

COALITION FOR A BETTER MEMPHIS
Shelby County School Board Candidate Questionnaire
Election Date: August 5, 2010

Name: **David Reaves**

District for which you are running: **3**

Section 1: Qualifications and Background (2 questions)

Section 2: Vision and Strategies (5 questions)

Section 3: Improving the Education System (4 questions)

1. QUALIFICATIONS AND BACKGROUND

A. Describe your qualifications for holding the office of Shelby County School District board member. (Please answer in the space below and attach a resume.)

- a. BA, MIS – University of Memphis, 2000
- b. Product of Shelby County Schools, Bartlett High School ‘94
- c. Father of 3 children all in Shelby County Schools
- d. Have been an active PTA member for 6 years
- e. Internationally-certified Business Continuity Planner
- f. Protects a \$8 Billion company from business interruption
- g. Active in our community: Mentor, Coach, Sunday School Teacher

B. Please indicate whether you or any close family member has any direct or indirect financial or material interest in firms, corporations or organizations doing business with the Shelby County School District, Memphis City Schools, local City, County or State governments

I have no family members or close acquaintances that I am aware of that have any material interests in doing business with any of the school systems. My mother is a special needs assistant in the Shelby County Schools.

NAME: _____

2. VISION AND STRATEGIES

A. What are the three greatest issues (challenges or opportunities) facing the Shelby County School District in the next four years. What policy changes, if any, would you recommend in dealing with these issues?

1) Threat of school consolidation between the MCS and SCS

I believe that a special school district is needed and is in the best interest of the Shelby County School system to freeze boundaries and prevent any kind of consolidation effort from the city. It is unfair to the children for our leaders to continue to use them in pawns in the game of the Metro consolidation effort. I will support any and all legislation efforts to make sure that happens.

2) Inadequate school funding

The SCS does more with less and they prove it every fiscal year. But it has become apparent that there is an unfair funding formula that has been determined by the state legislature that handicaps the county by giving more to the city. I do not think single source funding is the way. I will support legislation that make the ADA funding formula for the county schools closer to our city school peers for both operating and capital funding.

3) Lack of parental involvement

This is one of the most significant threats we face as a society in general. I see less and less parental involvement in the lives of their children due to financial stresses and the state of our economy. I believe that we need to expand the use of the PTA to help fill the gaps and encourage the parents and be mentors to children along with the teachers.

NAME: _____

B. What policies would you support to address the issues of school safety and violence prevention? This is a complex issue that really starts in the homes of the children. There are 3 things that I think we can do to address this issue:

- 1) Security Cameras in High Schools – all high schools should have an on-site security presence that monitors security cameras during school hours.**
- 2) Early childhood prevention programs – We need to expand our use of early detection of children with possible problems and get children and their parents help early.**
- 3) Expand the creation and use of alternative schools- Not every child has the capacity to be taught the same way. Some children respond to different types of stimulus and structure. For those who are institutional students, violent, or even repeat drug offenders, I would recommend an alternative solution or school with a very well defined structure and curriculum to give them their best shot and being productive citizens.**

C. What opportunities exist to improve/increase collaboration between the Shelby County School District and the Memphis City School District?

I think that the City of Memphis does its citizens in the future annex areas a grave disservice by not completing its annexation process. Children are being bussed all over the mid-south while there is a city school right around the corner. With that said, I think that there are few opportunity areas:

- 1) Complete annexing the future city annex areas and get children into schools in their local communities**
- 2) In areas that are not annexed, look at a possible joint solution of a utilizing the same space and having a city and county school in a common space.**
- 3) Expand knowledge sharing between the administrations.**

Continued on next page

NAME: _____

D. Do you support single-source funding for the Memphis and Shelby County School Districts? (Circle one) Yes Yes with reservations No

Explain: I am not in favor of single source funding because it does not fix the root of the funding problem which is at the state level. I also believe that it paves the way to consolidation which is not the best solution for either the city or the county.

E. An educated workforce and successful entrepreneurs are key considerations when companies evaluate a city for a new location. What should Shelby County schools be doing to better prepare graduates for the workforce, as entrepreneurs, and/or college? I think that the SCS actually does a pretty good job of this as it is. My major concern is more along the lines that we have children who come out of school who have no life skills like putting together budgets and handling money and evaluating decisions. I think at times we put too much emphasis on grades and performance and not enough on practical life skills.

NAME: _____

3. IMPROVING THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

A. What is the single greatest challenge facing schools in the particular district you are running for? What specific policy would you propose to resolve it? *The biggest problem we are facing in the district is the movement of children in our community to schools well outside of the community. This has to be fixed by a common sense rezoning policy that balances the school population and maximizes the use of the capacity and keeps children in their community.*

B. Merit pay for teachers is a major topic of discussion nationally. Do you support differentiating pay for teachers?

(Circle one) Yes **Yes with reservations** No

Explain: I believe that we should reward teacher performance and innovation by providing for incentive pay for teachers who are exceeding expectations. However, I do not want to hurt the seniority process for all of our teachers but I do think there needs to some incentive to perform.

C. Do you believe that test scores should be a factor in determining whether teachers obtain tenure? *(Circle one)* Yes Yes with reservations No

Explain: I think incentives should be based upon an expanded set of criteria and test scores would be part of those. I think tenure should be based upon the teacher's willingness to stay a part of the system and continue to educate our children. However, I do believe that if a teacher is not making an effort to educate all children that their pay and tenure should be tied to that.

NAME: _____

D. As the CEO of the Board of Education, the school district superintendent plays a crucial role in educating Shelby County's children. What in your opinion is the best way to evaluate a superintendent's performance? I think that the superintendent's performance should be based upon the overall performance of the school system and how it is performing against state and national standards. However, there needs to be some subjective information like employee satisfaction and parental feedback that helps determine a small piece of that evaluation.

- end -