



## Voter Guide for the May 2021 Election: Fredericksburg ISD

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan civic organization and does not support or oppose any candidate or candidates or political party or parties. This voter guide includes candidate and voting information for an election that has two or more candidates on the ballot for an office. All responses to questions come directly from the candidates and are not edited by LWV-Hill Country Texas. The information provided on this flyer is also available at the website VOTE411.org, sponsored by the League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas.

### Fredericksburg ISD School Board: term of office - 3 years

The Fredericksburg ISD Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees elected by eligible voters to serve a three-year term. Each trustee serves in an at-large position for the term and represents the entire school district. Elections are held annually on the May uniform election date. The boundaries for Fredericksburg ISD are located in Gillespie County and in Blanco County.

Duties: adopt goals and priorities and monitor success; adopt policies and review for effectiveness; hire and evaluate the superintendent; adopt a budget and set a tax rate; and communicate with the community.

| Erin Carter   | Kelly DiCuffa       | Judge Edwards   |
|---|---------------------|---|
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### 1. What experience and knowledge qualifies you to serve as a member of the school board for Fredericksburg ISD

**Erin Carter:** I worked in education for 30 years and at FISD for 21 years. I have a Bachelor's in Special Education and a Master's in School Administration. The last 17 years I have been the HCSEC Coordinator. This job was coordinating special education services for 5 school districts in our area. As a result, I was on every campus with multiple teachers, counselors, principals and administrators. I know schools. I know how schools are run. I know budgeting. I know teachers, I know students and I have worked with hundreds of parents over the course of 21 years in Fredericksburg.

**Kelly DiCuffa:** Thank you for considering me for FISD School Board. I am a strong candidate for several reasons: I have been a committed board member for three years and am seeking reelection. I have a voice in meetings on behalf of students, teachers and administrators. I have three children in the district. I am a working mom and understand the challenges of busy families. Also, I am an employee, employer and small business owner, and I understand the talents and skills needed for the future. My goal is to help all students be their best. Go Billies!

**Judge Edwards:** My experience that qualifies me as a trustee includes my first term on the school board, having worked at the state legislature, and owning a successful business. Being a parent helps as well. In regard to knowledge, as a first term board member, we had some extraordinary circumstances that pushed us to work together to make difficult decisions. I learned a lot about working together as a team the last two years. Working at the Texas Capitol taught me about making policy, and getting it passed. Understanding finance is very important as a Trustee, and business has taught me that.



**Fredericksburg ISD School Board: term of office - 3 years**

**2. What is the most pressing issue facing the FISSD and what do you hope/plan to do about it?**

**Erin Carter:** FISSD has had a rough 6 years and I have witnessed that first hand working at Central Office. The leadership was that of building walls and closing doors. I know we have overlooked staff when it comes to pay as compared to the negotiated administrator salaries which has caused major morale problems in the district. Positions have been added without an analysis to justify their expense. We are failing our staff instead of supporting them. Teachers and support staff are leaving education at an alarming rate and we need to find a way to retain and appreciate them.

**Kelly DiCuffa:** One of the pressing issues currently for FISSD is communication and district leadership. Over the next 30-60 days, the board will hire a new administrator. With this change, there are opportunities to grow leadership, collaboration and communication to students, parents and teachers. This is an exciting opportunity because new leadership will guide the future culture of FISSD and will help elevate academics, extracurricular programs, parent involvement, teacher leadership, technology and infrastructure. This will help to take all our campuses and students to the next level.

**Judge Edwards:** While there are many pressing issues right now, to answer the question direct, the most pressing issue now is to give families the choice in deciding whether to have their kids wear a mask. The mask issue has brought on the biggest outcry from the public by far that I have seen since I became a board member. Nearly all want the mask mandate removed, and there are some that do not. I am hoping once the teachers that want to be vaccinated, can be, we can get the measure passed and families will have a choice.

**3. What are the citizens who live in the school district telling you about school problems?**

**Erin Carter:** Parents and community members are very concerned about our district and the leadership choices. Teachers and staff are worried we will continue to go in the wrong direction. They are wanting transparency from the Board, and board members that understand the impact of how a bad leader can ruin a good district. FISSD needs to heal from our last 6 years with compassion and support. I know people are concerned about the future possible Bond Election for a new middle school and I hope that can be navigated with clarity and reality for Fredericksburg citizens.

**Kelly DiCuffa:** The 2020 and 2021 school years have been challenging years like no other for Gillespie County, between COVID and the major winter storm. However, these challenges have brought advances for the district. Parents were reminded that the schools are a source of refuge and safety for kids, and parents have appreciated the meals, showers and shelter. Academically, parents have been thankful for the technology advances. Ultimately, parents want technology long-term to augment education and not replace teachers. Parents have vocally shared how thankful they are for teachers and FISSD.

**Judge Edwards:** The main issue discussed is about families having a choice as it relates to wearing a mask to school. Another issue is the cost of property tax. The School Board has not raised the tax rate, but the property values have gone through the roof over the last several years. The state did give us some relief last session by funding public schools somewhat better than they have in the past several decades, but we still have the "Robin Hood" issue and we are sending millions of local dollars to other districts by way of the State.



VOTING INFORMATION FOR FREDERICKSBURG ISD SCHOOL BOARD

Take a photo ID with you to the voting location. Curbside voting available.

Early Voting Location: Gillespie County Annex 3 at 95 Frederick Road in Fredericksburg

Note: Extended hours on Tuesday, April 20 and Tuesday, April 27

Table with 7 columns (Sunday to Saturday) and 2 rows of voting hours. Row 1: April 18-24. Row 2: April 25-May 1. Hours range from 7:00am to 7:00pm to 8:00am to 4:00pm.

Election Day: Saturday - May 1 from 7:00am to 7:00pm

Location: Fredericksburg Middle School Cafeteria 110 West Travis Street Fredericksburg