

LEON COUNTY SCHOOLS

2022 School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: _____Alva Striplin_____

Office Sought: _____Leon County School Board, District _____

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Candidate Signature: _____

Date: _____June 6, 2022_____

Local School Board

Local school board members have been under increased scrutiny. The decision made by these individuals are critical to the future of our students, public schools, and the community.

Why have you decided to run for school board and what do you hope to achieve?

I decided to run for school board while I was a teacher and was first elected in 2014. Since then I have been a voice for teachers and hope to remain being that voice moving forward. There is no more important component of success for our community than the education of our children.

What is your background and experience with schools, and public education?

I attended Kate Sullivan, Raa and Lincoln and graduated from FSU. I was a classroom volunteer at Hawks Rise elementary for six years and then became a paraprofessional, then a teacher at Deerlake Middle School. I became CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters, placing a mentoring in the lives of over 600 youth in Tallahassee, and now work at FSU College of Law. I have six children, three graduates from Chiles High, one graduate from Lincoln High, one graduate from Leon High, and one a rising Junior at Leon High.

What is your plan to address the teacher and staff shortages in our district?

Continue advocating for teacher raises and getting our entry level teachers to a salary of \$47,500, while raising our veteran teachers, continues to be a goal. If we are not competitive with surrounding districts, we will not be able to attract and retain the best teachers.

Please rank the issues below by level of importance to the district and students with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.

- 2 School staff and teacher pay and the importance of stabilizing salary compression
- 4 Addressing overextended class sizes and implementing a caseload cap for service providers (SLP, ESE, OT, PT, ...)
- 6 Improving communication and transparency with all stakeholders
- 1 School Safety and Security
- 3 Finding a permanent solution to mitigate teacher and school support staff shortages
- 5 Expanding school choice options within traditional public schools.

Please identify any other needs within the district. How would you address those concerns, include funding?

The needs within any school district are endless. I have listed the three I would like to focus on this year:

1. We must place an emphasis on the mental well being of all of our children. The pandemic has left many youth feeling isolated and disconnected. I am proud that we have placed counselors in every school for mental wellness, not just academic guidance. We will continue to fund these measures and place mental wellness programs in our schools.
2. We need to continue to place an emphasis on early learning, making sure that every child is prepared to enter our schools, regardless of socio-economic status and zip code. I am proud that we have installed "all day vpk" and would like to see this program continue and grow.
3. I will continue to advocate to get our teachers the salary they deserve.

Please share your position on school choice, including charter schools and private schools that receive taxpayer dollars to fund student scholarships.

The expansion of tax funded charter schools has pulled funding out of our traditional public school system and has left the Leon County School District with a significant loss of funding. Additionally, the expansion of scholarships (Hope, Family Empowerment, etc.) has also left our district with a loss of funding. We must continue to place an emphasis on quality education for all of our students, educational offerings that meet the needs of every child, and keeping the best teachers in our classrooms here in Leon County.

While state legislators have an important role in deciding statewide education standards that guide instruction, do you believe these same elected officials should be directly involved in influencing what school district curriculum, material and

instructional resources are used in schools locally, or should this decision be made by the Superintendent and school board?

Local school districts have and will continue to adhere to guidelines outlined by the Florida Department of Education in regards to curriculum and instructional resources.

Please share your plan to collect input from and work with parents and employees in making decisions that affect our schools and community.

Parents and teachers are the most important components of our children's education. I will continue to listen and incorporate teacher and parent input into my actions as a Leon County School Board member.

Education unions have an important role in supporting school employees. What do you believe the proper role of the union should be in working with the school board? As a school board member, how would you work with the union?

I became a member of the Leon Classroom Teachers Association when I was an educator and believe in the collective voice. LCTA holds an important place in the Leon County School district and I look forward to continue hearing their input in the years to come.

Student behavior and attendance has become a serious problem for educators. What ideas do you have to support administration and teachers to address these issues, while maintaining safe schools?

We have and will continue to place additional supports for our teachers in every school. We have placed an emphasis on increasing our mental health counselors, hall monitors, and resource or law enforcement officers at every school. Teachers should feel comfortable utilizing these resources at any time with our students.

Would you be in favor of an independent forensic audit to better understand the fiscal practices of Leon County Schools?

The district undergoes independent audits annually and these audits are made available to the public on our website.

What are your views on how to best provide FAPE, a free appropriate public education, for ESE students (or students with disabilities) within Leon County Schools?

The Leon County School District is committed to a free appropriate public education for all students, regardless of ability and without discrimination. WE will continue to provide this education in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Florida Department of education.

Is there any additional information you wish to share with us when making endorsement decisions?

I am proud that we have offered every educational option available to our students during what has been the most difficult years in history, and would be grateful for the endorsement from LCTA to continue serving our community for the next four years.