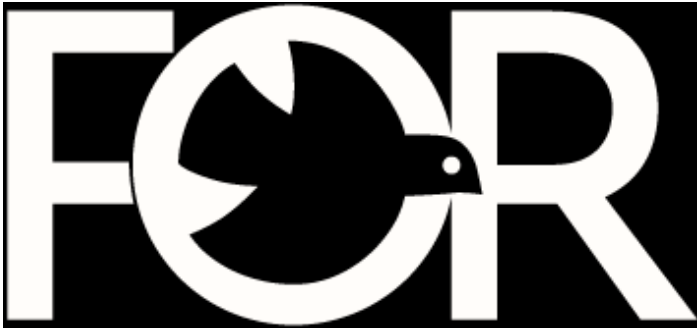




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FOR 2026 Questionnaire for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) School Board Candidates in District 5

Candidates:

William Snawder School Board District #5 Candidate



William Snawder is a JCPS graduate, husband, father, and business professional running for JCPS School Board in District Five.

William graduated from Fairdale High School and has built his career around education, business management, and serving his community. He currently works as a hotel General Manager, where he oversees employees, budgets, operations, and day-to-day business decisions. His previous experience includes serving as a Center Director at Mathnasium, working in nonprofit development at Harbor House of Louisville, and working as a substitute teacher.

William is running for School Board because he believes every JCPS student deserves the opportunity to receive a strong, well-rounded education and every educator deserves the support and resources to provide it.

As a JCPS parent, William understands that the decisions made by the School Board directly affect families across our community. His priorities are improving student achievement, supporting teachers, strengthening neighborhood schools, and being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars.

William believes education should come before politics and that the School Board should focus on what matters most: putting students first and making JCPS a school system our community can be proud of.

Endorsements:

Greater Louisville Area Realtors - Political Action Committee.
Jefferson County Republican Party

Website/Socials:

www.snawder4schoolboard.com

[William Snawder for JCPS School Board - District 5 | Facebook](#)

Carrie Donovan School Board District #5 Candidate



Carrie Donovan is a lifelong public education advocate with nearly 20 years of experience working in schools in Kentucky and Florida. She has served as a classroom teacher, Reading Recovery teacher, reading interventionist, academic instructional coach, project-based learning coach and trainer, and instructional support for teachers and students across multiple grade levels.

Carrie holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with a Middle School endorsement and Special Education minor, an associate degree in Early Childhood Education, and a master's degree in Literacy. She is also certified in English Language Learning.

Her work has always centered on the people closest to learning: students, educators and families. As a union member and organizer, she has advocated for educators to have a meaningful voice in the decisions affecting their classrooms and schools.

Carrie believes strong schools require more than good test scores. They require excellent teaching, safe and welcoming environments, meaningful family engagement, equitable access to opportunity, responsible stewardship of public resources, and a willingness to listen before making decisions. She believes her role as a board member would be to ask good questions, examine the evidence, listen to the community, and help ensure JCPS decisions ultimately serve students.

<https://sites.google.com/view/carriedonovanforjcbe/home>

Kyle Killebrew School Board District #5 Candidate



I graduated from Holy Cross high school in 2005. I immediately went to work for Vendome Copper & Brass Works; I started out as a Pre-Apprentice for the International Association of Sheet Metal Workers. I worked there for 19 years full time “with my tools”, I held part-time positions in the Union after completing my apprenticeship. I ran for Business Representative in June of 2024; after my election bid was successful, I came into office and I’m currently one of two reps for SMART Local 110. I have 3 children who all have attended JCPS, my oldest has since graduated. I understand the direct link with a strong public school system and the community success around that school system. I’m ready to hit the ground running and start tackling the issues.

Endorsements: C-FAIR PAC, GLB&CTC, GLCLC, SMART 110, IRONWORKERS 70, UA 502, Better Schools Kentucky (JCPS teachers union)

Candidates Troy Gardner and Bob Devore have withdrawn.

TraShaun Spencer does not live in District 5. Under state law, she could not be sworn in as a board member. She did register as a candidate. It is not clear if her name was put on the ballot.

Questions for candidates

1. Background: During and after the pandemic, former Superintendent Marty Pollio, his team, and the board 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 William Snawder:

I think rebuilding trust is critical. This is done with active communication, transparency, and accountability. I would work with the superintendent to provide the legislature and community with accurate information as it pertains to finances, academics, and other major decisions. When it comes to programs and staffing and evaluating those things I believe we need to look at student outcomes, overall costs, and overall participation. If a program or certain staffing isn't producing the necessary results then it likely needs to be reevaluated. If a program is successful then we should do our best to protect it. I believe that Cost of Living Adjustments should be considered when it is the financially responsible thing to do. I think teachers and educators deserve the world. Personally, I

feel that a tax increase should be a last resort. Before we ask taxpayers for more money we need to show that we are utilizing our current funds appropriately and to the best extent possible. Once we've done so, then I am all for having the conversation about increasing taxes. A lot of people forget teachers are taxpayers too and increases affect them as well.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

Trust starts with transparency. As a board member, I would want the community to clearly understand where JCPS dollars come from, where they go, which funding is recurring versus one-time, and what outcomes we are getting from major investments.

Fiscal responsibility and investing in students are not competing values. I would evaluate programs and staffing using student outcomes, participation, equity, cost, staffing impact, and long-term sustainability. I would also expect the district to examine administrative and contractual expenditures before placing additional pressure on school-based staff.

COLAs need to be part of a sustainable three-year financial plan. Educators did not create the deficit, and competitive compensation is essential to retention. I would remain open to a recallable tax increase if JCPS demonstrated that the financial projections were sound, efficiencies had been pursued, the community had meaningful input, and the revenue had a clearly defined purpose. I don't believe taxpayers should be asked for a blank check. I also don't believe fiscal responsibility should mean continually asking classrooms to do more with less.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

Rebuilding the community trust has got to start with transparency, open the books let the taxpayers see. I know all too well how much everything costs, everyone across the country feels the pain. We must let the community see first-hand; that's just the start. The AI boom is shaping the careers of tomorrow; we must be ready to answer the call of what industry looks like tomorrow. I believe those are the metrics in which programs we keep and which ones we scale back. I do believe that there is a path to COLA's where we

first must get our house in order monies wise. I feel a great deal of frustration when teachers can't get a raise, especially in these tough economic times. I feel that when it comes to a recallable tax increase and whether I would advocate for one, we must get the deficit in order. I don't think society has issues with paying taxes. I do believe that everyone wants to get the most bang for their buck. I will say in conclusion people want to see transparency that will lead to fiscal responsibility, then we can have the conversation about what the important programs are going to require more contributions.

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 William Snawder:

We have extremely talented teachers in JCPS but we have to give them the resources they need to help struggling students catch up. I would have our lowest performing schools to have strong instructional coaches and experienced educators who can work alongside the teachers. I also believe that school admin should be more than just admin. I think they should be instructional leaders who understand what is happening inside of the classrooms. Teachers need time to collaborate, look at student data, and figure out what works best for each student. I would closely look at whether our current curriculum is producing the necessary results. I would also ask the Superintendent what data supports his current approach and how success is being measured and how struggling students are expected to improve. When I visit schools, I will ask staff what is working and what isn't and what they need from the district to improve student outcomes. I believe that the people on the front line working with our students should have a large voice and opinion in how we address challenges.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

I would start with three questions: Are students attending? Are they receiving the right intervention? And are teachers getting the instructional support they need? Attendance has to be addressed because students cannot benefit from instruction they are not present to receive. We also need timely, individualized interventions when students are struggling rather than waiting for gaps to become deficits.

Teachers need meaningful time to collaborate around actual students and their specific learning needs. Strong instructional coaching can help, particularly in schools serving students with the greatest needs.

I would also look closely at JCPS schools that are already seeing success. We have talented educators doing innovative work inside our own district. Before importing another model, I want to understand what those educators are doing, what conditions allowed it to work, and whether those practices can be replicated elsewhere with the appropriate support and funding.

I would study Dr. Yearwood's results carefully, including demographics, starting achievement, attendance, staffing and specific interventions, before assuming one factor caused the difference. The question isn't simply, "What program do we need?" It is, "What does this particular student need to succeed?"

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

Teachers only have so many hours a week with their students. I had a tutor growing up in 3rd, 4th and 5th grade it was imperative to my overall success in school. We should be able to offer classes to parents in the evening to help them teach their children. Parents need to be the first ones to support the teachers. I feel that more involvement with business and the industries in the community will directly benefit from a well-educated population. Throughout my career I always believed in handling matters internally, the CAO should be the first step. The principals in the schools maybe should have those roles. We of course need more teachers that look like our students. I would ask Dr. Yearwood to identify the areas of his approach that are in line with the educational professionals at JCPS and focus on those first. The areas where we can find common ground is typically the most robust in productivity. The best tools for the job typically yield the best results, let's have a conversation with our teachers about what tools they are missing!

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 William Snawder:

I am a firm believer that every student deserves the opportunity to succeed regardless of background or circumstances. I believe as a district we need to ensure that resources are directed where the need is greatest based on actual data and performance. This means that we are identifying students who are struggling early on and providing targeted support to that student. I also feel like we need to ensure that our schools that are serving higher need populations have the support and resources necessary to help their students succeed. My goal would be to ensure every student has access to the support they need to ensure that they are prepared to succeed in school, work, and life.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

Equity does not mean every school receives exactly the same resources. It means students receive the resources necessary to have a meaningful opportunity to succeed.

I would support a transparent, needs-based allocation model that considers factors such as poverty, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, mobility, attendance and academic need. But the formula itself cannot be the end of the conversation. We should be able to explain why a school receives

additional resources, what those resources are intended to accomplish, and whether they are actually helping students.

I also believe resources should follow student need rather than simply follow a school label.

Recruiting a diverse educator workforce matters because students benefit from seeing themselves reflected in the adults who teach and support them. But recruitment without retention is not enough. We need to understand why educators stay, why they leave, and what working conditions allow talented teachers to build long careers in JCPS.

Equity requires data, but it also requires listening to the people experiencing the system.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

The United States is a melting pot; it always has and always will be. Louisville has the second largest Cuban population, Miami-Dade County has the highest. Learning life-long must be the goal of the community. JCPS must organize in the communities in which groups gather; be at the events where people congregate and celebrate. The teaching profession is predominantly female at 77%; studies have shown that young men of color learn better when the teacher is a male that looks like them. I would say this is another opportunity for organizing, pounding the pavement and knocking on the doors. I believe that the next generation of teachers is out there, we just have to go identify them, showing them the tools for success; put them in the driver's seat!

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 William Snawder:

Every child deserves the opportunity to receive a quality education in a safe school. For our immigrant children, that means ensuring that challenges such as language barriers or other things don't prevent them from learning. I would support strong ELL programs, as well as additional academic resources and clear communications to families about what is available to them. I would like to hear directly from staff about the challenges they are seeing so we can make sure we as a district are using our resources to address them.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

Schools should be safe educational spaces where students can learn without fear interfering with their education.

JCPS should continue strengthening language access, newcomer supports, translated communication and clear protocols for staff when outside agencies request information or access to school facilities.

Families should know who to contact and how to communicate with their child's school regardless of the language spoken at home.

I also believe we need to change how we think about multilingualism. A student's home language is not a problem to solve. It is something that student brings into the classroom.

Students and families who speak multiple languages bring cultural knowledge, perspective and communication skills that strengthen our schools and our community.

As a board member, I would want multilingual families at the table when we evaluate these services. We should ask them directly: What is working? Where are the barriers? What are we missing?

Supporting immigrant and multilingual families is not simply about translation. It is about ensuring that language, culture and family circumstances do not become barriers to belonging, participation or learning.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I must first state for the record that I've done Ancestry.com DNA test and that I in fact have zero indigenous lineage. We must double down on the progress that has been made by the former board and lobbyists to protect our community as we prepare the tools we need for tomorrow's economy. The children in our communities are the future, they are the nurses, teachers, sheet metal workers and every other profession that will provide support to the community as we are all ages and we all start depending on services which we can't provide for ourselves. We must call on other groups in our communities to stand up and head down to Frankfort to advocate for the future! I started fighting back in 2017 when Labor got in the cross hairs of the Beavin administration. I will say since then I've locked arms with other disenfranchised groups along the way.

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 curriculars.

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 William Snawder:

Our educators are a top investment for JCPS. Attracting and retaining quality teachers has to be a priority. We need to look closely at how JCPS is currently spending the money it has. We need to evaluate programs, admin costs, and other expenditures to identify where funding can be redirected to the classrooms. I think It's also important to analyze how COVID funding is being phased out and make sure there is a plan in place for replacing those resources without creating future budget issues. I believe that is the data shows that a COLA is necessary to remain competitive and retain teachers I would support making it a priority within a responsible budget.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

Competitive compensation has to be part of JCPS's long-term academic strategy, not treated as a separate issue.

If we want to attract and retain excellent teachers, instructional assistants and other school-based staff, compensation has to remain competitive with surrounding districts and sustainable over time. A one-time payment can help in a particular year, but it does not permanently change the salary schedule.

I would want compensation modeled alongside JCPS's three-year financial projections, including recurring revenue, enrollment, vacancies, turnover, substitute costs, contracts and other major expenditures.

And before asking school-based staff to absorb additional cuts, I believe the district should take a hard look at administrative and contractual expenditures and ask what every major expense accomplishes. That does not mean assuming everything outside a classroom is unnecessary. It means being disciplined about priorities.

Our teachers and staff did not create the deficit. They should not automatically become the solution to it.

The goal is a financially sustainable compensation structure that allows JCPS to retain experienced educators while continuing to provide the services our students need.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I must first state for the record that I've done Ancestry.com DNA test and that I in fact have zero indigenous lineage. We must double down on the progress that has been made by the former board and lobbyists to protect our community as we prepare the tools we need for tomorrow's economy. The children in our communities are the future, they are the nurses, teachers, sheet metal workers and every other profession that will provide support to the community as we are all ages and we all start depending on services which we can't provide for ourselves. We must call on other groups in our communities to stand up and head down to Frankfort to advocate for the future! I started fighting back in 2017 when Labor got in the cross hairs of the Beavin administration. I will say since then I've locked arms with other disenfranchised groups along the way.

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 William Snawder:

I believe all students can benefit from an education that is well rounded that includes academics, music, art, JROTC, and other extracurricular things. I think we would need to evaluate these programs based on overall participation, outcomes, overall costs, and the

value that they provide to our students rather than just making the assumption that one is more important than the other one. We as a district should provide clear and objective information about the programs that allow the families to and board to make informed decisions. I think it's also important to analyze why students are leaving any pathway, not just JROTC. I think knowing why students are leaving will help us figure out if there are any issues with specific programs or whether students just found a different interest.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

I would evaluate JROTC the same way I would evaluate any other program: What does it cost? Who participates? What do students gain? And what would happen if the program changed?

I do not believe every valuable student experience can be reduced to test scores or graduation statistics. Arts, music, world languages, athletics, career pathways and other programs can create belonging, leadership, creativity, discipline and engagement that may not show up neatly on an assessment.

At the same time, no program should receive a permanent exemption from objective review.

For JROTC, I would want participation, retention, student outcomes, costs and student and family feedback examined alongside comparable elective pathways. I would also want to understand why students leave a program before deciding what that means.

Students and families deserve accurate, balanced information about the opportunities available to them, including what each pathway requires and provides.

The question should not be which program “wins.” It should be whether each program is serving students effectively and whether students who leave one pathway have another meaningful opportunity available to them.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I don't know exactly what I wanted to be when I started my freshman year.

Senior year around Christmas I knew I was going on the trade pathway. Kids need to have

options for engagement; they need to gain experience while trying to figure out what's next. I don't know if eliminating the JROTC program all the way is the correct approach. I do feel that an economic burden to a program that's shrinking rapidly and losing its appeal should be under review. I would say now that JCPS has 5 districts maybe have 1 per district? I believe that if a more rural district had the same disinterest and waning participation in the arts, foreign language or music, those programs should be protected and preserved to some degree.

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 William Snawder:

Technology should support good teaching, not replace it. Our educators should have the opportunity to use technology to personalize learning and use it to identify where students need help, but also still using their own experience and judgement. The board should ensure that students have a healthy balance of technology and hands on learning and classroom interaction. I personally believe JCPS does not need to be 1-1 on chromebooks. I think students should have access to them but I don't think 1-1 is still necessary. This is due to studies showing our testing scores have decreased since going 1-1.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

I do not believe technology is inherently good or bad for learning. It is a tool. It should not become the classroom.

I would support the board establishing clear expectations around developmentally appropriate screen use while preserving teachers' professional judgment about when technology improves instruction and when students need conversation, writing, movement, hands-on learning or face-to-face collaboration.

I also believe JCPS should continue evaluating whether one-to-one devices remain the most effective and sustainable use of district resources rather than assuming the answer will always be "more technology."

With AI, I support a balanced approach. Students need to understand how these tools work and how to use them ethically, while still developing independent writing, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. There should be clear expectations around academic integrity and appropriate use.

There also need to be intentional opportunities for screen-free learning.

Technology can expand access and personalize learning. But it cannot replace relationships, curiosity, communication or the teacher who knows the child sitting in front of them.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I read this question and I already know that a year from now my answer will need to evolve. I believe that this is probably going to be the most important topic of our lives. I see this massive wave of infrastructure being built day in and day out across the country, I'm cautious when I start to discuss it. AI is more polarizing than politics itself, I believe it has united right and left on both ends of the pendulum. Teachers need to approach AI as they did when the calculator first came on the scene as a tool, not the answer. The notion that the board should be the screen time czar to me is concerning, the teachers are the ones who should determine that. I think that certain classes might need to spend more time on computers than others, let's let teachers teach. Lastly on this topic I want to say on the Chromebook piece I need more data. I honestly don't know how I feel

about the 1 to 1 Chromebook saga that seems to be a polarizing topic in JCPS.

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 William Snawder:

I would consider the different options. Including expanded JCPS transportation, partnerships with TARC, smaller shuttle routes, or strategically placed mirror programs. I think it's important to analyze each based on costs, accessibility, and where it actually increases access for our students.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

Access to a magnet or Academy program is not truly equal if transportation or geography makes that opportunity unrealistic for some students.

I believe JCPS should look at transportation and program distribution together. Transportation solutions could include traditional buses, partnerships, hubs or other options, but we should also ask whether successful programs can be geographically distributed or replicated closer to the students they serve.

If a program is working, I want to understand what makes it successful and what support and funding would be required to replicate those conditions elsewhere.

That could mean creating additional opportunities in neighborhoods that currently have fewer choices rather than expecting students to travel across the district for every specialized program.

I would want families and students involved in identifying the barriers. They understand the practical realities of work schedules, siblings, transportation, after-school responsibilities and travel time.

The goal should be more than technically offering choices.

A choice is only meaningful when students can realistically access it.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I want to say first this is by far the most complex problem that JCPS has. I also believe that this one has the most opportunity for investment, making the kinds of investments that's required to solve this issue will uplift the entire county. I believe that building schools in the predominantly communities of color is the first step. I don't know for sure the locations of the proposed sites or what schools would get the upgrades, but that seems to be the first investment that needs to happen. I agree with the COO the current labor market is extremely competitive. I would err the side of caution about going other routes at first for logistic purposes. The entire community would agree that historically school bus stops are not the safest, but I think we start adding other means into the mix the scenarios could be far worse.

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-wide 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 William Snawder:

I think all school closures or consolidations need to be based on data and not politics. I would want to look at students’ outcomes, enrollment, capacity, costs, and the neighborhood impact before making decisions. I would support a district level review of attendance zones instead of just targeting schools with lower enrollment. Most importantly I think if a closure or consolidation is needed that we involve teachers, parents, and the community early on and listen to their input. It is also important to have a transition plan in place for those affected.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

I would support a school closure or consolidation if the data demonstrated that it was necessary, but I would not make that decision based solely on the number of empty seats.

I would want a district-wide review of enrollment and attendance patterns before individual schools are

selected. That review should consider building condition, projected enrollment, transportation, demographics, special programs, student outcomes, staffing, neighborhood growth, and the effect on both the school being closed and the schools receiving additional students.

Teachers, families, students and community members should be involved long before a final recommendation is presented.

Schools are more than buildings. They are often neighborhood gathering places and trusted community institutions. If a closure becomes necessary, JCPS has a responsibility to provide wraparound supports for the students, families and staff affected by that transition. That includes carefully planning for receiving schools rather than simply moving students from one building to another.

Difficult decisions are sometimes necessary, but people should never be treated like numbers on a spreadsheet.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I have stated that school closures in my opinion would be some of the toughest decisions I believe a board would have to make. I first think that the board must look at where the city is making investments at. I want to say that if a massive data center is going on in a particular area, that's not the sort of investment that I'm referring to either. Schools will thrive in areas if the population is not displaced. The proper investments are in shops, parks and places where people can participate in meaningful engagement whatever that means to whomever is reading this. The schools will stay open as long as there are kids in those areas attending them, seems simple right? The downsizing piece of this question is interesting; I believe that it could give teacher/student ratios closer to where scores could be raised. Modifying attendance zones across the entire district could be a contentious discussion, that some areas of the district are doing well with enrollment, and I would bet money on those areas see massive investment from the city already.

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 William Snawder:

I believe prevention should come before punishment. JCPS should give teachers, parents, and staff better behavioral support and training to identify challenges early and help students develop accountability and self-control. Student voice should be part of that process. Students can help us understand what is working, what isn't, and what makes them feel safe and supported. I would also look at alternatives to out-of-school suspension and make sure discipline is applied fairly and consistently. Funding should come from evaluating existing programs and prioritizing resources that directly support students and staff. As for sworn officers, I support having them where the data shows they are needed to maintain safe schools, while also investing in prevention and positive school culture.

Response by Carrie Donovan:

I believe this requires a combination of prevention, accountability, student voice, family partnership and staff support.

Every school should have a collaborative process for identifying behavioral and emotional needs early, before a student becomes defined by a disciplinary incident. Teachers, counselors, administrators, families and students all bring information that matters.

I support reducing unnecessary out-of-school suspensions while maintaining meaningful consequences for serious behavior and safety concerns. Accountability should teach students how to repair harm and develop replacement behaviors—not simply remove them from the learning environment.

I am also interested in a structured peer-and-adult model where appropriately trained students can have a meaningful role in restorative and school-climate work, alongside adults with the necessary professional expertise.

Student voice should not be symbolic. Students should help tell us what makes them feel safe, respected and connected.

Staff also deserve safe working conditions and adequate behavioral support. No teacher should be expected to manage dangerous behavior without appropriate resources.

I would evaluate any expansion of armed officers through evidence, specific safety needs, cost and community input.

Safe schools and welcoming schools should be the same goal—not competing goals.

Response by Kyle Killebrew:

I am of the camp that looks at these issues that these children have been wronged in the past. I have heard through the time campaigning for this spot on the board that often the public school system can be viewed as pipeline for children to incarceration. I think that we should bring in adults who were wronged in their youth and ultimately ended up in the system. Rehabilitation in this country is a mess, but if we could ultimately bring in the people who lived it, then they could have the conversation with the youth. I would add that this would be done with an abundance of caution and for the older high school age children. Childhood doesn't last that long, kids should have a chance to stay kids; far too many are not afforded that opportunity. I am not a mental health professional, the next school board needs to be pragmatic across the spectrum of issues that they are going to face. I understand that I won't have all the answers, but I will be willing to get the right people who advocate for the entire community.