

2022 Hamilton County General Election

Voter Guide

501(c)(3) - compliant and
nonpartisan

County School Board Dist. 3

County General Election | 8/4/2022



www.VoteChattanooga.org

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MATTERS**

8/4/2022

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Contact Church Voter Guides at: Info@VoteChattanooga.org | Updated 7/2/2022

For other Voter Guides and more information, please go to our website: www.VoteChattanooga.org

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

The Voter Guide Information contained in this document is provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from the candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501(c)(3) and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate.

Hamilton County 2022 General Election Voter Guide for County School Board Dist. 3

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Introduction to the Voter Guide

Church Voter Guides is an independent 501(c)(3) faith-based nonprofit organization. We serve the public by providing objective research and education on matters specifically of interest to Christians, primarily through the production and distribution of 501(c)(3)-compliant, nonpartisan voter guides.

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Church Voter Guides, a Chattanooga nonprofit, initially started in Colorado Springs in April of 2021. *This new Voter Guide for the 2022 General Election* is being distributed electronically only, both through our interactive website and by downloadable and printable PDF files. We have produced one Voter Guide for each seat that is: (1) conducting an election this year, and (2) for which at least one candidate in that election answered our Questionnaire. Our Voter Guides are being promoted through a wide-ranging network of area churches, faith-based non-profit organizations, mainstream and social media, and other means.

The purpose of our Voter Guides is to educate and inform voters of each candidate's positions on a variety of policy issues that they are likely to address if elected. As a Voter Guide designed to be distributed through Churches, we ask the candidates questions on topics that are of utmost interest to the Christian voter.

How to Get the Most Benefit from this Voter Guide

The core information in this Voter Guide comes directly from the County General Election candidates themselves. We asked them questions, they answered (with a 120 word limit), and we have published their responses here. In order to understand and utilize this information to the fullest, so that you may vote in the most informed way, we suggest the following:

1. Pray and ask the Almighty for discernment. The Kingdom of God is all about truth, while politics is a system fraught with compromise. Make sure you consider the candidates' answers with a Heavenly mindset.
2. Ask yourself, "Did the candidate actually answer the question, or rather side-step it, or give a fluff, wishy-washy, and/or 'political' type answer that leaves you not really knowing where he/she truly stands on the issue?"
3. Learn more about the candidates running for County School Board Dist. 3 including their positions on issues we did not cover in our questionnaire, by visiting their official campaign websites (if they have one.) The website URL for each candidate is listed in the Voter Guide.
4. Educate yourself more about the Christian/Biblical perspective regarding many of the subjects covered in our Voter Guide by reading topical articles on our website: www.VoteChattanooga.org
5. Use search engines to find additional information about each candidate, including written articles and videos, other voter guides, and even voting records for those who have served in public office before. You may even want to watch online recordings of the local County School Board Dist. 3 meetings to see how incumbents conduct themselves and vote.
6. Reach out to the candidates themselves through the provided email addresses and other means, in order to ask them questions of personal importance to you. Please make sure to show great respect toward each candidate and his/her time, especially to those with whom you disagree. Running for office is hard, stressful, time-consuming work, and these are your fellow citizens who have lives, families, jobs...and feelings (just like you!)

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What makes a Voter Guide 501 (c)(3) - Compliant and Nonpartisan?

Federal tax law permits nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations to develop and distribute materials about political candidates' positions on issues, in order to educate voters impartially and on a nonpartisan basis; meaning that it is free from party affiliation, bias, or designation. The IRS states that 501 (c)(3) organizations may conduct any range of activities to promote voter participation and educate voters so long as it is nonpartisan. But, 501(c)(3) organizations are explicitly prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

Some of the activities 501(c)(3) nonprofits *MAY* perform: Conduct or promote voter registration; educate voters on the voting process; distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and **voter guides**; organize “get-out-the-vote” activities; encourage and help people to vote; educate the candidates on issues important to their organization; and continue to do issue advocacy during an election.

So, first and foremost: **Church Voter Guides** does **NOT** endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Second, all of our staff and volunteers are required to act in a nonpartisan manner when working for or representing the organization and the creation of the Voter Guide.

Third, we do not edit, revise, or editorialize candidate responses to our Questionnaire. We do not even correct typos. **Candidate answers are published verbatim**, ensuring that their responses accurately represent their positions and perspectives on these issues. We then simply share this information through the Voter Guide, and you decide whom you believe to be the best candidate.

To be fair and impartial, we reached out by email, text, and phone when determined necessary, to all registered candidates running for County School Board Dist. 3 throughout Hamilton County for their 2022 elections, inviting them to answer our questionnaire. Candidate information is presented in alphabetical order by **last name**. If a Candidate did not respond at all, or did not choose to participate, or did not choose to respond to certain answers in the questionnaire, then it is noted where applicable. If there were not enough candidates running, then we did not produce a Voter Guide for that seat.

**Join Our Growing Grassroots Coalition of Citizens, Churches/Nonprofit Organizations,
and Media Partners Committed to Promoting the Voter Guide throughout Our Region**

Let's get the word out!

It's simple. Just share our website URL all around the Hamilton County region: www.VoteChattanooga.org

Tell your friends and neighbors, post on social media, and ask your Pastors to promote it to your congregation (we'll even provide you /them with the announcement info and the slide deck.)

Please contact us for any reason, we'd love to collaborate with you: Info@VoteChattanooga.org

The “Small Print”: The information contained in this document is being provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been “fact checked”. Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501(c)(3)-compliant and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate

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County School Board | Survey Question Index

- 1) **School Board's Purpose:** What do you view as the purpose and role of the Hamilton County School Board?
- 2) **Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives:** What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what top three initiatives would you undertake as a Hamilton County School Board Member?
- 3) **Moral Values:** Should governmental laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why or why not?
- 4) **Vision:** What is your plan to get our schools back to the basics and fundamentals of public education?
- 5) **Budget:** With 64% of taxpayer's money goes to education in Hamilton County. About 1/3 of 3rd to 8th graders are able to read at grade level. Without raising the budget, what is your solution to improving reading levels?
- 6) **Parental Rights:** What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?
- 7) **COVID Protocol:** What is your position on school vax requirements, testing, contact tracing, masking and quarantines in the schools?
- 8) **CRT:** What is your position for a curriculum that incorporates the teaching of diversity, equity and inclusion, Critical Race Theory and Social-Emotional Learning?
- 9) **Social-Emotional Learning/Sex Education:** What is your stance of comprehensive sex ed, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships being taught in schools K-12? What is your stance on gender neutrality, co-ed bathrooms, trans sports?
- 10) **Problem/Solution:** What is your plan to tackle the problem with bullying, child sex crimes and the physical safety of our children?
- 11) **School Board Meetings:** How can the board make greater accommodations for all citizens who want to participate in school board meetings, including public comments?

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County School Board Dist. 3

(In alphabetical order)



JENN PIROTH



JOE SMITH

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JENN PIROTH

Candidate Information

Party: Democrat

We made multiple attempts to communicate with Jenn Piroth; however, the Candidate did not complete the survey by the submission deadline.

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JOE SMITH

Candidate Information

Party:	Republican
Email Address:	ddkjoesmith@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Ex Dir Prison Prevention Ministries
Resident of Hamilton County:	68 years
Campaign Website:	https://www.facebook.com/JoeSmithD3Schoolboard

1) School Board's Purpose: What do you view as the purpose and role of the Hamilton County School Board?

A school board member has 2 primary responsibilities. The first is to supervise and evaluate one employee, the Superintendent. Secondly, a school board member is responsible for setting policy for the entire school system which includes the annual operating budget.

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2) Candidate's Focus/Expertise/Initiatives: What are your areas of special focus and/or expertise and what top three initiatives would you undertake as a Hamilton County School Board Member?

I have been married for 46 years and have 2 grown children, raised 19 foster children and have 8 grand children. After a 25 year career at the YMCA serving as the Executive Director for programs for at risk youth, I now serve as Executive Director of Prison Prevention Ministries. I am a youth counselor, coach and mentor. I am a member of Abba's House in Hixson and a number of civic organizations to include the Hixson Kiwanis Club and Friends of Hixson. My top 3 initiatives are 1. raising the achievement levels of all students 2. being a good policymaker for the 6,000 people who work for the school system 3. transparency to taxpayers in demonstrating we are spending their money efficiently.

3) Moral Values: Should governmental laws, ordinances, regulations, etc. follow the moral principles of the Ten Commandments? Why or why not?

As a wise man once said, "The main things are the plain things, and the plain things are the main things." You CANNOT legislate morality. For me and my family, we believe strongly and follow judao beliefs.

4) Vision: What is your plan to get our schools back to the basics and fundamentals of public education?

I recommend combining old school wisdom with new school technologies. We know instructional strategies that work. We need to make sure we don't throw out the baby with the bath water. If great things are already happening in our schools and classrooms and you throw technology at it, it is going to magnify the greatness. For the past 15-20 years, we have been trying to use assessment solutions for pedagogy problems. Let's spend more time learning and less time testing. We need to refocus and reengage in a more meaningful conversation around the foundation of teaching and learning. It's all about teaching the right skills.

5) Budget: With 64% of taxpayer's money goes to education in Hamilton County. About 1/3 of 3rd to 8th graders are able to read at grade level. Without raising the budget, what is your solution to improving reading levels?

It is not acceptable in Hamilton County 37.5% of third graders read at grade level. In Hamilton County we are now outperforming the state in this area, as statewide third graders are reading on grade level at 35%. Prior to the pandemic, Hamilton County adopted a new literacy curriculum. We have experienced improvement even during this unprecedented time. Our improvement is not enough. We must do better. We need to make sure that our early learners are entering kindergarten prepared to learn. Parents across Hamilton County must do more preparing their children as they enter Kindergarten, and then partnering with teachers to develop a love for reading at very early ages. If a student cannot read, they cannot learn.

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6) Parental Rights: What is the best way to involve parents in the student's education? Who do you believe is the most important stakeholder in a student's education?

The most important relationship in every students life, second only to the parent is the classroom teacher. However, we cannot expect our teachers to be the parent, the nurse, the social worker, the counselor, and the disciplinarian. I believe that the biggest reason that many of our students in Hamilton County underperform is due to dysfunctional parenting and problems in the home. The educators job is to educate. The parents job is to parent.

7) COVID Protocol: What is your position on school vax requirements, testing, contact tracing, masking and quarantines in the schools?

The entire pandemic was a frustrating and often confusing time because of the information we were given was at times conflicting and all over the place. I always felt like masking a child should be left up to the parent. Wherever ones ideology may have been to the Covid response, you were able to find the data to back up whatever your claims may have been. I experienced first hand the damage done to our young people by closing schools, quarantining students, and mandating masks. If we are ever faced with those kinds of decisions again, I am personally all about parental choice.

8) CRT: What is your position for a curriculum that incorporates the teaching of diversity, equity and inclusion, Critical Race Theory and Social-Emotional Learning?

At it's core, CRT segregates people into 2 main categories, Oppressors or victims. We can all agree that racism and discrimination are wrong and have no place in public education in Hamilton County. However, CRT is nothing more than racially motivated propaganda and has no place in our education system either.

9) Social-Emotional Learning/Sex Education: What is your stance of comprehensive sex ed, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships being taught in schools K-12? What is your stance on gender neutrality, co-ed bathrooms, trans sports?

I am a born again follower of Jesus Christ. I believe the Holy Bible is the infallible word of God and true cover to cover. I do not want sex education taught in the public schools. That is the parents responsibility. I love all people and respect their right to make any choices about their life that they choose. In my view, there is no such thing as gender neutrality, you are either male or female from birth. Boys should go to boys bathrooms and girls should go to girls. Athletes should compete with other athletes that are their same birth sex.

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10) Problem/Solution: What is your plan to tackle the problem with bullying, child sex crimes and the physical safety of our children?

We need to do more bolder things on student safety. There need be zero tolerance for bullying much like offenses such as drugs, weapons and acts of violence. Hamilton County currently has, in place, a code of conduct. We must do more to train our staff related to consistent enforcement of that code.

11) School Board Meetings: How can the board make greater accommodations for all citizens who want to participate in school board meetings, including public comments?

Anyone who has a desire to speak at any school board meeting, has the right to do that by simply making a written request. I have asked that we, as a board, consider having improved protocols with regard to how this process is handled. For example, we should consider having periodic special meetings where we allow parents, or any stakeholders, ample time to speak to the board and ample time for the board to respond. Parent input is vitally important to me as a school board member.

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