

2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
City of Tuscaloosa
Office: Tuscaloosa City Board of Education, District 3

Candidate:
Mayci Hartley

1. What do you see as the top three issues facing the Tuscaloosa City School System? How should those issues be addressed?

The weakest points in our system are: quality of curriculum, lack of diversity and inclusion within the classroom, and not maximizing facilities. The curriculum within our schools is not up to par with the private schools in our town. We will need to reevaluate our curriculum, work with our teachers and parents, and decide on new ideas and materials to bring into our classrooms. Our classrooms need to have more equitable and inclusive books within them. These books will allow students the opportunity to have experiences with the characters, causing them to better empathize with their peers and others throughout life (<https://mrhartle.wixsite.com/mysite/board-of-education>). Our nontraditional school facilities such as TCTA and Alberta School of Fine Arts need to be utilized more proficiently. This looks like changing the perception of TCTA and allowing access to all students to the Alberta School of Fine Arts.

2. Significant community effort has been dedicated to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for the Tuscaloosa City School System. Do you support the implementation of this plan? If your answer is “yes,” why is it important to do so? If your answer is “no,” how would you change the plan?

I support the objectives of the plan, however I believe the strategies need to be worked on. The research on reducing the achievement gap in reading and math for special education, Black and English Learners as well as increasing student reading proficiency by 5% from 43% will be complete by the spring of 2021. At this point, we will readdress the plan’s strategies and how affective they have been. Making an effort to maximize the benefits of professional development for our teachers will increase the quality of education, and will help close education gaps at an increasing rate.

3. What should be done to address schools labeled as “failing” by the Alabama Department of Education?

There are more appropriate ways of addressing schools in need than labeling their students as failing. We need to put more of a emphasis on professional and student development within these schools. We will need to work towards inspiring student achievement rather than simply deeming a school “failing”. Recognizing the accomplishments and achievements of all students will be an equitable process for the entire system.

4. What efforts would you like to see to close the education “slide” students have seen from COVID-19 disruptions?

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I would recommend a summer learning program that is marketed towards every student due to all students being affected by the “slide”. This summer program will not be for academic credit, but would allow better access to getting back on track.

5. The Tuscaloosa region is expected to have a shortage of skilled labor in future years. What is the role of the Tuscaloosa City School System in helping address that shortage?

In order to address the shortage we need to address our curriculum within the high schools. Our “career prep” courses will need to be updated and modified to better equip students for the work force. We will also need to reevaluate TCTA and its ability to help with fighting this shortage.

6. What is your vision for the Tuscaloosa City School System in 10 years? How will you, in your role as an elected official, help make that vision a reality?

I believe that there are many aspects of our school system that need to be updated. I recognize that updates will be expensive, but I am prepared to write grants in order to make change occur. I want to be able to be proud to send my children to a school in the Tuscaloosa City School System in ten years and know that they will be equipped for college and the world outside of the classroom.

Candidate:
Lesley Powell

1. What do you see as the top three issues facing the Tuscaloosa City School System? How should those issues be addressed?

First and foremost, I would like to see us get back to school full time. I think that getting teachers vaccinated is a necessary first step. Second, we must address the reduction in learning that has occurred as a result of the Covid 19 quarantine and virtual learning. Third, we must address the mental health implications of the same. COVID put all of our children behind, and this new board will have the task of reviewing end-of-year data and fine tuning our strategy for recovery. In addition, next year the Literacy Act goes into effect. This Summer and next Fall will be a critical period of learning for our Kindergarten through rising 3rd grade children.

2. Significant community effort has been dedicated to develop and implement a comprehensive strategic plan for the Tuscaloosa City School System. Do you support the implementation of this plan? If your answer is “yes,” why is it important to do so? If your answer is “no,” how would you change the plan?

Yes! I love the strategic plan. As I understand it, the strategic plan involves developing a curriculum that helps students at every level succeed, hiring and keeping teachers that can make this curriculum really work, and making sure that the facilities where the students and staff are working create an environment for success. I think this is a well balanced plan to which many very dedicated people have

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dedicated their time, and it addresses every facet of learning. In particular, I like that it addresses the needs of each child's individual learning needs.

3. What should be done to address schools labeled as "failing" by the Alabama Department of Education?

The strategic plan, when implemented correctly, will address this issue. I will continue to advocate for every student by diligently working to ensure that this implementation is successful.

4. What efforts would you like to see to close the education "slide" students have seen from COVID-19 disruptions?

I love the idea of mandatory summer learning, and I know that it will take dedicated work to get enhanced summer learning programs running well. I would also love to see kids use it universally, and not just when they "need" it. Summer learning could also allow for maintenance and even a preview of their next year's classes. Additionally, there could be incentives for students to read on their own, and summer is a time when they can read at their own pace.

5. The Tuscaloosa region is expected to have a shortage of skilled labor in future years. What is the role of the Tuscaloosa City School System in helping address that shortage?

I think it's critical to devote time and resources to showing kids what opportunities are available to them. There are often kids who may finish high school and not know that skilled labor is even a career path they could choose. It is our job to provide students with options that give the highest rate of success, and I will insist that those options be provided to students at every opportunity.

6. What is your vision for the Tuscaloosa City School System in 10 years? How will you, in your role as an elected official, help make that vision a reality?

I like the current path of the school system. Dr. Daria and the strong, cohesive board we have now have done tremendous work. I hope that 10 years from now, Covid will be something the kids study in history class. A strong response over the next couple of years will be crucial, and allow us to concentrate on continuing to implement the strategic plan. I believe that strong leaders will need to be willing to make tough decisions to allow that to happen. It is my hope that I will be entrusted by the voters of District 3 to make those decisions as their City School Board Representative.