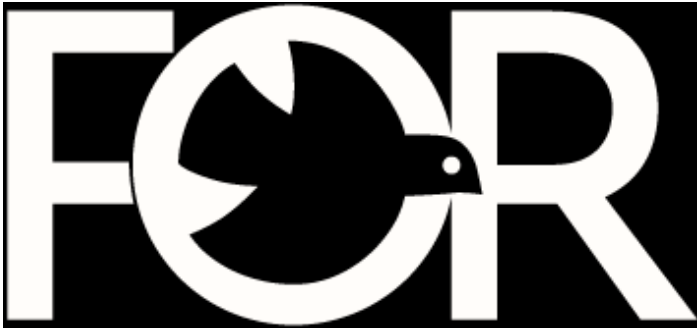




Fellowship of Reconciliation

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FOR 2026 Questionnaire for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) School Board Candidates in District 2

Candidates:

Alante Gaines School Board District #2 Candidate

Chose not to respond to the FOR Questionnaire. Chose not to participate in the Urban League and Courier candidate forums. No website

Phil Haming School Board District #2 Candidate



Chose not to respond to the FOR Questionnaire. Chose not to participate in the Urban League candidate forum. Did participate in Courier-Journal forum.

Phil Haming is a St. Xavier graduate and a former JCPS teacher who has spent the last three decades in industrial sales — the last twenty of them helping Kentucky shops buy, run, and staff the machines that make things.

He taught Language Arts and Social Studies at Newburg Middle School, then English at Holy Cross High School, where he also coached varsity basketball. He is a Certified Machine Tool Sales Engineer through the AMTDA and has been recognized repeatedly for market share at HAAS Factory Outlet, covering Louisville and Western Kentucky.

Phil and his wife Dina, a registered nurse, have raised five children, one of them a JCPS graduate. Their five kids took five different paths after school — skilled trades, business, the arts. That is the idea he is running on.

Website: <https://philhamingforschoolboard.com/>

Lillian Brents School Board District #2 Candidate



Chose not to respond to the FOR Questionnaire. Participated in the Urban League and Courier candidate forums.

As the former President of ATU Local 1447, Lillian Brents spent years successfully managing complex organizations, advocating for hard-working community members, and delivering real results. Now, she is ready to bring that powerful executive experience to the School Board to support our children, our educators, and our public schools.

"District 2 is broad, diverse, and full of potential. A district of this scale needs a leader who already knows how to run large organizations, manage substantial budgets, and advocate for every single corner of our community. I will stand up for your family just as I have stood up for our workforce."

Endorsed by Better Schools KY, (Teachers union PAC)

Website: <https://lillian4jcps.com>

Robert Kahne School Board District #2 Candidate



Chose not to respond to the FOR Questionnaire. Participated in the Urban League and Courier candidate forums.

I'm a native Louisvillian and proud graduate of Hite Elementary, Meyzeek Middle, and duPont Manual High School. For most of my adult life, I have lived in the Highlands with my wife and daughter (an incoming JCPS Kindergartener). After JCPS, I earned a BA in Political Science and Economics and a Master's in Public Policy from the University of Kentucky. My JCPS education gave me both a strong academic foundation and the chance to learn alongside my community. I'm running for School Board to ensure every student has that same opportunity.

I believe in JCPS. As the father of an incoming Kindergartner, I feel a personal call to action. Our students, parents, teachers, and staff deserve a school system focused on community building, faculty and staff support, and fiscal responsibility. That means electing board members who ask hard questions, collaborate with leadership to drive real change, and hold themselves accountable.

Strong public schools are the heartbeat of a successful city. Good public schools create strong community leaders. I am running for School Board because I believe creating and maintaining JCPS's success is the best way I can help make our community better. I'm ready to take on this work with care, enthusiasm, and a commitment to restoring pride in our district.

Website: <https://kahneforschoolboard.com/>

Tim Shaughnessy School Board District #2 Candidate



Tim Shaughnessy served most areas of the new School Board District 2 over his six terms in the Kentucky State Seante. Dr. Shaughnessy chaired the Education Committee and was broadly-recognized as a championed of education throughout Kentucky. Tim served as a Campus Leader and Associate Provost at Jefferson and Gateway Community & Technical Colleges, was the Corporate Officer over Jewish Hospital Properties and Executive Director of the JH and UofL Cardiovascular Innovation Institute. He currently serves as Director of Career Pathways at the Southern Regional Education Board where he also oversees the SREB Dual Enrollment Initiative.

Tim grew up in Buechel, the fourth of five children. He played Little League Baseball at Seneca and YMCA Football at Fern Creek. He graduated from St. Xavier High School and worked his way through college. Tim attended Jefferson Community College and graduated from the University of Louisville with a degree in Policy Analysis. He has an MBA from Bellarmine University, a Doctorate in Leadership Education from Spalding University and Post Graduate Certificates from the University of Kentucky in Teaching and Learning and Instructional Communication. Tim and his wife Shelley live in Jeffersontown. They have three children and seven grandchildren.

<https://timshaughnessyforschoolboard.com>

<https://www.facebook.com/Tim.Shaughnessy.for.School.Board>

Questions for candidates

1. Background: During and after the pandemic, former Superintendent Marty Pollio, his team, and the boards took advantage of available Federal COVID era funding to make critical new program investments for JCPS, e.g.,

- a. 1:1 chromebooks and wi-fi so all students could be computer savvy at graduation, not waiting at a public library;
- b. Mental health professionals in place at every school;
- c. Nurses at every school; and
- d. New research-based literacy and numeracy curricula rolled out with teacher professional development for early school years.

Superintendent Pollio, board and chief financial officer knew this COVID money would end, but they believed the programs would help JCPS students move forward. They knew there would be deficits, and that cuts or more property tax income would be needed to maintain the successful improvements. Indeed, they set up a committee of community groups (including Fellowship of Reconciliation) to consider the possibility of a recallable tax increase to be able to retain the best of the new programs.

Here are two detailed stories from local media. They reported on the process and timing around making these important decisions and, also, the making of the first \$100 million of cuts under former Superintendent Pollio and the board at the time:

Jess Clark of Louisville Public Media, in August of 2023: <https://www.lpm.org/news/2023-08-29/amid-budget-shortfall-jefferson-co-board-of-education-lowers-tax-rate-for-2023-2024>

[Fernando Garcia-Franceschini](#) of WAVE TV in May of 2025:

<https://www.wave3.com/2025/05/14/jcps-cut-close-100-million-its-upcoming-budget/>

Over the last year and during the selection of a new superintendent, various state and local officials, local media and social media have berated previous decisions as financial mismanagement.

The current board just accepted the new nonrecallable property tax rate of 70.3 cents/\$100 assessed value. Because the assessments are higher, the actual rate was dropped from last year's rate of 71.7 cents/\$100 assessed value. The board meeting on Tuesday (youtube at JCPS Board Meeting Materials on JCPS website) September 22, 2026 will show that while there may be "tax anticipation" notes to cover salaries that must be paid in late fall of the next three years, the major cuts are over and the deficit not as large as anticipated last year.

Question: How will you as a board member, working with the Superintendent, rebuild trust in JCPS management with the community and with the legislature? How will you evaluate what programs and staffing should be retained or could be scaled back? Is there a path to COLAs? Under what circumstances/when might you be open to calling for and promoting a recallable tax increase to be able to retain the good programs and teachers that grow our learners?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

From Courier Journal survey--

For 30 years, I have sold high-dollar capital equipment, so I am accustomed to evaluating major purchases, budgets, long-term costs and return on investment. JCPS needs that same level of scrutiny. I support the idea, also advanced by Courier Journal columnist Joe Gerth, of hiring a paid CPA with unrestricted access to district finances who reports only to the school board. That person should be independent of the administration and empowered to follow the money wherever it leads. The board should never simply rubber-stamp spending. We should demand clear answers, challenge questionable expenditures, and make sure taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently, transparently and as close to the classroom as possible.

Response by Lillian Brents:

From Courier Journal survey--

I will approach the budget with the critical eye of an experienced negotiator. Every dollar spent must directly benefit students and front-line educators. I support mandatory, independent financial audits and comprehensive fiscal transparency training for all board members. We need strict guardrails that limit administrative cost growth and require clear performance metrics for major expenditures. If a program or contract cannot prove it directly improves student outcomes or school operations, it should not be funded. Our taxpayers and families deserve complete transparency and accountability.

Response by Robert Kahne:

From Courier Journal survey--

We must ask questions in the good years, not just the bad ones. When \$500 million in federal relief was flowing in, that was the moment to ask what happens when it stops. I support three guardrails: multi-year forecasting in public, a standing rule that recurring costs are never funded with one-time money, and aggregate quarterly reporting on spending, which the board no longer votes on individually due to

2026's SB 1. A pattern is visible even when a single contract is not. With a BA in Economics and an MPP, I bring the financial education needed to analyze budgets and read audits without waiting to be told what they say. Kentucky requires 12 hours of annual training for new board members. I will treat that as a floor to ensure oversight.

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

I will NOT support a recallable tax increase. The School Board must demonstrate that it can operate and deliver within balanced and sustainable budgets that are aligned to a strategic plan. The School Board currently has neither. If a "tax referendum" is put before the public, it will fail by a wide margin and would be detrimental to the productive working relationship the School Board must create with key legislators. Job #1 is restoring public confidence and step one in that process is operating and delivering within responsible and sustainable fiscal policies. The state legislature and the general public hold the School Board in low regard do to persistent, reckless fiscal operations and enduring poor student performance. Rebuilding trust will take time and require more listening than talking toward jointly creating solid steps that will lead to a sustainable foundation to build upon.

2. Background: You as a board member will plunge immediately into helping the JCPS superintendent, staff and community create a five-year plan for improved outcomes for all our students, especially those who have been struggling. In parallel, you will oversee three-year, rolling budget projections.

Two JCPS schools were recently identified as being among the best schools in the country. Both schools had relatively selective entrance policies. Among the rest of our nearly 170 schools, several dozen schools—generally with most of their students living in poverty-- are among the bottom 5% of public schools in Kentucky.

Children living in poverty have extra basic needs, from safety in their home neighborhoods, to adequate meals and sleep every day. In some cases, working parents facing a lack of time together to fully shape their children's character and adaptability and to engage with their school. JCPS has important family support staff (FRYSCs) for helping to address some of these needs.

In the class rooms, we are seeing some improvements from new literacy and numeracy curricula in the lower grades. We also must assess and address the needs of older (middle school and up) students who were not exposed to the new curricula, so that they can also graduate with English and math skills of a lifelong learner.

Data from Stanford University Education Data Archives--Educational Recovery Project showed that the last three years (2022-2024) Dr Yearwood was Superintendent at Columbia (MO) public schools, the average change in reading scores was +0.04 for low-income students. JCPS' change for the same time period was -0.23 for our low-income students. Those same students in MO raised their average math scores 0.39, while scores for the equivalent student in JCPS rose only 0.19. Dr, Yearwood and his CAO did improve outcomes in reading, and more so in math.

Question: We have talented teachers and they need to be supported, but what extra is necessary to catch these struggling children up? Who should be guiding/coaching teachers at these high-needs schools? KDE? The CAO? Should principals be administrators or chief teachers? Do teachers need more time to confer with other teachers in their school to identify each child's specific way of learning? Do we have the right curricula to speak to these struggling students? Do we need more teachers who look like their students? Is it a matter of extra contact time after school for individualized help? Summer study and enrichment? What questions would you ask of Dr. Yearwood's approach? As you visit your district schools, what questions would you ask of JCPS teachers/principals who may have successfully turned around underperforming schools?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

From Courier Journal survey--

Improving academic achievement starts with restoring an environment where teachers can teach and students can learn. I support fully enforcing KRS 158.150 and district policies that allow teachers to address serious classroom disruption without fear of being reprimanded for maintaining order. From my two years teaching at Newburg Middle School, I know that repeated disruptions can rob every student in the room of valuable instructional time. I also do not believe achievement should be measured by test scores alone. Success should include reading, math, attendance, behavior, graduation readiness and preparation for a productive career. For many students, that means access to skilled trades and technical education. A student who can read, think critically, solve problems and master a trade is academically successful.

Response by Lillian Brents:

From Courier Journal survey--

To improve achievement, we must focus heavily on early literacy, math proficiency, and classroom stability. We need to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and implement intensive, small-group tutoring during the school day. I would champion a strict policy requiring a portion of district funds to be tied directly to reducing classroom sizes in high-need schools and expanding student mental health supports. Teachers cannot effectively teach when they are overwhelmed and unsupported. By giving educators the autonomy, tools, and manageable workloads they deserve, we create a stable environment where student learning naturally thrives.

Response by Robert Kahne:

From Courier Journal survey--

We should implement high-dosage tutoring, done the way the evidence says works. Sessions with the same tutor, several times a week, in smaller groups, aligned to what the classroom teacher is already teaching, during or beside the school day. In a financial deficit, community partners can deliver this where JCPS cannot directly. Kentucky law requires science-of-reading instruction in the early grades, and the state funds the two-year teacher training behind it. I want to know how many K-3 teachers have finished it, how many we enroll each year, whether we give them enough time to do it, and whether or not teachers think it is impactful. Another major issue is that a third of JCPS students are chronically absent. A child who is not in the building cannot be reached by any teacher or tutor.

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

We have successful schools – we need more. The School Board oversees a district where 2 of 3 students are NOT proficient in Reading and Math and progress with marginal if any improvement from elementary through middle to high school graduation. Yet, 89% of 2025 seniors graduated - while KY employers said 80% were NOT prepared for work and did NOT have the skills employers need. Only 15% enrolled in college. We have talented, committed teachers – however the School Board has placed them in classrooms where 1 in 5 students are afraid, 20% do not understand English, 2 of 3 are not learning at the grade level they are enrolled in, and at any time a few bad actors can disrupt instruction with little consequences. I am visiting every school in District 2 – attending SBDM Council meetings. Principals and

teachers do NOT feel supported by the District. Communication is one way with schools giving little input. The struggling students you reference above are the vast majority of the Districts' students. Students, the School Board has failed for over a decade. We must be school focused NOT district driven. Going forward, our policies and funding must be school focused not District driven.

3. Background: According to the US Census, children born from today forward will graduate high school and plunge into life in a “majority minority” country. JCPS is already a majority minority district, i.e., our students are mostly people of color. JCPS must meet the needs of all our students for their personal success and for creating the Jefferson County of the future. It is a matter of fairness—of equity.

Gap reduction requires that underserved groups of students improve faster than more privileged demographic groups. Our students come from many racial and ethnic backgrounds, and students from immigrant families may speak one or more of over 100 different languages heard in JCPS. A majority of our students come from low-income families. Some are homeless. Some have special developmental or disability challenges. We must find the best ways to reach and teach all of them.

Research shows that all students respond more easily to teachers who look like them. For a variety of reasons, not the least of which are the demographics of our state, we have only about 20% of our teachers who are people of color. JCPS has been active in trying to grow and recruit more.

Following a model used by Miami Dade (FL) school district and others, JCPS created a path to provide extra money for a school, based on the percentage of the school’s population which came from low-income households, were immigrants, had special needs, etc. During the recent cost-cutting to reduce the deficit, half of these targeted funds were cut. Some have been restored.

Question: You will be helping shape the diverse future of our city and country. How will you look at apportioning resources to help our diverse groups overcome challenges so that all become proficient at the skills of lifelong learners?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

From Courier Journal survey--

JCPS should maintain strong academic standards while recognizing that every student does not learn in the same way. From my experience teaching at Newburg Middle School, I learned that every child has a gift, and our job is to help them discover and develop it. Some students thrive in traditional academics; others excel through hands-on learning. That is why I strongly support expanding skilled trades and technical education throughout our middle and high schools. A strong curriculum should establish what students need to know while giving teachers flexibility in how they teach and giving students multiple pathways to demonstrate learning, build confidence and prepare for a successful future.

Response by Lillian Brents:

From Courier Journal survey--

Standardized curriculum provides a baseline framework, but it must never restrict a teacher's ability to innovate. We balance this by investing heavily in robust Exceptional Child Education (ECE) staff and expanding Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathways. We must empower our classroom teachers with the flexibility and time to differentiate instruction based on real-time student needs, rather than teaching strictly to a test. Success for every student means meeting every child where they are.

Response by Robert Kahne:

From Courier Journal survey--

A common, high-quality curriculum is the floor, not the ceiling. We need to standardize what is taught and let teachers teach. A child who changes schools mid-year should not lose a semester. Kentucky's structured literacy requirement is standardization grounded in evidence. However, it is very important that teachers be given the ability to use their expertise to do their jobs. Real individualization does not come from a different curriculum for each child. It comes from teacher capacity: manageable class sizes, protected planning time, intervention staff, and tutoring. Standardized curriculum and individual learning are only part of the learning equation. Ensuring teachers can do their job is paramount.

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

You reference the District's plan to provide extra money to low performing schools. You did not, however, recognize that the School Board canceled the \$8,000 stipend they committed to provide to teachers who agreed to assignments in the lowest performing schools you described. Nor did you note the School

Board did so just days before school started this fall. To successfully advance the strategies you are describing would require broad community support and a high level of public confidence in the School Board. Unfortunately, we have neither. I am striving to be specific in what I believe can be realized based on my past experience and given the scope of our current challenges. The state legislature has put us on notice with the release of the 2026 state audit and the adoption of SB 1 – this is our last chance to address the persistent challenges our School Board has perpetuated for over a decade. We as a community must act definitively with decisiveness and a sense of urgency. We must develop a strategic plan to address student and community need that is integrated within balanced, sustained budgets, and includes leadership accountability to clear objectives .

4. Background: Immigration has been a primary source of population growth in Jefferson County for more than a decade. While our current federal government has reversed that policy, approximately one out of every five JCPS students is part of an immigrant family. Almost 40% of these students may have been born in the US and are US citizens, but many speak a different language with their family at home.

There are a limited number of ESL (English as a second language) teachers available for hire regionally. We do have some who are immigrants themselves. We have never had an immigrant on the board.

JCPS was actually an innovator and early adopter of real-time translation technology to allow more teachers to work with these students successfully. JCPS created the Newcomer Academy for initial intensive English language training for new immigrant students before they were mainstreamed in schools. Some immigrants arrived at an older age and became Newcomer students. Some of these students are now graduating from Newcomer directly, without first being mainstreamed.

Almost a decade ago, the JCPS board created a sanctuary policy to prevent federal officials from upsetting our school communities for immigration enforcement. Today the pressure has been compounded by new federal directives. Schools must be a safe space for students and their studies. Students should not have to be concerned about being taken from the schools, about being used to track down their parents when they come to the schools, about needing to be absent to work enough to support families where parents are at risk. We have a JCPS police force of over 70 officers, specially trained to support and protect our students. The JCPS board and lobbyists have thus far resisted ICE and legislature efforts to create 287g partnerships to support ICE enforcement.

Question: Each of you will have immigrant students in your district schools. How can we better support their educational challenges and better protect their families as they participate in our community and its schools?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

No response

Response by Lillian Brents:

No response

Response by Robert Kahne:

No response

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

As a foundational practice the School Board must ensure a safe, orderly, and supporting environment throughout all schools. Unfortunately, they are not doing so. As referenced above, the 2026 state audit indicated 1 in 5 students are afraid at school. The audit also stated throughout the last two years there were over 42,000 “bus disruptions” with 78% being associated with repeat offenders. The School Board must assure all students feel safe in an orderly environment that provides the basic needs and comfort that are conducive to successful learning.

5. Background: Teachers and classroom aides are the core of who interact directly with our students and help them become lifelong learners. Teachers need time to plan, time to collaborate, time for professional development. JCPS’ “product” are all the new members of our Louisville community.

Wages for teachers, aides and other staff haven’t kept up with inflation since 2008. Part of this is JCPS, part of it is reduced SEEK funding from the state. Teachers did not create the JCPS deficits and they should not be borne by teachers and school staff.

Salaries and benefits need to keep pace with inflation so that: 1) older, more experienced teachers don’t retire at the first opportunity and 2) that we can’t compete for teacher talent with surrounding districts and states. A cost-of-living allowance (COLA) costs about \$10million/per year for each one percent for all teachers. This year inflation has been high across the country, around 3%. This spring the teachers settled for one-time payments, not a COLA, because of the deficit. Other staff union contracts follow the percentages for JCTA salary increases.

We cannot count on massive funding for public schools from the coming Federal education \$1700 tax credit program. The program can pay for individual students' tuitions for private schools, but there is no tuition in public schools. Our students might have smaller expenses like after school tutoring or transportation to extra curriculums.

Question: Given that we are reducing the deficit from COVID spending, how can we find money for COLA so that we can continue to attract new teachers and retain our most experienced teachers? How do we find and prioritize funding for those in front of the classrooms?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

No response

Response by Lillian Brents:

No response

Response by Robert Kahne:

No response

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

The School Board oversees a budget of almost \$2 billion nearly twice the budget of Louisville Metro Government. The state auditor concluded the School Board has a spending problem not a revenue problem. The School Board must prioritize school funding first, then transportation, and then provide the necessary district oversight. School needs not District wants should drive the budget process. I am advocating for balanced and sustainable budgets that will correlate and align with a Strategic Plan that prioritizes (1) a district wide safe, orderly, and supporting environment; (2) attainment and progression of grade level learning; (3) college, career, and life planning; and (4) completion of a free semester of college in high school as a foundation for continuous learning and progressing success in what's next. Envisioned as the Jefferson Scholar Academy – the model will build upon Maryland's state-wide initiative

of college and career readiness in 10th grade and Vanderbilt University's development of integrated general education curriculum as a foundation for lifelong learning.

6. Background: JCPS is continuously evaluating programs for their value in improving student outcomes. Over the past year of deficit reduction, JCPS produced millions of dollars in savings by scaling back or eliminating some programs, such as poorly attended summer and tutoring programs. We have urged the administration to listen to and engage with the community about equity before decisions are made.

One example of a non-academic program that the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) believes should be considered for elimination is the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program, which costs the District approximately \$1.4 million per year. Open Records Requests over the years have shown that many students in JCPS' JROTC programs have been leaving the programs instead of staying in until graduation. In the class of 2023, 54% of the cadets left early. The class of 2025 is similar-- just over 50% left JROTC early. Over the last two years, two schools have independently dropped the JROTC program for lack of student enrollment. In four other schools, JROTC enrollment recently fell below the minimum required by the schools' contracts with JROTC, but the programs were allowed to continue. The district should be listening to students and their parents and scrutinizing JROTC district-wide.

Unlike the highly-successful Academies of Louisville program – which creates links between academics and career training -- JROTC has no ties to academics. JROTC instructors (now 18 in the nine JROTC units) are not certified teachers. JROTC curriculum is supplied by the Pentagon and is not subject to District review. There is no academic focus aligned with state standards. Nor does JROTC offer a career-training advantage. At graduation, any 18-year old can walk into a recruiting office and enlist in the military.

But the most significant shortcoming of JROTC may be the opportunity cost to students. The 120 to 180 class hours per year spent in JROTC classes reduce time available for arts, music, foreign languages and computer skills – subjects proven to improve academic achievement and social/emotional development. Numerous studies link arts participation to improved literacy, math performance, and problem-solving skills. Music programs, for example, strengthen pattern recognition and mathematical reasoning, while theater and visual arts improve reading comprehension and verbal communication (Public School Review). Foreign language classes develop cognitive flexibility, memory, and cultural awareness, which support learning in other subjects. JROTC offers none of these benefits – and for the over half of students who exit the JROTC program early, it prevents them from gaining the full advantage of the other Academy programs offered at their school.

Question: How would you evaluate the value of investing in JROTC and other nonacademic offerings compared to further support for Related Arts offerings such as arts, music, or foreign language classes? What would you do to make sure that JCPS students, parents and community are given objective, balanced information to make informed decisions, both for their own family and for JCPS' consideration, of nonacademic offerings like JROTC? Should we also be assessing different Academies for students quitting a pathway, similarly to JROTC cadets?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

No response

Response by Lillian Brents:

No response

Response by Robert Kahne:

No response

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

We have enough challenges with Frankfort and the General Assembly without picking a fight over JROTC programs. This is not the hill we want to die on - and we would die on it.

7. Background: This new board, along with the legislature and the Ky Department of Education (KDE), will face policy issues around technology and its impact on student learning. The current board has wrestled with phone use by students during school and seems to have created workable policies. The next set of issues for the board may concern screen time limits and use of and or reliance on AI. The challenges are about ethical use.

Educational psychologists have over the last two decades seen reductions in critical thinking ability as screen time increases. TV, without educational programming, detracts from socialization, physical activity, sleep, etc. At the same time, increased screen time and AI hold promise for more individualized and creative work, drawing on more sources. There is also the opportunity for misrepresenting work as a student's creation and loss of independent writing skills.

Question: How should teachers use these tools to create personalized work products for learning without becoming dependent on these tools? What role does the board play in limiting screen time of students, while still providing technology for all students who otherwise might not have access. Do we still need one-to-one Chromebooks provided and maintained by JCPS?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

From Courier Journal survey--

JCPS should embrace artificial intelligence, but only after students have developed the basic skills needed to think independently. I would not support student use of AI before at least the ninth grade. Younger students need to learn to read, write, calculate, research and solve problems without relying on technology to do the thinking for them. Once those foundations are strong, AI can become a powerful educational and career tool. We should prepare students for an AI-driven future without allowing AI to prevent them from developing the judgment, creativity and critical-thinking skills they will need to succeed.

Response by Lillian Brents:

From Courier Journal survey--

We must implement strict boundaries and guardrails. Technology and AI should strictly serve as a supplement to human-led instruction, never a replacement for a teacher. JCPS needs clear, district-wide policies that limit screen time, protect student data privacy, and teach ethical digital literacy. Cell phone usage during instructional time should be strictly restricted to keep students focused on peer interaction and core learning.

Response by Robert Kahne:

From Courier Journal survey--

The board should admit it created part of this problem. We put a screen in front of every child, which encourages its use. We must set screen-time guidelines with teachers and parents, and back their judgment. The district already put Gemini in classrooms, so any new AI policy is catch-up. I support three AI guardrails: disclosure standards for AI-assisted materials, hard rules protecting student data, and an honesty policy that is teachable, not purely punitive. Prohibition alone teaches students to hide it. Our standards must be flexible and recognize that they will almost immediately be out of date – it will take constant hard work to get this right.

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

Technology discussions must be led by school faculty with supporting direction from principals and school leaders. This work must be aligned to supported by the latest research which will be challenging given the rapid rate of change and relevancy of findings specifically in regard to AI. This is an opportunity to engage postsecondary, industry, and community perspectives along with the Kentucky Department of Education, legislators, and other strategic voices.

8. Background: Part of the pledge made by the previous JCPS management and boards was for improving near West End schools—creating the schools of the Choice Zone-- and providing transportation to and opportunity for attending engaging magnet and Academy schools for the African American students. Our current COO who has thankfully led us back to adequate general bus service in 2026, has said he believes JCPS has hired all the drivers it can get competitively and retain against UPS, Amazon, etc.

The Magnet Schools of America organization in particular urges intentionally diverse student populations in magnet classrooms, because its data show that a diverse mix of students, exposed to other students' different ways of learning and looking at problems, helps all students be more effective and creative problem solvers.

Question: How do we create the transportation that will allow us to fully live into the promise made regarding African Americans access to magnet schools? Is the answer to fuller transport in TARC, vans, or other paths, such as more mirror magnets in schools in African American neighborhoods?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

No response

Response by Lillian Brents:

No response

Response by Robert Kahne:

No response

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

We must reconnect our schools with their neighborhoods by ensuring school boundaries are consistent with city and neighborhood boundaries, and area students are given 1st option to enroll. Our current transportation system is driven by availability of drivers –not the needs of students and parents and impacts a much larger audience beyond African American neighborhoods.

9. Background: Around the country, major school districts are finding they need to close, repurpose, and/ or consolidate schools, as birth rates and lower immigration reduce attendance. We are seeing this in JCPS as well. This fall, JCPS counted just above 90,000 students in classrooms, far below the attendance a decade ago. The Courier -Journal (9/20/26) estimated JCPS has 15,000 classroom seats unclaimed.

Last year, in the interest of reducing budget deficits by cutting operating costs, JCPS closed Martin Luther King Elementary in Shawnee and Zachary Taylor Elementary in the East End. \$5.4 million were saved. Both schools had diverse student populations—people of color, special needs students, students living in poverty mostly. Neither had anywhere near the lowest school occupancy rates. Both had teaching staff that had worked together well and been improving struggling student lives. Parents, teachers, and students came or marched to meetings by candlelight for the opportunity to be heard by the Superintendent and administrative staff, but to no avail. The MLK families told JCPS that MLK was “the heartbeat of the neighborhood”.

The CJ article identifies some key steps other district had identified. Every closure must be preceded by adjustment of the attendance zones not only for student seats, but also for shared programs in all new clusters. Consolidations must look at the mix of demographics, access to special programs, magnets, and student services, etc. Teachers also need to be involved and heard. They can help figure how school populations could be blended and how to avoid the apparently common student slowdowns in progress in English and math, both for the affected students and the receiving schools’ rankings.

Question: How would you look at selecting schools for closure and/or consolidation? Would you support a district-wise approach redoing attendance zones, instead of just finding lower-occupancy schools? How can we take smaller steps in modifying attendance zones with a great deal of cross-community input? How would you involve the teacher and entire community in downsizing discussions long before actual selections were proposed? In what way can we keep a JCPS presence and community centers across the JCPS geography? Schools are community centers for our neighborhoods.

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

From Courier Journal survey--

I would not support closing a school simply because enrollment has declined. In schools already facing academic challenges, reduced enrollment can be an opportunity to create smaller class sizes, giving teachers more time with each student, allowing earlier intervention, improving classroom management and strengthening academic outcomes. Closures should be a last resort and based on transparent financial and academic data, community input, building condition and whether students would truly be better served elsewhere.

Response by Lillian Brents:

From Courier Journal survey--

No. School closures should happen as an absolute last resort after every alternative has been thoroughly exhausted. If a closure is deemed necessary due to structural or safety realities, the process must be completely transparent. JCPS must engage in meaningful, face-to-face community dialogue months in advance, actively listening to families. We must guarantee that impacted students are transitioned into higher-performing, well-resourced schools with robust transportation solutions.

Response by Robert Kahne:

From Courier Journal survey--

I will not promise never to close a school while also promising to balance this budget. I hope further consolidation will not be necessary, but our budgetary realities make it impossible to take closures off the table. Utilization and cost per pupil are inputs, not the decision. Before voting to close a building I want three answers: is there a good alternative nearby; what happens to those students and staff; and what does the neighborhood lose. Decide early rather than under deadline pressure, involve families before the recommendation is written, and say publicly what the savings buy.

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

The School Board has shared no sustained plan from a facility and operational perspective to account for the significant decline in student enrollment projected over the next ten years. Last year the School Board closed two schools in a piece meal approach. That is not leadership, that is kicking the can down the road. I will support operational and instructional practices that are fair and effective, efficient and inclusive, and sustainable.

10. Background: There are a variety of programs (e.g., PBIS, Restorative Practices, Compassionate Schools, Trauma Informed Care, peer mediation, etc.) and, now, mental health professionals at every JCPS schools where—ideally-- teams of teachers and counselors assess students and implement plans to avoid situations that give rise to behavioral problems for individual students. Teachers are continually being trained to teach and model specific positive behaviors, to understand different cultures, to de-escalate, and to ask not “what is wrong with this child?” but “What has happened to this child?”. Some of this support and healing work must include families, not just students.

Much has happened to our students--increased violence in parts of our community, and the generational stress and trauma of families living in poverty. Absenteeism is soaring at JCPS and elsewhere across the country and is emblematic of the impact of these stresses on student sense of belonging and inclusion and corresponding behaviors. There are increasing the numbers of social workers and mental health professionals in JCPS schools. Because of their limited numbers, though, they may often be called on to respond only after problems occur rather than inviting some students into group counselling.

We already have weapons detection technology and about the 40th largest police force in Kentucky. Nationally, armed, sworn officers in schools have been shown to actually increase arrests and suspensions and decrease student sense of belonging, particularly for students of color. They have not been found to effectively stop mass shootings in schools.

National research data show that out-of-school suspension is a key predictor of future low achievement, dropping out, delinquency, and incarceration. Just one suspension doubles the chance of dropping out. These inequities do not occur uniformly in every school across JCPS.

National research also shows that out-of-school suspensions are ineffective at changing student behaviors. Suspended students are more likely to repeat behaviors-- and consequences-- again. Suspensions accelerate declines in academic performance both because of the lost learning time and the disengagement from loss of a sense of belonging.

Suspensions are also expensive for JCPS—e.g., a loss of attendance-based funding and the cost of providing “alternative schools”. While all that research is clear, some JCPS teachers (as indicated by national TELL surveys) feel they do not have all the skills and resources necessary to maintain their classrooms without using out-of-school suspension for “crises”.

Multiple or serious suspensions can lead to assignment to one of JCPS' alternative schools. At one alternative school, the 2023-24 student population was almost 78% African American and 33% special needs students. Students at alternative schools are now most likely to continue and graduate from the alternate school, rather than being reinvesting at their previous home school.

Question: How can the schools provide professional, collaborative behavioral assessments of students at every school to help students, parents, and teachers (and, yes, bus drivers) engage positively, before students are stigmatized by disciplinary consequences? What models are needed to build appropriate self-control behaviors and sense of accountability by students, teachers, and parents? How do we engage with and support parents around their students' challenges inside and outside of school, as well as their learning and school choices? How can student voice help direct this work?

How can we simultaneously create for both students and staff a sense of belonging in safe and welcoming schools? Can we reduce unwanted behaviors and radically decrease use of out-of-school suspensions? How can we decrease the demographic disproportionalities of alternative school placements and, more generally, find ways to keep more students--in all demographic groups--in regular schools where they can develop their social skills and maintain their progress in learning? How would you pay for the programs, training, etc.?

How should student voice help direct this work? Do you support further expansion of armed/sworn officers in JCPS schools?

Response by Alante Gaines:

No response

Response by Phil Haming:

No response

Response by Lillian Brents:

No response

Response by Robert Kahne:

No response

Response by Tim Shaughnessy:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my position on various issues concerning the Jefferson County School Board. As you have noted, the nature and scope of your questions are expansive and complex.

For the most part they will require a high level of expertise and knowledge for successful and sustainable development, implementation, and evaluation. The state legislature has taken an unprecedented action to define and limit the responsibilities of the Jefferson County School Board. By law, they have mandated a specified focus of strategic planning, budget development and oversight, and the hiring, evaluating, and when necessary - the firing of the superintended. The scope of knowledge and expertise that is necessary to successfully address most of the issues you have outlined – is to be provided by faculty, staff, and leadership; and not the school board. The school board's role will be one of direction, oversight, and accountability concerning the required action to achieve the stated objectives of the strategic plan and to ensure those responsible for their attainment have the support and resources to successfully do so.