


SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
VOTER GUIDE**



**BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 4**  
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR  
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION.

---

**Join us for a Candidate Forum**

**MARCH 23**

**3:30PM NETWORKING**

**4:00PM FORUM**

**Forum is presented expressly for Chamber  
members and registration is required.**

Visit the calendar at [www.springfieldchamber.com](http://www.springfieldchamber.com) to register.

---

**LOCATION**

**Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Office**  
202 S. John Q. Hammons Pkwy  
Springfield, MO 65806

**Springfield**  
Area Chamber of Commerce



## A MESSAGE FROM JOSELYN BALDNER

*Central Bank of the Ozarks*  
*2023 Chairman of the Board*  
*Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce*

### WHY QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION AND SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE MATTER TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

For more than 20 years, the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce has prioritized the need for a strong public school system because of the direct connection to the future workforce and a thriving community. The Chamber has advocated for academic excellence within an educational system that is accountable, visionary and equipped to prepare students for living and working in the 21st century. The Chamber's Education Platform, first adopted in 1999, established strategic objectives and policy positions to guide decision making and action in pursuit of that vision.

Quality public education is a pillar of a growing economy. District governance and student performance can either fuel or cripple our region's economic opportunity. Decades of research confirm this link between education and economic growth. One recent national study on the future of work revealed that increasing student achievement across all states to match the highest-performing state would add \$70 trillion to the Gross Domestic Product over time.

With this correlation between public education and a vibrant economy, it is essential district leaders understand evolving factors that impact student college and career readiness. The future of work looks different than it did even a decade ago. Our R-12 school district, the largest in the state with nearly 25,000 students, is a key element of workforce development for the region, and the needs of the business community must continue to be top-of-mind for district leaders.

Over the years, aligned with our Education Platform, the Chamber has engaged in school board elections to ensure that strong connection between the business community and Springfield Public Schools. Beginning with the 2023 election cycle, and based on member feedback, the Chamber has moved from a candidate endorsement model to a member education model.

This board-approved approach will enhance our transparent, volunteer-driven process to provide meaningful information about all candidates running for the Springfield Public Schools board of education.

This voter education guide is representative of our efforts to help members evaluate all candidates through a business lens and to make their own informed decisions at the ballot box. Members are also invited to a candidate forum on March 23, to which all candidates have been invited, that will focus on education issues relevant to the business community.

We encourage you to use these opportunities to become thoroughly educated and identify who you think is best positioned to lead our school district. The governance of the district matters and it's up to all of us to be informed and vote for the most qualified candidates. The Chamber board has endorsed Springfield Public Schools' Proposition S on the ballot in April. The board encourages your support of this important measure that proposes specific investments in projects prioritized with citizen input. Please remember to vote on April 4!

Thank you,

# USING AND UNDERSTANDING THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to serve as a resource for Chamber members as they consider candidates for the R-12 board of education in the April 4, 2023, election.

## PROCESS AND CONTENT: WHAT'S IN THE GUIDE

### Candidate Questionnaire

The Chamber's Education Task Force developed a candidate questionnaire that was sent to all certified candidates for the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) board of education election. These questions align with the Chamber's board-approved Education Platform and are intended to focus on the qualifications for school board governance and the issues most relevant to the business community, especially as it relates to our future workforce and capacity for economic growth.

Learn more about the Chamber's Task Force and the Education Platform on **pages 14 and 15** of this guide.

## R-12 BOARD OF EDUCATION – APRIL 4, 2023, ELECTION

### Qualifications for school board members:

School board members must be a resident of the school district and have resided within the state for one year at the time of election or appointment and be at least 24 years of age. The term of a member is three years. The primary function of the board of education is to oversee the education of children in the community.

### Current members of the SPS board of education:

- Dr. Denise Fredrick, Board President (*term ends in April 2023 - not seeking re-election*)
- Scott Crise, Board Vice President (*term ends in 2024*)
- Kelly Byrne (*term ends in 2025*)
- Danielle Kincaid (*term ends in 2024*)
- Steve Makoski (*term ends in 2025*)
- Dr. Maryam Mohammedkhani (*term ends in 2024*)
- Dr. Shurita Thomas-Tate (*term ends in April 2023 - seeking re-election*)

For more information about the SPS board, visit [www.sps.org](http://www.sps.org)

### ALSO ON THE APRIL 4 BALLOT RELATED TO SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

In December 2022, the SPS board of education unanimously approved putting Proposition S on the April 4 ballot, which would fund new middle schools, major renovation to Pershing and significant safety upgrades across the district — all without raising the district tax levy. The Chamber board recently endorsed Proposition S – learn more on **pages 12 and 13**.

## DISTRICT FACTS

MISSOURI'S  
LARGEST PUBLIC  
K-12 SYSTEM

SPS 4-YEAR  
GRADUATION RATE  
**93.6%**  
(2020)

MISSOURI'S  
ONLY K-12  
INTERNATIONAL  
BACCALAUREATE  
— PROGRAM —

# CANDIDATE BIOS

There will be four certified candidates on the ballot (listed in alphabetical order).

**Voters will be asked to vote for two of the four candidates. The two candidates with the most votes will be seated on the board.**



## JUDY BRUNNER

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Currently serves as clinical faculty at Missouri State University, Chief Education Officer for Edu-Safe LLC, and part-time assistant director of Study Alternative Center
- 18 years working in administration for Springfield Public Schools (retired 2006) including serving as principal at Parkview High School, principal at Reed Middle School and Wilder Elementary School
- Small Business Owner/Chief Education Officer, Edu-Safe LLC

### EDUCATION

- B.S. Sociology, Missouri State University\*
- B.S. Ed. Learning Disabilities, Missouri State University\*
- M.S. Ed. Reading, Missouri State University\*
- Ed. S. Administration, Missouri State University\*
- Attended Springfield Public Schools, graduate of Glendale High School

*\*Southwest Missouri State University at the time*

### SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Founding member of the Do Something Fund



## LANDON McCARTER

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Owner and president of Secure Agent Marketing, a digital marketing agency with approximately 40 employees
- 14 years of entrepreneurial experience, having previously built and sold multiple businesses

### EDUCATION

- Bachelor's Degree, Marketing, Missouri State University
- Attended Springfield Public Schools, graduate of Kickapoo High School



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- HealthDirect Pharmacy Services, Facility Manager and Pharmacist in Charge

### EDUCATION

- Doctor of Pharmacy, University of Missouri-Kansas City
- Attended Springfield Public Schools, graduate of Glendale High School



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE INCUMBENT

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Currently an Associate Professor, Missouri State University and consultant/independent contractor through Shurita Thomas-Tate Consulting
- Past experience as Assistant Professor at Missouri State University and Florida State University
- Professional experience as a reading coach, teacher consultant and speech-language pathologist

### EDUCATION

- Ph.D. Speech-Language Pathology, The Ohio State University
- M.A. Speech-Language Pathology, The Ohio State University
- Southern University

### SCHOOL/COMMUNITY/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- NAACP, Springfield Chapter – Treasurer and Youth Council Advisor, Education Chair, Board of Directors
- Ujima Language & Literacy – Founder, Camp Director and Board of Directors
- Abilities First Advisory Council
- Springfield R-12 Board of Education (2020 to present)
- Mayor's Initiative on Equity and Equality
- MO Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Literacy Advisory Council
- The Connecting Grounds Homeless Outreach Team, Family Connection Team

# WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO RUN FOR SPS BOARD OF EDUCATION? WHY DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE THE BEST CANDIDATE?



## JUDY BRUNNER

As a native Springfieldian, I am a proud product of Springfield Public Schools (SPS). I have always supported public education. I have had the privilege of seeing SPS from a variety of perspectives—parent, grandparent, teacher, principal, and administrator.

My family and I believe the voice of a seasoned, K-12 educator is critical at the table. As a member of the school board, I will have unique credentials. I have been an educator for 30+ years, I am also a small business owner and educational consultant. My career at SPS has given me the opportunity to work in a variety of school communities listening to their needs and my experience as an education consultant has provided the opportunity to learn and work in school communities across the country.

I understand the challenges facing the district—from academic achievement, teacher/staff recruitment and quality learning environments. My focus will be school safety, engaging families and supporting educators to that end.

As a school board member, I will roll up my sleeves and be visible in the community that I love while listening carefully to constituent concerns and recommendations. No one individual has all the answers to the issues facing our public schools, but collectively we can, and must, do our best to educate all students in a manner that prepares our children for life after their K-12 experience.



## LANDON McCARTER

I chose to run for SPS Board of Education because of two main reasons. The first reason is that my father was a teacher in SPS for 30 years. My mother was as well. I was raised by teachers. I love Springfield and it is important to give back to the community. I believe that my skill set has equipped me to serve the community by serving the students on the board. The fact that I also have 3 children in SPS is another reason I am passionate about this project. My kids go to Cherokee and Disney. This allows for me to have first hand experience of the school system.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

Factors that led me to run for a position on school board: I have made it a priority to give back to my community and specifically to kids through fitness over the last 5 years. At this point in my life I wanted to do even more and felt offering my service on the Board of Education would be a good area to give back to my community in a different way. I have 7 kids, 5 of them still in the district (this gives me good access to students, parents, and staff), and I am committed to helping bring personal excellence to our students, teachers and administration to the best of my ability. I have spent the last 5 years setting my standards high for myself in my own life so that in turn I can now inspire and help those around me do the same.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

Running for the school board is a natural path and outgrowth of who I am, who I have always been, and what I value. I have always valued education, especially public education. This is evident in the time and effort that I have committed to educating myself and others. I have always been an engaged citizen who values community. I grew up in a civically minded family. I was taught the importance of being informed about what was going on in the world around me, that individually I have the power to impact my community, but also, that there is even more power to make changes for the good of my community when I work together with others. I believe that public education is for the public good. Public schools have the power to transform lives and transform communities. When the public schools are healthy, the community is healthier and stronger. It is my desire to continue to support and advocate for a strong and healthy Springfield Public School District.

# WHAT ARE THE TOP ISSUES YOU WILL ADDRESS IF ELECTED? WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIFIC STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?



## JUDY BRUNNER

**Safe Schools | Quality Learning Environments:** Since the district has invested in and developed a long-range facility improvement plan, this information should guide the budgeting process. This plan should include short-term and long-term goals related to specific needs.

A comprehensive safety audit should be completed for each educational site. This audit should include specific guidelines for reviewing individual classrooms as well as common spaces. Additionally, staff should be surveyed in terms of their knowledge of emergency response plan implementation. Where misinformation is noted, appropriate professional development should be facilitated.

**Engaging Families | Academic Achievement and Learning:** SPS's recently adopted strategic plan has six objectives related to success ready students. With each smart goal there are champions responsible for implementation as well as key metrics, baselines, targets, and strategies. The school board should monitor the plan and objectives as a priority as well as listen and engage families to support these objectives.

**Supporting Educators | Teacher/Staff Recruitment:** Salary and benefits is a priority. While money isn't all that is important, it is one of the first things considered when deciding if and where to teach and work. Actively recruit the best and brightest individuals for all positions. Encourage master teachers to become cooperating teachers to mentor early teachers. When student teachers (pre-teachers) demonstrate promise and educational excellence, recruit, recruit, recruit. Communicate regularly with employees that they have value. We should never underestimate the power and benefit of employees explaining to others why they choose to work in SPS.



## LANDON McCARTER

A few top issues I plan on addressing if elected are:

- Distractions in the classroom including disciplinary issues. I believe that teachers are asked to not only teach, but become social workers, or even police officers in some situations causing the overall class learning to suffer. I think teachers' hands are tied in a lot of situations with policies that are not helping the academic excellence of the students because too much teacher bandwidth is taken up by distractions that are not academic.
- Our district is seeing dropping ACT scores and MAP scores year over year. When you compare our district to area district MAP scores, we are the lowest performing district. This must change.
- I plan on focusing on policies that protect the classroom focus and bandwidth and equipping teachers with the tools they need to teach and focus on academic excellence.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

I feel the greatest challenges facing SPS from information I gathered from others include: student achievement with regards to test scores, teacher retention and recruitment, fiscal accountability with bond monies, student behavior and distractions in the classroom. Some suggestions I would look at would include: looking at time proven and evidence backed methods for curriculum, a balance of technology with pencil to paper and physical text books, phonics, etc., evaluating teacher salaries and benefits, monitoring all transactions and transparency with regards to bond money if passed in April, and looking at best practices to implement across the entire school district with regards to student behavior as well as enforcing current standards and disciplinary actions already in place. I also feel that transparency with board members could be improved with more open access to schools, staff, etc.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

The current anti-public education movement paired with the increase of misinformation concerns me greatly. The anti-public education movement aims to undermine, defund, and dismantle public education. The movement is fueled by the spread of false narratives and misinformation. Misinformation is used to fuel the culture wars pitting students, parents, teachers, administrators, communities, and board members against each other. In-fighting has become such a distraction that many are missing what is happening in the larger educational landscape. I understand the larger landscape of public education and can speak to the history of education in America as well as the potential future of public education. Promoting public education is what I do as a part of my career. It is also a major part of what I do in my civic work through NAACP, and Ujima Language and Literacy. The narrative of the absolute failing of American public schools needs to be reframed by local, state, and national educational and political leaders to highlight the many successes that continues to come out of public schools. This will need to include engaging with the community on defining/redefining student success and creating a vision of what student success looks like for Springfield beyond standardized test scores.

# WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE CRITICAL WORKFORCE NEEDS FACING EMPLOYERS AND HOW WOULD YOU ENSURE THE DISTRICT IS WORKING TO MEET THOSE NEEDS?



## JUDY BRUNNER

We currently have more jobs than we have people to fill them. I don't believe it's just about the numbers. It is more complicated. Some SPS graduates are prepared and others are ill equipped to meet the job demands.

Career pathway options and career counselors should be in every high school. These pathways provide students opportunities to explore career choices along with counselors who are there to support and advise. Parents want it, students need it, and the district must meet the demand.

Listening to business and industry needs and aligning it with student experiences is critical for both the employer and future employee.



## LANDON McCARTER

Being an employer myself and having 40 employees on staff currently, I can tell you that what we need is hard working talent that is willing to put in the time to learn their skill. I believe that the district can do a better job on connecting with the business community and offering programs for internships or other arrangements that help develop skills for the youth in Springfield.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

Some critical workforce needs facing employers include: emotional intelligence, team player attitudes, growth mindset, openness to feedback, adaptability, active listening, and work ethic. I would ensure the district is working to meet those needs by evaluating district strategies in preparing students to meet these skills they will need to be a positive contributing member of the workforce as they graduate from SPS. Not only setting strategies and policies, but more importantly taking action to make sure the strategies are being acted upon through staff feedback and surveys.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

The workforce needs more available employees who are ready to work and/or have necessary foundational skills that prepares them for training. SPS has a student body that reflects varied needs, abilities, and desires for their future. We will prepare some students to go to college or job training programs, some to military, and some who will go directly into the workforce. Students need to know all of the options available to them. Students should be supported in exploring various options for their future. This should occur early and often so that students have the opportunity to experience different paths, and determine what knowledge, skills, and training they need to gain prior to graduation. The district recently purchased Naviance, a comprehensive K-12 college and career readiness solution that helps districts and schools align student strengths and interests to postsecondary goals, improving student success and overall outcomes.

SPS  
STUDENT  
FACTS

STUDENTS  
24,139

10,767 ELEMENTARY  
4,812 MIDDLE SCHOOL  
7,382 HIGH SCHOOL

53  
SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE RATE  
90.64%

\*As of 1/27/23

# WHAT STRATEGIES WOULD YOU ADVANCE TO ENSURE SPS IS ABLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN QUALITY TEACHERS?



## JUDY BRUNNER

Supporting Educators | Teacher/Staff Recruitment | Safe Schools

Salary and benefits are important components, but they are not everything. Money alone will not be enough to recruit and retain the very best. A positive, responsive work environment is essential, too.

SPS has a strong tradition of providing professional development (PD) to all educators. As a board member, I would encourage differentiated PD in terms of specific teacher/staff needs. We have first year teachers and seasoned veterans, and a one size fits all approach will not be effective. Professional development should be curriculum focused, collaborative, supportive of best practices, and include coaching and reflective feedback. When educators feel prepared for challenges, they are more likely to remain employed in the organization.

Educators that believe they are safe will be more likely to remain in the district. We must recognize there is a difference between being safe and feeling safe, and those differences need to be addressed. In my recent experience, events around the country make educators reflect on their own personal safety as well as those of their students. Trauma-informed practices, de-escalation strategies, and the direct teaching of a school's emergency management plan will help prepare staff to deal with the realities of teaching in 2023. While I strongly believe school is one of the safest places to work and learn, not all within our SPS district are so sure. We need to continually review safety practices while communicating to educators all that is being done to ensure a safe and productive learning environment.



## LANDON McCARTER

This goes back to the issues I pointed out earlier. The more pressure we put on teachers involving things besides teaching is causing great strain on their overall ability to teach. Teachers will go to districts that have control of the classroom. The more distractions we allow that take them away from their primary purpose, which is to teach, the more we will lose our valuable teaching force to districts that have the classroom under control.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

Strategies I feel we can look at are first and foremost looking at student behavior in the classroom. Through speaking with teachers I have been told over and over this is the number one reason teachers are not retained. I also would evaluate and look at salaries, benefits, and making sure teachers have the proper tools they need and support required to perform their jobs effectively and efficiently.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

Better Pay – We have to invest money into teaching, this includes higher salaries, and consistent salary steps/increases for experience and time. In order for this to happen we need to hold our state and local officials accountable for fully funding public education and reforming how public schools are funded so that it is not so dependent on property taxes.

Reduction of non-instructional responsibilities – Teachers are being required to do a lot of work beyond teaching (e.g., behavior management, social work, counselor, nurse). Reducing non-instructional responsibilities frees teachers to do what they love...teach!

Increase pathways to earning teaching credentials – Recruiting qualified, well-trained teachers will require that we create additional pathways to earning teaching credentials. This will require collaboration with higher education institutions, local businesses, and state licensing agencies.

Include teachers in decision making (get input, collaboration) – teachers want to have a voice in decision-making at the state and local level. Too often decisions about teachers are made by politicians and non-educators who have no idea what is really happening in school buildings nor what teachers need to be effective.



# WHAT WOULD YOUR APPROACH BE TO FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY? WHAT WOULD YOU PRIORITIZE AMONG COMPETING BUDGET DEMANDS?



## JUDY BRUNNER

I believe spending public funds should be monitored closely. A treasurer's report is provided monthly at board meetings and this serves to keep the board apprised of expenditures. The majority of the budget is in salary and benefits leaving little discretion regarding funds for other necessary expenses. It is ultimately the superintendent's role to ensure day-to-day fiscal responsibility, but the board must be aware of where expenditures are made and ask questions for accountability.

My Priorities:

- Educator salaries and benefits
- Facilities improvement/maintenance
- Meaningful and relevant professional development for all educators
- Ongoing and practical school safety initiatives
- Student career and technical education programs
- Parent/family engagement: PTSA/SPS University



## LANDON McCARTER

With over a \$340,000,000 budget there are a lot of decisions that need to be made. Having trackable and quantifiable results for budget expenditures so that we can track how the expenditure accomplished what it set out to do is how to create fiscal responsibility and accountability. I would always be prioritizing teacher resources and classroom resources for competing budget demands. These teachers need to be supported with the tools to teach and bring about academic success and excellence.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

My approach with fiscal responsibility would be to make sure first that all entities involved are completely transparent. The next thing would be evaluate each item in the budget for necessity, and determine if money is being used in the most efficient and effective manner to help support the over goal of producing quality students in the SPS district.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

I can emphatically say teacher salaries and teacher positions should be off-limits to budget cuts. Teachers are our biggest asset and, in my opinion, must be protected. Approximately 35% of SPS budget comes from the state, less than 10% from the federal government, and the remaining 55% from local taxes. Missouri is 33rd among other states in per pupil funding and 49th overall in educational spending. Missouri must do better! We could and should receive more from our state. Missouri's funding of student learning demonstrates how our state views public education. We are losing local funding revenue from property taxes due to a number of housing issues that plague our community. Until public school funding is reformed, we need to work with local officials on ways to increase the tax-base and local revenue for public education.

# WHAT DO YOU SEE AS KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS? WHAT ROLE WOULD THE BOARD PLAY IN ENSURING THOSE COMPONENTS ARE IN PLACE?



## JUDY BRUNNER

When students are asked what they want from educators, their answers are insightful:

*They want the following from educators:*

A smile from the teacher when they enter the classroom, interesting and engaging lessons, a trustworthy and respectful learning environment, teachers that like teaching and are passionate about why the content is important, educators that are willing to listen to their concerns, an interest in student extracurricular activities, positive and professional relationships.

*A successful learning environment includes the following:*

A classroom that has clearly defined expectations and procedures, an opportunity for hands-on experiences with practical application, classrooms that are safe and inviting to the learner, a classroom that is free from unnecessary disruptions, educators that never forget what it was like to be a student, educators that encourage and appreciate parental input.

School board members should be aware of what students, teachers, and families want for a child's education.

The superintendent should be vigilant in terms of environmental concerns and act accordingly. The board should monitor the superintendent's response.



## LANDON McCARTER

A successful learning environment is an environment that does not prioritize one student over another. As I am talking with the community, one of the main issues that parents have is that they feel that there are a few students that can dominate the classroom and teacher focus with their disciplinary issues. We must not allow anything in the classroom that distracts from the classroom learning.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

I see key components of a successful learning environment as one free of distractions. This includes behavior in the classroom, distractions from technology, and outside factors in the classroom. The board can play a vital role by helping to solve the behavior problem, look at policies regarding cell phones, devices, etc., and to limit other factors that may cause disruption to the classroom environment.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

When teachers have better working environments, students have better learning environments. High-quality working environments for teachers include safe and secure facilities, feeling supported, valued, and heard by building and district leaders, pay that reflects their value to the community, and healthy communities that support healthy students attending school. Students need teachers who are committed to continuous learning and improvements and match the changing needs of our community. As a member of the current board, we have made an effort to support some of these needs through the approval of facilities task force's recommendation to put forward a \$220 million dollar bond on the April 4, 2023 ballot to ensure safe and secure buildings for all of the students in our district. We have approved a professional development plan and budget that ensures that our teachers have the knowledge and skills they need to perform at their highest levels. We approved the plan and budget for SPS University which supports open dialogue and information sharing among families, teachers, and administrators.

# WHAT IS YOUR VIEW OF THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AS IT PERTAINS TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT?



## JUDY BRUNNER

The state of Missouri has established approved curriculum standards. Those standards drive our SPS local curricular content. While the board should be familiar with the state standards, it is the role of the superintendent and his/her team to align the local curriculum to meet those state standards. The board's role is to ensure relevant resources are budgeted and available to support educators to meet the individualized needs of students.

SPS curriculum standards are transparent and available for all to review: Elementary, Middle, High School.



## LANDON McCARTER

I believe that we should create task forces of teachers that are actually teaching the curriculum and listen to their recommendations. I believe that we can create task forces that represent most views and implement what the teachers recommend. We obviously have oversight on the curriculum, but I believe that we should listen first when it comes to what the teacher is actually teaching.



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

The board of education's role as it pertains to curriculum development is to hire and evaluate the superintendent, adapt a mission-vision-values-goals and strategic plan, monitor performance of the strategic plan, adopt policies and review them, and represent public interest and serve as a community liaison. Thus when issues rise regarding curriculum it is the board's role to educate themselves and assist in providing decisions that produce a quality education to all children.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

The local board of education should play little to no role in curriculum development. The board does not have the knowledge nor expertise to participate in curriculum development. The board's role is to support our one employee, the superintendent, so that they can fulfill their duties running the day-to-day operations of the school district. We are responsible for evaluating the superintendent on their achievement of goals set by the state and goals developed in collaboration with the board. The board is responsible for approving the budget to purchase curriculum materials, selected, and evaluated by qualified district personal. The board can play a role in the approval of policy related to the processes and procedures used by the district in the selection and evaluation of curriculum. The board also has the responsibility to listen to parents and teachers and share their input with the superintendent. The superintendent then has to weigh the needs and expectations of all stakeholders as they work with their staff in selecting and evaluating curriculum.

SPS  
LUNCH  
FACTS

FULL PAY LUNCH  
**46.88%**

REDUCED LUNCH  
**10.31%**

FREE LUNCH  
**42.88%**

\*As of 1/27/23

# WHAT GOALS WOULD YOU HAVE FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM AND HOW WILL YOU MEASURE THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THOSE GOALS?



## JUDY BRUNNER

SPS's recently adopted Strategic Plan provides four goals for district improvement:

1. Success Ready Students
2. Organizational Efficiency
3. Collaborative Culture
4. Quality Learning Environments

SPS's recently adopted Strategic Plan has six objectives related to success ready students. With each smart goal there are champions responsible for implementation as well as key metrics, baselines, targets, and strategies. The school board should monitor the plan and objectives as a priority as well as listen and engage families to support these objectives.



## LANDON McCARTER

Here are some goals that I would like to accomplish:

- Reduce students choosing to leave our district for other schools
- Reduce teachers from retiring early, or leaving our district to other schools
- Increase ACT scores
- Increase MAP scores
- Increase Academic markers in Reading, Writing, Math, Science and the arts
- Decrease classroom distractions on things outside of academics

We can measure these by the numbers because we are already tracking these metrics for the most part.

## INFORMATION ABOUT PROPOSITION S

The board of directors of the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce voted to endorse Proposition S, the Springfield Public Schools bond issue on the April 4th ballot that would provide \$220 million for school improvements throughout the district prioritized by a citizen task force, the Community Task Force on Facilities. The endorsement followed a full review of the issue by the Chamber's Local Issues Task Force. The state provides no direct funding for buildings and facilities, so local property taxes are the primary funding source for schools to make major capital improvements.

The no-tax increase to the debt service levy will fund multiple projects including:

- Safety and security upgrades at all school facilities
- New construction for Pipkin and Reed middle schools
- Renovation of Pershing School
- Construction of storm shelters at Cowden, Holland, Mann, Pittman, Watkins, and Wilder elementaries

For more educational information about the bond proposal, visit [www.sps.org/props](http://www.sps.org/props)



## DR. CHAD ROLLINS

The goals I have for the school system are to focus on teacher retention, improved test scores, and to monitor the school bond monies, if approved. Teacher retention will be monitored by evaluating statistics each year and comparing them from the current year to past years as well as trends from year to year. Improved test scores will similarly be monitored from year to year to see trends over time. School bond spending will be monitored by evaluating each entity's value and need for each individual project, evaluating costs, and spending for each project.



## DR. SHURITA THOMAS-TATE

I have learned a lot in my three years on the board. I have a greater understanding about my role on the board and the work of the board collectively. In my time on the board, I have served with eleven different board members and two different superintendents. The dynamics on the board have varied greatly with each different board composition. I have experienced effective board governance and less effective board governance. Given what I have learned and experienced as a board member, my top priorities are:

- To champion public education, by educating the community, re-defining student success to include more than just test scores, and by advocating at the state level to fully fund public schools
- To make sure that every child in the district counts (education is not one size fits all)
- To champion SPS by supporting the superintendent and holding them accountable to meeting realistic, set expectations

Additionally I would like to be able to provide stability and consistency to the board, continue to increase opportunities for meaningful engagement with stakeholders, and collaborate with the community to develop a vision for what a successful SPS student looks like.

PROPOSITION S IS A CONTINUATION OF SPECIFIC INVESTMENTS IN PRIORITIZED PROJECTS, WITH **CITIZEN INPUT** AND A TRACK RECORD OF 'PROGRESS AS PROMISED' ON PREVIOUS PROJECTS, THAT IS ALIGNED WITH STRATEGIC PLANNING. THERE IS **ACCOUNTABILITY** AND **TRANSPARENCY** IN THIS PROPOSAL WHICH IS VITALLY IMPORTANT TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY. AS WELL, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO BOTH STUDENT SUCCESS AND OUR ABILITY TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT IN THE DISTRICT. IT ALSO ENSURES THAT SPS HAS QUALITY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS. OUR R-12 SCHOOL DISTRICT, **THE LARGEST IN THE STATE** WITH NEARLY **25,000 STUDENTS**, IS A KEY ELEMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE REGION.

— JOSELYN BALDNER  
2023 Chairman of the Board

# THE EDUCATION PLATFORM: DEFINING AND GUIDING CHAMBER ADVOCACY IN EDUCATION

Because of the direct connection to the future workforce and a thriving community, the Chamber's board-adopted Education Platform sets the vision for our engagement and establishes the strategic objectives and policy positions that guide our action:

## VISION STATEMENT

The Chamber supports schools that emphasize academic excellence within an educational system that is accountable, visionary and equipped to prepare students for living and working in a global economy.

## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. To ensure that the region's school systems successfully prepare students for higher education and the local workforce.
2. To help Springfield Public Schools operate as Missouri's premier school district when measured by student achievement, graduation rates, resource utilization, and attendance rates.

Policy positions key to ensuring students are ready for college and/or careers include:

- **Workforce Development**  
Schools must take a leadership role in developing a skilled workforce.
- **Career Exploration**  
Programs that provide opportunities for students to "test drive" jobs in high-demand fields in preparation for productive careers.
- **Technology**  
The strategic use of technology will help prepare students for life in a high-tech world.
- **Emphasis on Basics**  
There must be continued emphasis on basic educational subjects such as math, science, communication and interpersonal skills to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workplace.

Policy positions focused on effective, responsible management of resources and accountability:

- **Teacher Attraction & Retention**  
The attraction/retention of quality, experienced teachers should be a priority.
- **Staff Leadership & Development**  
An emphasis on professional development and continuity of leadership strengthens the district.
- **Fiscal Responsibility**  
Fiscal policies should align with the district's strategic plan.
- **Addressing Capital Needs**  
Strategic planning for capital needs must be quantifiable, realistic and include community input.
- **Communication and Public Involvement**  
Two-way communication with the community regarding district goals and activities is critical to district success.
- **Safety and Security**  
The board should prioritize the safety of students, faculty and staff through resource allocation, building design, training and security features in facilities, policies and practices.
- **Progress and Transparency**  
District progress including student graduation rates and test scores, among others, should be measurable and clearly articulated to all stakeholders.
- **Good Governance**  
Board members should work collaboratively in the best interest of the district, students and families, and prioritize transparency and accountability to stakeholders.

To review the full Education Platform document, visit the Chamber's website: [www.springfieldchamber.com/educationplatform](http://www.springfieldchamber.com/educationplatform)



# A MESSAGE FROM ELIZABETH WENTE

**Chairman**  
**Education Task Force**

The Chamber’s Education Task Force is comprised of business leaders from around the community. The group was tasked by the Chamber board with developing a process and creating resources for Chamber members to evaluate all candidates for the SPS board of education prior to the April 4th election.

The members of this task force are your highly engaged and experienced peers who care deeply about the quality and governance of the school district and its direct impact on students’ ability to realize their full potential. They also are acutely focused on growing and shaping our region’s future workforce. Task force members engaged in careful deliberation and thoughtful consideration throughout this process to provide members useful resources to evaluate candidates. Our efforts were guided by the Chamber’s Education Platform and consideration of the role the board of education plays in overseeing the education of children in the community.

The survey questions were designed to elicit responses relevant to concerns of the business community related to public education and to provide candidates with the opportunity to detail their own experience and skills that equip them well for the scope of duties of a school board member.

We are grateful to all SPS board of education candidates for their willingness to run and desire to serve. We appreciate the time taken to participate in this educational process by responding to our survey questions and for engaging in the Candidate Forum on March 23. To all those who currently serve on the SPS board, thank you for investing your time and talent in this incredibly important and demanding responsibility.

It is our sincere desire that this voter guide and the candidate forum are valuable tools for Chamber members. We encourage you to use this guide to learn more about the candidates and their positions on issues relevant to the business community prior to exercising your right to vote on April 4.

## EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

- Elizabeth Wentz, Spencer Fane, LLP - Chairman
- Sarah Hough, Bass Pro Shops - Vice Chairman
- Logan Aguirre, 417
- Kevin Ausburn, SMC Packaging Group
- Ann Marie Baker, UMB Bank
- Brad Erwin, Paragon Architecture
- Robert Ferguson, CoxHealth
- Brian Fogle, Community Foundation of the Ozarks
- David Hall, Missouri State University
- Brian Hammons, Hammons Products Co.
- Sally Hargis, Ozarks Coca-Cola/Dr Pepper Bottling Company
- Heather Ramsey, Guaranty Bank
- Shari Reaves, O’Reilly Auto Parts
- Krisi Schell, SRC Holdings Corp.
- Jaimie Trussell, Council of Churches of the Ozarks

### BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 4.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Join us for a Candidate Forum

**MARCH 23**

**3:30 PM NETWORKING**

**4:00 PM FORUM**

Forum is presented expressly for Chamber members and registration is required. Visit the calendar at [www.springfieldchamber.com](http://www.springfieldchamber.com) to register.

### LOCATION

**Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Office**

202 S. John Q. Hammons Pkwy  
Springfield, MO 65806

SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
VOTER GUIDE**

**BE AN INFORMED VOTER ON APRIL 4**  
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR  
SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION.

---

**Join us for a Candidate Forum**

**MARCH 23**

**3:30PM** NETWORKING

**4:00PM** FORUM

**Forum is presented expressly for Chamber  
members and registration is required.**

Visit the calendar at [www.springfieldchamber.com](http://www.springfieldchamber.com) to register.

---

**LOCATION**

**Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce Office**

202 S. John Q. Hammons Pkwy  
Springfield, MO 65806

