

NABOR School Board Candidate Forum
June 21, 2022

DISTRICT 1		
Kimberly Boobyer	Jerry Rutherford	Jory Westberry
Opening Statements		
<p>[00:05:54] I will fight for all students in Collier County, but especially for the 38%, on average, that are failing ELA and math. CCPS has 41 elementary schools. On the most recent FSA scores for third grade, 22 of them ranked below the county average of having 62% of their students achieving satisfactory grades or better. I will maintain fiscal responsibility with the \$1.3 billion budget and find ways to shift dollars spent on administrative staff to provide for greater teacher resources to address the 38% of students that are failing. I will ensure parental rights and education and keep Woke Gender Ideology out of schools. I will protect students by supporting our excellent school security policies. I will support mental health initiatives that include parental consent. I will seek to better engage parent involvement throughout CCPS. I will restore the foundations of academic excellence and traditional values for all students.</p>	<p>[00:08:23] I have a plan for reducing the budget, increasing the teachers' opportunities for promotion, turning the schools into a well-oiled machine. After 35 years and being mostly ignored because I didn't have a vote, I ask that you put me on the inside to accomplish the goals that I know will work.</p>	<p>[00:10:38] I want to apply my experience, dedication, and love of education as a proactive board member to make our school system even stronger. I want to support all of our aspiring students, talented teachers, and staff. CCPS has made impressive gains over the last three and a half years. And this will continue with positive dedicated board members who can apply their experience from recent district challenges to the future. By working collaboratively, we will make even better strides in Collier County Schools.</p>
<p>1. What do you envision the role to be of the school board when it comes to safety on school campuses and preventing incidences of gun violence like we've seen recently at the elementary school in Uvalde, Texas and the 2018 high school mass shooting in Parkland?</p>		

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<p>[00:26:51] Continuing to follow the lead that the district has already taken in this area. They have done a really great job of collaborating with the Collier County Sheriff's office to make sure that we have lots of layers of protection for our schools. But I do want to say that it's not a gun issue.</p>	<p>[00:28:23] We've heard many things that could be done. One of them would be to arm teachers and others. They would buy their own weapon. They would go through training. They would get in there and actually be paid for this process - hazardous duty pay. They would get a monitor that would go to the guard if something happened.</p>	<p>[00:29:29] I think Collier County has done an amazing job putting in safety procedures for our schools.</p>
<p>2. In late March, Governor Ron DeSantis signed into law, The Parental Rights in Education bill. You may have heard this dubbed by opponents as the "Don't Say Gay" bill. Supporters say it's meant to allow parents to determine when and in what way to introduce LGBTQ topics to their children. Parents also have an option to sue a school district if the new policy is violated. Opponents argue it will hurt LGBTQ children, noting that LGBTQ youth already face higher health and suicide risks in their cisgender or straight peers, due in part to the marginalization they already face. As a member of the school board, how would you hope to balance compliance with this new law and what's in the best interest of all children in the district?</p>		

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<p>[00:55:03] I firmly believe in parents' rights, and CCPS does acknowledge that there can be no discrimination on the basis of race, sex, etc. They do follow state statutes. CCPS handles the issue of transgender students on a case-by-case basis, inclusive of student, parent, principal, discussion, and determination of procedures to be followed. I am confident that CCPS will enforce the new law, stating that zero talk will be permitted in grades K through three regarding sexual orientation and gender identity. CCPS has dealt with noncompliance with teachers on a case-by-case basis and will continue to do so in reference to any LGBTQ issues.</p> <p>As a school board member, I will work actively to ensure that this compliance to this new law continues to stay in place.</p>	<p>[00:52:32] Parents have rights and I think they should be respected. I think the parents need to take a more active part in going to the school boards and PTAs and changing things.</p>	<p>[00:54:08] Our governor has had insights into several good things. And one of them was to deter teachers from teaching about lesbian/gay issues in K to 3, and that law was passed. And so, if we allowed anything like that to go on, which we wouldn't, we would be at fault. So, we're not going to do that.</p> <p>And, yes, parents have, absolutely, rights, and the communication is important. On a civil level, I would hope to discuss those factors with us and have us reach good conclusions.</p>
<p>3. How would you characterize the duties and responsibilities of an elected county school board member? And since the School Board will be selecting a new district superintendent in the coming year, what qualities would you be looking for in a new superintendent?</p>		

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<p>[01:18:12] The role of the board is to determine policies and programs necessary for the district's efficient operation, after receiving, reviewing, and considering recommendations submitted to it by the superintendent. We are the governance of the district. The superintendent falls in line under that. As school board members, we need to work with diplomacy and have respect for our other board members along with respect for the superintendent.</p> <p>In the Superintendent, I would be looking for qualities of leadership, integrity, knowledge, loyalty, decisiveness, and initiative. I would like a team builder, an excellent communicator, someone that's good at building morale among her staff, community liaison, and a visionary. And I would like someone that's going to be focused on academic excellence and student achievement, fiscal responsibility, financial prudence, HR retention, and effective staffing.</p>	<p>[01:16:29] For a new school board superintendent, I would be looking for honesty, integrity, ability to work with the school board. They need to know what the problems are here before they get here so that they'll know how to attack it. What would you do with the problems we're now faced with? A person that has a track record of their own, wherever they are coming from. A good background check.</p>	<p>[01:19:20] I have to agree with all of these characteristics that have been brought up already. I think that the superintendent needs to have policy and budget oversight, needs to direct the board into ways to improve, and to provide the in-service and training that the board may need. The superintendent should have an experience at K12, should have a background in education, have integrity, and communicate fairly with all.</p>
<p>4. Data released in April by the National Education Association shows that despite efforts by the Florida Legislature to improve teacher starting pay, Florida remains near the bottom in the ranking of average teacher pay. In 2020, the Florida Legislature enacted a plan to increase teacher starting salary to \$47,500 a year. As a result, starting teacher pay in Florida increased in the national ranking from 30th to 16th place, but the plan does little to help experienced teachers. Overall, Florida's average teacher pay ranking stands in 48th place. This plus Collier County's well-documented affordable housing crisis could make the region a difficult one for teachers to both live and work in. How could the school board be working on this issue regarding teacher pay and retention?</p>		

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<p>[00:42:48] I would evaluate administrative staff positions relative to the ratio of teachers and staff related to running all the schools. We currently have approximately 7,000 employees of which 3,200 are teachers. I would increase teacher salaries whenever possible, because I fully support good teachers. [00:42:48]</p>	<p>[00:41:32] I'm for teacher pay. And I believe that we need to do something about it. I have a plan. I don't tell you what my plan is, because if I put it out there, then everybody is going to know about it. I have a plan for increasing the teachers' pay. And so, I want to implement it, but I can't implement it on the outside, and I'm not going to share it on the outside. [00.41:32]</p>	<p>[00:39:32] I couldn't agree more about teacher salaries. I think it's pitiful that we don't have the highest salary schedule in the nation. [00:39:32]</p>
<p>5. Local school district officials all over Florida are now engaging with the impact of new education legislation that allows parents to have more input in what sorts of materials are available to students in school libraries and on school media center shelves. House Bill 1467 gives parents, and anyone from the public, more access to the process of selecting and removing books and instructional materials. 5a. What role should members of the school board play in this process? 5b. And what metric would you apply to determine if a request to remove a certain book or material should be followed and then that material not be made available to students?</p>		

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<p>[01:05:01] The current school board members have been dealing with this issue since last October. They have relegated the discussion, solution, and process to Mr. Fishbane, General Counsel. An objection procedure has been developed, and currently, CCPS is seeking participants for the objection committee. As a school board member, I would want to ensure that parents are a part of that selection process for that committee, because parent involvement is key here.</p> <p>And then I would also want to pose the question, do we really need these books in our media centers? Do they really add to the value of quality academic education? Do they enrich and add beauty to our students' lives?</p>	<p>[01:07:26] There was a time many years ago, many decades ago now, where the banning of books and movies and so forth came out.... I got together with a bunch of guys that were on both sides. We debated the thing. And we finally came to the realization that, yes, certain things should be banned.</p> <p>I'll be on the side of putting morals and values back in the school system, like the Founders established.</p>	<p>[01:06:42] We presently have a process for parents to bring concerns to a committee. The committee is made up of parents and teachers and, I think, some administrators. There are rubrics for people to work on. And we're asking whoever has a complaint to put it in writing, tell us the page, so that we can get the committee going and analyze those issues and get them taken care of.</p>