



School Board Candidates Questions

YOUR RESPONSES WILL BE POSTED ON 15TH DISTRICT PTA WEBSITE, FACEBOOK AND TWITTER!

Name: Chris Kolb District: 2

1. If you have children, did they or do they attend public school?

I have been married for fifteen years and my wife and I have two children, ages 12 and 6. We are very excited that our youngest just began kindergarten at Lincoln Elementary, the JCPS performing arts elementary school. Our 12-year-old attended JCPS at Coleridge-Taylor Montessori for grades K-4. We did have to transfer him to a private school after fourth grade. We are hopeful he will return to JCPS for high school. As a JCPS graduate myself, and as my wife and I are strong supporters of public education and are regularly involved in public schools as PTA members and school volunteers, this was a very difficult decision for us but it is what our 12-year-old needed.

2. You represent a specific part of the city; how will you balance the needs of your specific constituents with the needs of the overall school district?

There are several reasons why I will be an effective representative for all parts of Jefferson County. I teach at Spalding University, where I work closely with hundreds of JCPS graduates from all different parts of the city. I am also a long-time leader in a major community organization whose members come from all parts of the city. In this role, I work to address serious community problems alongside people from West, South, and East Louisville. I attended the Brown School for grades 2–8, where I formed several life-long relationships with classmates from different parts of the city. Thus far, my two children have attended JCPS outside of District 2 and my wife and I have formed relationships with parents and teachers from a diverse range of neighborhoods. Finally, as a social scientist, my work often involves researching local, national, and international education systems, programs, and initiatives. This will allow me to bring a unique global perspective to the Board of Education.

3. What are your priorities for the district in the coming two years? Why and how did you select these issues?

I have selected priorities through six years of work with the JCPS Board of Education and JCPS administrators as a leader in a large community group, through hundreds of conversations with teachers and parents, and through extensive research into education in my career as a social scientist. Priorities in a school system begin and end with academic achievement, and JCPS must quickly improve many factors that influence academic achievement.

The reality is that we will first need to replace the superintendent. Dr. Hargens has lost the trust and respect of teachers, and teacher morale is extremely low. In addition, Dr. Hargens has failed to address the financial imbalances identified two years ago in a state audit by Adam Edelen. As a result, JCPS remains a top-heavy organization that spends too much on administrators and not enough to support teachers and students in the classroom. Added to these serious shortcomings in job performance, Dr. Hargens has knowingly reported false data to the state, has failed to curb systemic abuse of students at some schools, and has acted very slowly to address a serious safety crisis in many schools.

After securing a new superintendent, every decision I make as a Board Member will focus on correcting these serious

shortcomings to more fully support teachers and students in the classroom. We must hold the new superintendent accountable at every public meeting by requiring reports on:

- how the superintendent is reducing administrative spending and shifting resources to the classroom,
- how the superintendent is ensuring that JCPS data has integrity,
- how the superintendent is working to improve school safety, and
- how the superintendent is improving the morale of school staff, especially teachers.

In addition, I will prioritize community responsiveness and engagement, especially with the JCPS families and school staff in my district. The superintendent has often left the Board of Education in the dark about key issues. While primary responsibility for this lies with the superintendent, board members must be more proactive in creating opportunities to listen deeply to families and school staff. Board members are elected to serve the interests of our constituents and we must better recognize this in our actions.

I have selected these issues because JCPS is in the midst of a serious crisis of credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the public. A public institution simply cannot function without public confidence but, for the reasons discussed above, JCPS has lost a significant amount of public credibility. Each of the points I will focus on will serve to repair the relationships damaged by the Hargens administration and increase public confidence in our school system, which I believe is the most important institution in our city.

RETURN TO 15TH DISTRICT PTA BY WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26TH, 2016 BY 8:30PM