

# LEON COUNTY SCHOOLS

## 2022 School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name: Laurie Lawson Cox

Office Sought: LCSB District 4

Campaign Address: 2640A Mitcham Dr.

Campaign Telephone: 850-877-1099

Campaign email: Info@laurielawsoncox4schoolboard.com

Website: LaurieLawsonCox4schoolboard.com

Candidate Signature: Laurie L Cox

Date: 6/23/22

### **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?**

Having taught and been involved in Leon County Schools for 33 years, I understand the unique needs of all invested parties in our children's education. I believe I can be a strong voice for parents, teachers, staff, and students as we navigate the challenges ahead.

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

I have taught elementary physical education for 36 years, 33 years in Leon County. I have served as the physical education coordinator for our school district, where I helped plan and implement training and in-services. I am married to a Leon County educator who has also spent his entire career as a teacher, coach, and administrator.

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

Teaching is the greatest career, yet we are also facing challenges to recruit and retain quality teachers. I want to advocate for increases in pay and continue the relationships with colleges and universities to provide internships and experiences for potential teachers. We need meaningful training and in-services for teachers and staff so that they are supported.

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

Notes: I believe school staff and teacher pay will help mitigate teacher and school support.

- I do not believe we need to expand but enhance school choice.

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

We should continue to prioritize the health (both physical and mental health) of our students, teachers, and staff by enhancing programs already in place.

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

We should always ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely. I do support school choice where parents can choose the best place for their children and make our schools competitive. Leon County should continue to provide the highest quality education for all students regardless of public or charter.

**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?**

As much as possible, decisions should be made at the local level with all stakeholders (teachers, parents, administrators) involved.

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

My door will always be open. I am looking forward to being at schools, school events, talking to teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members. I have always and will continue to be active and involved in the community and always open to input.

**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 appreciate the union's involvement in supporting our schools. I will have an open-door policy and look forward to listening and working with them.

**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?**

This is a very important issue that faces our school system. We need to follow the district's policies and guidelines that are in place. We should continue to work with parents, school support staff, and administration, as well as continue to partner with our mental health experts.

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

I would support reviewing the budget with greater transparency in financial decision-making, but I do know Leon County Schools already goes through extensive audits from independent and state agencies. A forensic audit suggests criminal or illegal activity. There are procedures in place if someone suspects that is happening. Unless there is illegal or criminal activity, I would not be in favor of an "independent forensic audit".

**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?**

I have worked with amazing teachers of students with disabilities and would support continuing to fund and provide resources for them.

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

---

With my years of experience teaching thousands of students and working with parents and community partners, I know Leon County Schools! I have a great relationship with teachers and staff at every school in Leon County, and a unique perspective and knowledge of our schools, which I believe makes me the most qualified candidate.

---