

Coalition for a Better Memphis Candidate Questionnaire Shelby County School Board

The Coalition for a Better Memphis is an independent non-profit organization, made up of Shelby County individuals, businesses and organizations. Its mission is to assist area voters in identifying qualified candidates for public office.

In 2008, CBM's Candidate Assessment Committee is interviewing candidates for the Shelby County School Board with the intention of publishing a "voter guide" of candidate evaluations.

Completed questionnaires may be emailed to: peggy@bettermemphis.org
Or Mailed to:

**Coalition for a Better Memphis
7730 Goshawk Cove
Cordova, TN 38016**

Direct any questions to:
Peggy Callahan
peggy@bettermemphis.org

Please complete this questionnaire and
return it to

The Coalition for a Better Memphis

No later than 5 p.m.,
Friday, June 6, 2008

*Please answer all questions carefully – your responses will be printed on the
CBM website EXACTLY as they are provided to us.*

SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD QUESTIONNAIRE 2008

NAME: JIM W. JONAKIN

1. In your opinion, what are the three greatest issues (problems or opportunities) facing the Shelby County School system in the next four years?

In my opinion the three greatest issues facing the Shelby County School System in the next four years are:

- (1) Growth management as it relates to funding the construction of new schools and the resulting adjustment of attendance zones at existing schools;
- (2) Student safety and school security;
- (3) Maintenance of a high level of qualified personnel throughout the system.

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2. DESCRIBE BRIEFLY YOUR QUALIFICATIONS FOR HOLDING THE OFFICE OF SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER.

With regard to the legal requirements, I am a resident of District 2 (the district for which I am a candidate) and I meet the educational requirement of at least a high school diploma since I have earned 72 hours beyond the Master's Degree.

In addition to the legal requirements, I feel that my extensive involvement with the Shelby County School System from various perspectives, such as (1) that of a student who attended Shelby County Schools for 12 years; (2) parent of two daughters who attended Shelby County Schools from kindergarten through the twelfth grade; (3) grandparent of a child currently in the system; (4) husband of a teacher/counselor in the system (retired); and finally (5) as a teacher, coach, and principal myself (retired), shows the depth of my interest in the system, both personally and professionally and qualifies me to seek the office of Shelby County School Board Member.

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3. What do you think is the primary role of the School Board in leading the Shelby County School System, and what is the primary role of the superintendent?

The primary role of the School Board is one of policy making. The elected School Board is responsible for developing the policies that guide the operation of the school system. It is the Superintendent's responsibility to implement the policies and carry out the day-to-day operation of the system.

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4. School construction costs have been a major contributor to the county government's debt load. What, if anything, should the Shelby County School Board do in the years ahead to help the county avoid adding to the debt?

It would be inappropriate for me to suggest a solution to such a complex issue prior to my election and access to detailed information regarding such matters.

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5. Raising student achievement is a critical mission for the school system. If you could implement only one initiative, enhancement or management change, to raise student achievement in the Shelby County schools in the next four years, what would it be?

If I could implement only one initiative, it would be to remove the formal subjects of science and social studies from the curricular offerings in kindergarten through the third grade. The basic information for these subjects could be integrated into the instruction of Reading, Writing, Language, and Math. Thus teachers would have more time to develop concepts as opposed to "covering the material."

Of course, I'm not naïve enough to think that this will happen, but your question asked if I could only implement one thing, what would it be?

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6. Are there opportunities for collaboration between the Shelby County School System and the Memphis School System that aren't being pursued today? If so, what are two that you would favor?

At this point in time I don't have access to sufficient information to answer this question.

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7. How would you propose the Shelby County School system cooperate and comply with the current court order to achieve unitary status?

Continue to work in good faith with the court to meet the necessary requirements as stipulated by the court.

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8. What is your position on Special School District status?

It is my understanding that Special School Districts are authorized by the State of Tennessee. Other than that, I have no position with regard to Special School Districts.

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9. As a public servant, how do you propose to be accessible to the people you represent?

It is my understanding that School Board are open to the public. In addition to that access, I plan to make my phone number and email address available to my constituents.

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