

Jackie Zeigler, Republican Candidate for State Board of Education District 1

1. Describe the qualifications and experiences you would bring to the State Board of Education and how your contributions would be an asset to the work of the Board.

I have been an educator in the state of Alabama for thirty seven (37) years as a teacher, Chapter I facilitator, assistant principal, principal and an adjunct professor in the department of education at Spring Hill College. During my tenure as principal at Mary B. Austin Elementary for fourteen (14) years, the school was awarded the National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence. I have a BS/MA in Elementary Education and certification in administration and supervision from University of South Alabama.

I am a wife and mother of 2, both children are products of the public school system. Our elder son is a recent graduate and our younger daughter is presently a junior at Baker High School in west Mobile. I fully understand the importance of parental involvement both from a parent aspect and as an educator. I am totally committed to the viability of the public school system.

My hands-on experiences within the school setting that incorporated all the intricacies of curriculum, management, financial accountability, communication with all stakeholders (students, faculty and staff, parents, community) along with a myriad of other daily, fluid responsibilities cements my ability to bring a working knowledge to the SBOE table. I am a firm believer, and my open door policy during my school experience authenticated this belief, of maintaining lines of communication that are a two way street with the vital component of listening as the main focus. Listening is the most important aspect in any communication along with keeping an open mind to be a life long learner.

I am a committed citizen and stakeholder who has fulfilled my responsibilities and obligations by being respectful of being on time, completing reports within framework, giving my all to completing a job performance and working well with others. Being retired, I will be able to visit the schools in the 7 counties of District 1, attend town hall meetings, meet with constituents at local events as well as being available to listen to the teachers, students, administrators, parents and community members so they will be reassured of an advocate who will speak for them.

2. As a State Board of Education member, what would you do to improve the academic preparation of students as well as their transition to higher education or other post-high-school training?

I am in full accord to move forward with repealing Common Core. I believe this act alone is one of the most important issue facing our state school board. To improve academic preparation at all levels, it is necessary to:

- *return common sense to education; replace Common Core with high quality standards that are aligned to Alabama by engaging public in this vital discussion

- *return to back-to-basics; bring back cursive handwriting, return the arts to all our students, recess, basic skills that are mandatory to build a strong foundation for our students so they are able to choose the educational setting most attuned to their desires be it career or college. They all need that very important strong foundation.

- *return autonomy to the teachers in the classroom; reduce paperwork

- *return effective instructional delivery; we want our children to be taught, not trained

*return to student learning needs and styles; bring back the flow of creative juices and thinking outside the box.

*realize that technology is a tool for instructional delivery, not a replacement for hot teaching and hands on experiences.

*provide students with options that will deliver to them the means for becoming productive citizens-- to provide both college prep classes as well as specialized career tech classes that are available to all our students and not limited to available slots.

*use assessment as diagnostic tools, not for collection of student data (P20W)

3. Please state two or three key goals you want the State Board of Education to accomplish during your term of office.

Goals: *repeal common core

*keep eyes and ears open to protect our educational system (ex. ETF; RAISE Act, ESSA, ...)

*be an active advocate for our public schools and their best interests

4. Do you believe Alabama's current system for funding public education provides adequate support to schools across Alabama? Please explain your position.

*Current funding is forty ninth in the US with only Oklahoma behind us.

*It is so very important that adequate funding is provided to public education.

*It is critical that we protect the Education Trust Fund (ETF) from raids to move money out of the ETF and into the general fund.

*We must be cognizant to the fact that many funding sources are accompanied with restrictions and/or strings attached.

*The public is keeping a watchful eye on spending and demands transparency. Being good stewards of public tax dollars is imperative when creating and submitting annual budget.

5. Do you believe school choice, including public charter schools and tax credit scholarships, improves the education of children in your district? Please explain your position.

I believe in families having control and input in the selection of the proper placement for their children. We must, though, be cognitive of the fact that we must continue to preserve the public schools and their viability while supporting an effective School Choice and Student Opportunity Act. I am a strong advocate in promoting and providing as many choices as necessary for students who have deemed that college is not the best route for them. With the increase in naval shipbuilding (Ingalls, Austal), aerospace opportunities (Airbus), vehicle assembly plants (Hundai, Mercedes, Honda and Toyota), along with the great need for more welders, HVAC technicians and the list goes on and on, then we have the obligation to have available schools and tech centers to provide the specialized classes that afford these students the training needed. One may need to look at the signature academies that Mobile County Public School System has implemented to address this ever increasing need.

6. Do you believe student performance on annual standardized tests is a fair criterion to assess teacher effectiveness? Please explain your position.

Student assessment results should be utilized as a diagnostic tool to guide instruction and address the areas of weakness that are indicated. It is of great concern when an attempt is made to tie student performance on standardized tests to teacher effectiveness. This attempt loses the intent of such assessment. There are major concerns now about the amount of classroom instructional time is being taken by preparing for said tests and then the actual taking of the tests. Tying teacher performance to student achievement only raises possibility of additional testing and more data collection. The RAISE Act brought to the forefront the issue of tying student achievement to teacher effectiveness. Once voices were raised in objection, the author rescinded this part of the act.

7. Do you believe Alabama's public schools, and the people working in schools, are doing enough in our schools to protect and improve the lives of our most vulnerable children, including those at risk due to family poverty and students with disabilities? Please explain your position.

We can never rest on our laurels when dealing with children. We must never be satisfied with the status quo in regard to children of poverty, children with exceptionalities, our at risk children. We must continue to strive to find different methods to give all students, with particular focus on our at-risk students, that educational base. How is this accomplished? Return to teaching to children's learning styles and multiple intelligences, to start at their specific level of understanding as teachers adapt their classroom methods for an effective instructional delivery. This allows coping strategies to be developed when dealing with weaknesses while capitalizing on strengths. Students with learning disabilities as well as ADHD respond favorably in this forum. Another important step is to untie our teachers' hands and stop undermining their professional judgement. We need to free them up so they are not locked into a set way of teaching. To allow the creative juices to flow once again by enhancing students' critical and creative thinking skills (Talents Unlimited).

8. Do you believe the legislature or the state board of education should take the lead in proposing major reform initiatives for public education? Please explain your position.

I believe the state board of education should be the leader in proposing major reform legislation. Our entire focus is the education of the students in the state of Alabama. We are challenged to continually explore and discover well researched reforms that will address the high quality Alabama standards that need to be designed with the help of our citizens.

9. How can you, as a state board of education member, positively impact the national view of Alabama's K-12 educational system?

Ways that I can positively impact the national view of Alabama's K-12 educational system:

By being an advocate for the public school educational system by working to repeal Common Core; to share how high quality academic standards are determined with the input from our citizens.

I will positively endorse our educational system by being well versed with current facts that show initiative and forward thinking endeavors.

By demonstrating by doing, not talking, that making a concerted effort to meet with educators, parents, students, community for the main purpose of listening to them.

To show by action, that teachers are valued and that they are an intricate part of our plan to make Alabama's educational system one to be touted, not scorned.

To be able to articulate at every opportunity how the vision of the SBOE is the driver of our vehicle that will move our state forward. It is our vision and not programs, resources, or administration. To move back to a vision driven educational system, change is necessary and accompanied by verbiage that states, "It is all about the children."