

Shannon Beckham – District 2 School Board

What are your plans to address the budget deficit in order to fiscally stabilize our schools? What other sources of revenue would you propose instead of relying strictly on the reserves in order to balance the budget?

I think we should look into selling our current district school board building and move administrative offices into schools that are under enrolled with unused classrooms and office space. I am also in favor of consolidating schools with low enrollment. In order to ensure we have quality schools we will need to raise revenue on a local level. I am willing to work with our local leaders, with input from our constituents on what is the best way to do that. I think it is important that if the board recommends an increase in the millage rate that there is a clear plan as to what that money will be used for. I am opposed to wasteful spending of taxpayer money.

In order to better equip our students to enter the work force, do you support expanding our curriculum to include vocational and/or technical training classes? Why or why not? If you support this, how would you propose to implement and finance this expansion?

Yes, I support expanding our vocational and technical training classes. As a special education teacher, I worked with students to provide vocational opportunities and I feel those programs are necessary to ensure all our students are prepared as they leave DCPS upon graduation. We should be partnering with local business and trade groups to create apprenticeship and mentor programs within our schools.

Would you support having a forensic audit conducted to better determine how the resources are being allocated? Why or why not?

Yes, in 2017 DCPS spent \$21 million more than was budgeted, which is unacceptable. When budgets are tight, we may be smart about our spending and have the appropriate controls in place to ensure that funding is being used appropriately. These types of audits can also sometimes reveal potential cost-saving measures.

How do you plan to determine the needs and interests of the individual schools in District 2 and effectively advocate those needs and interests to the Duval County School Board?

As your elected representative I will be going to the schools, engaging with teachers, parents, students, and administrators. Over the past 5 years I've volunteered in the schools in District 2, including tutoring students and raising funds to support education programs. I've worked alongside teachers, administrators and other parent volunteers to improve District 2 schools. My role as your school board representative would be to expand this to all District 2 schools and listen to their needs so I can advocate for them. Since both my children attend District 2 schools, I will have the unique perspective as a parent at both an elementary and middle school at the beach.

What are your plans to make our schools safe without creating a “prison-like” atmosphere?

We need to create community partnerships with local, regional, state and federal agencies. I want to have more community engagement programs with law enforcement. We also need to improve and update our buildings and security systems to the 20th century. We historically have underfunded this area and we need to improve our focus on building security.

What changes at the policy level, if any, would you propose to address chronic absenteeism and other discipline-related issues?

We need to ensure we are offering students programs and activities throughout our schools that engages them and gives them meaningful reasons to come to school. Stronger vocational education programs and after-school activities can engage and keep students interested in attending school as well as reduce

discipline-related issues. We also need to update our student code of conduct to include stricter penalties for absenteeism and ensure that it is being enforced consistently.

Describe your plans for improving communications with the State Board of Education and the Duval County delegation.

I would support more joint meetings and sending delegations to share in the policy meetings at the DOE. I would advocate for more School Board participation and inclusion in those meetings.

How do you propose to keep your constituents informed on a regular basis with regard to pertinent matters related to District 2?

I will utilize communications through word of mouth, regular community forums, local school meetings, social media, email, phone and overall accessibility to me. I plan to be present in the school to observe first-hand the needs of our children, teachers and schools.

What is your position on maintaining local control over the evaluation and renewal of charter schools?

I believe the Duval County School Board should maintain local control over the evaluation and renewal of charter schools. Charter schools receive tax money and the tax payers have a right to elect representatives on their behalf to serve on the board. Moving the control of charter schools away from the local board would result in taxation without representation for our citizens.

The Duval County School Board recently stopped paying stormwater utility fees in all three beach cities, claiming that the fees are actually assessments and that the beach cities have no power to sue for collection because of sovereign immunity. The school properties continue to receive stormwater service despite non-payment for the past several months. Over the years, all three city governments have provided support and materials to the schools within their jurisdictions in the form of crosswalk signage and markings, police supported traffic control and safety plans, landscaping and tree service, post-storm recovery, educational and career support, and other similar services that assist the schools with their daily operations. How would you propose to bring this problem to a solution that can work for all sides and ensure the cooperative relationship between the schools and the beach cities continues to benefit our teachers and children?

Because of the complexity and legal battles that have been fought in the courts across the state, I feel strongly that a compromised contractual agreement with regards to stormwater fees is the best course of action to take between our local government and school board. If you look at the recent settlement of the 7 year dispute between Marion County School Board and Ocala, we should learn from their example that spending exuberant amounts of money to fight for fees in the courts is wasting taxpayer money that could be better utilized for student education and building better local beach communities. I would advocate for bringing in a mediator to bring the councils of the beaches together with the school board members to develop this plan and work to negotiate a compromise to built a strong positive relationship between the school boards and the beach communities. I am invested in the beaches as a resident of Jacksonville Beach and understand the importance of the beach community maintaining our stormwater utilities. I am also heavily invested in my student's education attending schools at the beaches so I feel strongly that I am uniquely positioned to empathize with both sides of this complex issue.

How does this decision affect the inter-local agreement, if any, with regard to the school board's authority to stop paying stormwater fees?

Stormwater fees are not part of the inter-local agreements from 1982 or 1996, but perhaps could be a part of a future agreement. Since the law states that local governments are responsible for stormwater management programs, the beaches community must create a utility or raise funds to manage this process. Since

Jacksonville Beach, Atlantic Beach and Neptune Beach have their own stormwater management programs that are separate from the City of Jacksonville they should independently be allowed to address this issue.