

**VOTER GUIDE – NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTION
BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Tuesday, November 3, 2020
POLLS ARE OPEN 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OAKLAND AREA

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5 Candidates for School District Board Member for TWO 6-year terms

<p>CANDIDATES for SCHOOL BOARD</p> <p>TWO 6-year terms and</p>	<p>Question 1 (150 Words or less): Please provide biographical information and explain why you are running for School Board and relevant qualities and skills you would bring to the position that you are running for.</p>	<p>Question 2 (150 Words or less): What are the top three (3) Priority Issues facing your school district and what actions would you take to address them if elected to the school board?</p>
<p>LORI AJLOUNY 1898 Pine St. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>I am a mother of four, and have been a teacher in the BPS school district for 31 years. I feel my experience as a mother an involved resident of Birmingham plus my long service as teacher in our district provides me with insight to maintain our standards of educational excellence. Both teaching and parenthood prepared me to be able to make "tough decisions" in the best interest of all. Working directly with students in the classroom, working with the community, teaching staff and administration gives me a unique perspective not many board members have had, nor can bring to the table. When I found out there hasn't been an educator on our school board for almost 50 years, I knew I had to run for this position to make sure decisions made from a few in positions above didn't have a trickle-down affect and negatively impact the classroom nor school climate. Decisions have to include all stakeholders' perspectives in order to maintain our high educational excellence.</p>	<p>In the face of a global pandemic, my top priority as a school board member was to keep our children, families, all staff and their families safe. The second priority I see as a high second, is a return to in-class-learning. Next to family and safety education is a top priority. While I voted to move our learning to a virtual platform in August, I am influenced now by improving data based on credible studies; CDC, Harvard Global Health Institute, Oakland County Health Department, that our numbers of infection, transmission, cases of hospital treatment and deaths have gone down on the Oakland County Metric System to a status of "yellow". This allows us to move forward cautiously to phase in face-to-face learning, beginning with our most vulnerable student population i.e. children that have special educational needs and kindergartners through first or second grade. My third priority is to address any "slide or increased learning gap" among our students and be fiscally responsible.</p>

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS (Continued)

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<p>LUKE JOSEPH 1520 Pierce St. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>I am a father of two young boys who do attend school within the Birmingham School District. I am an Accountant and Real Estate Agent. Both professions would help me as a Board member. I would be able to handle the budget and find new ways to raise funds and help the district financially. I am also aware as a Realtor that having strong School rankings are critical to the value of the homes. I am running for multiple reasons. First, I want to give back to the community and help parents to hear all of their voices for every decision made. Second, I want to maintain and grow Birmingham School district so it can continue to be at the top of rankings not just in the state, but also nationally. Finally, I want to make sure that all students are safe, secure and treated fairly and equally.</p>	<p>Student Educational Levels- Parents need to be involved at all levels from academics and athletics, to just simply a family night outing. Teachers need to voluntarily communicate with parents on constant basis on the positives as well as the negatives and suggest any possible improvements. Offer International Baccalaureate for example. Offer opportunities for Special Need children to be in sports as well and give them that pride to be part of the team. We need to have everyone play a role, nobody should be sitting out because we are not offering enough educational/sporting/rewarding programs.</p> <p>Safeguarding in the era of Covid-19 - Everything in life has a solution, virtual learning was the "safe" decision that should have been tackled as last resort. If the students attend one day a week is better than zero.</p> <p>Control of reforms - Long-Term Vision for the district, sustain strong leadership, have ambitious standards, high quality teachers & leaders, motivate student to connect globally</p>

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<p>SAMUEL OH 820 Hazel St. Birmingham, MI 48009</p>	<p>With my family moving Birmingham in 2013, I consider myself more a recent resident. I have no political agenda and only care for what makes sense for our schools and children. With my corporate background and family of teachers, professors, veterans, healthcare professionals, and technology executives, I hope to bring new perspective, positive change, and tap into valuable best-case practices from other successful industries.</p> <p>In 2019 and 2020, both my elementary sons were victims of racism at school that went unabated, which was ironic because last year my son's Kindergarten class was more than 40% minority, 2/3 of which were Asian. However, there are no Asians at the principal, superintendent, or Board of Education level in the BPS system. Nothing ever changes unless there are numbers and representation at the highest level down. Leadership needs to reflect class diversity and purposefully fight racism and prejudice. This is the main reason why I am running for School Board.</p>	<p>Firstly, recent events have shown that Birmingham Public Schools is woefully ill prepared for the technology future. When COVID-19 first hit, virtual learning was an embarrassment. Even now, glitches persist, hindering our students' education and putting Michigan's schools further at risk of falling behind in national rankings. I would champion for an immediate technology revamp.</p> <p>Second, the public school systems need to be laser-focused on growing population density. As the public schools have to increasingly compete with private schools, I would advocate for purposeful and strategic steps to achieve population density. If not, our local school districts will become a diminishing asset, over-staffed and underfunded.</p> <p>Finally, executive school leadership and oversight has to proportionally reflect the reality of the incoming student body – 50% women, minority representation, etc. If elected I would look to correct this underrepresentation in our district.</p>

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOLS (Continued)

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<p>NASH SALAMI 900 Adams Castle Dr. Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>I live in Bloomfield Township, I've attended public schools all my life, and I graduated from Seaholm in 2019. In the past, I've worked extensively in non-profit organizational management, and alongside student advocacy groups at numerous high schools across our state. I took what I learned and started my own organization to focus on the advocacy of clean water access in developing countries, as well as educational equity in underserved communities.</p> <p>As a recent graduate, I would bring my relevant experiences and first-hand knowledge of the culture and complexities of our students' lives to the board. I bring my experience as a problem-solver and collaborator to be able to bridge divides and come to solutions while involving all stakeholders. Further, I bring my experience as an organizational manager, where I've been charged with overseeing budgets and balance sheets, to be able to keep our district's finances in check and be a good steward of your taxpayer dollars.</p>	<p>1) If given the opportunity to join the board, I would be an advocate for fiscal responsibility and strive for a balanced budget on our school board. Preserving our budget balance, especially while we weather financially turbulent times, is vital while we face declining enrollment rates.</p> <p>2) When faced with important decisions, it is the board's duty to completely collect input from all interests to make the best decision for everyone involved. I would strive to always involve every vested interest in the decisionmaking process, as well as being an open collaborator and communicator.</p> <p>3) Providing more resources to students surrounding mental health issues. As a recent graduate, I have first-hand knowledge of the complex issues facing our students today. I would advocate for further investment into resources such as school psychologists, social workers, and restorative action programs in mental health.</p> <p>Learn more about my stances on further issues by visiting NashSalami.com/priorities</p>

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<p>WILLIAM BARTON CLIFFORD, JR. <i>(Write-in)</i> 409 Whippers In Ct. Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304</p>	<p>I am a father to three BPS students, an attorney, and a proud resident of Bloomfield Township.</p> <p>Like so many other parents throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I have felt powerless as others made decisions that have negatively impacted my kids without offering any substantive explanation. I finally reached my breaking point with the School Board's August 11 decision to rubber stamp the Superintendent's sudden decision to pivot away from the option for an in-person return-to-school in favor of a virtual return. While my election cannot undo the damage that the School Board has already done, I will not become another rubber stamp vote for the Superintendent or anyone else. I will be a vocal advocate for the BPS students and parents that are routinely ignored and overlooked. I will ask the tough questions that in the past have not been asked and will fight to ensure that our students are in the best position possible for long and successful futures when they depart the Birmingham Schools.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BPS's response to the COVID pandemic has destroyed the community's trust in BPS leadership. BPS must reestablish a positive working partnership with the community. Leadership has to start listening to the community on all matters. If elected, I will listen to all interests and do my best to understand and consider the needs of parents, students, teachers, and the community. 2. One of the most common complaints I have heard is that BPS has failed to meet the needs of its special needs students both pre- and post-COVID. This is completely unacceptable. I will work with parents and educators to ensure that BPS meets these students' basic educational needs and to identify opportunities to enhance their educational experience and opportunities. 3. This year's Senior Class is the first class to have Integrated Math throughout high school. Given the controversy surrounding its implementation, I will insist that the District evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the program.

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