

# 2019 Shawnee Mission School Board

Response ID:12 Data

## 1. Policy Questionnaire

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### 1. Candidate Information

**First Name**

Brian

**Last Name**

Koon

**Candidate for Board Seat #**

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**Street Address**

7315 w. 55th Pl.

**Apt/Suite/Office**

**City**

Overland Park

**State**

Kansas

**Zip**

66202

**Country**

**Phone Number**

9137102071

**Campaign Treasurer**

Jan Bombeck

**Campaign Website**

[www.briankoonforkansas.com](http://www.briankoonforkansas.com)

**Campaign Email Address**

BrianKoonforKansas@gmail.com

**Candidate's Occupation**

**Fax Number**

**Mobile Phone**

## 2. (untitled)

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### 2. Occupation/Work History (last 5 years - 25 words or less)

2017 to present: English Language Learners' Aide in Olathe Public Schools  
2016 and 2017: Pro-Public Education Lobbyist in KS Statehouse

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### 3. Most recent Political/Community experience? (25 words or less)

2014 - 2016: volunteered extensively in my childrens' classrooms

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### 4. As a candidate, what are your top three policy issues? (25 words per line)

- 1 : Creating a sustainable lunch program for students in need.
  - 2 : Closing the achievement gap.
  - 3 : Ensuring fair and effective discipline.
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### 5. The Kansas Supreme Court recently ruled the current school funding formula is both equitable and adequate, however, the Court retained jurisdiction over the case to assure the funding is maintained. Briefly, what are your thoughts on the new formula and the additional dollars that have been added to K-12 school funding? (100 words or less)

I think it's fantastic and this restoration has been a long time in coming. In the next four years, SMSD will gain roughly \$10 million more each year, for a total of about \$50 million (unadjusted for inflation) than the district received last year. For this year, I expected a larger portion of the money to go to hiring more teachers to reduce class size, and to giving teachers and education support personnel long awaited raises. Going forward, I would like to see the state increase the reimbursement rate for Special Education services so that SMSD doesn't have to.

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### 6. With the recent ruling by the Kansas Supreme Court that the new funding formula and related funding are constitutional, it is likely the legislature will look closely at accountability measures for student performance. Please describe the accountability measures you support and believe are reflective of student achievement. (100 words or less)

I would prefer peer review: let teachers grade teachers. Highly educated and well qualified teachers (and principals) know what education expertise looks like. Teaching is a challenging profession often done so well as to appear easy. We need to measure students' progress.

My biggest concern is that after years of low funding and deferred maintenance, of highly qualified teachers leaving the classroom because they can no longer afford to teach, that we will expect miracles from a bare-bones system given a little lifeblood. The damage will take time to repair, and no amount of accountability measures will change that.

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### 7. Kansas is experiencing all-time low unemployment rates and employers are struggling to find qualified workers, especially in technical and skilled trades. How do you see the Shawnee Mission School District helping to meet our business community's future workforce needs through technical education and training? (100 words or less)

My focus is on setting up students for success. That may mean preparing students to attend college and earn a bachelor's degree (+/-37% will earn a degree), but my concern is for the other +/-63% who won't earn a four year degree. I want to make certain that all students who graduate from SMSD have good job prospects, and skilled trades and technical education - particularly those jobs that can't be outsourced - are an excellent opportunity. I want to see an even greater level of partnership between SMSD and JCCC, to increase access to a technical education certificate courses.

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### 8. Other than funding, what do you see as the greatest challenge facing the district? (100 words or less)

It is imperative that we adjust positively to our changing demographics and increasing diversity. The country is different today than it was twenty years ago, and so is SMSD. We need to change with the times, listen to parents, teachers, and students when they ask for new or additional supports, and "lean into" these changes with an eye to the best possible outcome. Our growing diversity, both ethnically and socioeconomically, is the part that excites me the most about SMSD. I believe that if we embrace these changes and adjust accordingly, our students will be well prepared for the future.

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### 9. Why are you seeking public office? (100 words or less)

I was deeply disappointed with a previous superintendent's administration, during which the SMSD was regressing in some areas (like cutting the computer special and hiring non-certified librarians), and treading water in others (not hiring a Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator, for example). This is not to say that we didn't have any positive changes, or that the district is in trouble. I want to make sure that we restore what was cut during the lean funding years, and grow into something better than we were five years ago.