

Shawnee Mission USD #512 Board of Education 2021

Response ID:6 Data

1. Candidate Information

1. Candidate Name

Brian Neilson

2. Candidate for Board Seat

At Large

3. Address

Street Address/Apt/Suite : 9605 Belinder Road

City/State/Zip : Leawood, KS 66206

4. Phone Number

913.735.6144

5. Email Address

skibrian95@gmail.com

6. Campaign Website

brianformsd.com

2. Candidate Background

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

M&A Investment Banker (2007-2017), Financial Planning and Analysis (2016-2018), Middle Market Commercial Lending (2018 - Present)

www.linkedin.com/in/skibrian

8. If you are or have been affiliated with a chamber of commerce or other business organization, please list which organization(s) and any leadership positions you have held.

N/A

9. Other recent political/community experience (50 words or less)

University of St. Thomas - GSB Alumni Board

Chair - Engagement

Aug 2017 – Present

Colorado State University

President - Kansas City Alumni Network

2014 – Present

Christ Church Anglican

Administrator - Endowment Trust

2016 – Present

City Of Leawood

3. Issues and Policy

10. As a candidate, what are your top three education policy issues? (100 words or less)

Falling test scores in what used to be a premier district in the USA.

Gain control of spending and make sure to direct funds to instruction and not administration.

Full transparency into the process and listen to teachers, the union, parents, and kids and make decisions at the end of the day that most benefit the kids.

11. The Kansas Supreme Court ruled the current K-12 education funding formula is both equitable and adequate. The Court, however, has retained jurisdiction over the case to assure funding is maintained. What are your thoughts on the formula and additional funding that has been added? (100 words or less)

The whole system needs to be blown up and we need to start over. The courts should never have been involved in the beginning. This is primarily a legislative issue and my goal will be to take what funds we receive and plow as much of those dollars into direct instruction activities and eliminate waste. The dollars we have are all that we have and the school board cannot change state law.

12. The K-12 education system requires accountability measures for student performance, which have sometimes been a source of debate. Please describe the accountability measures you support and believe are accurately reflective of student achievement. (100 words or less)

Only 1/3 of 10th graders in SMSD are ready for post high school careers without the need for remedial support. This needs to change and parents must wake up that we are no longer the premier district we once were. It is time to rise again and stop arguing over policies that do not prepare students to read, write, and perform math.

13. Kansas is experiencing low unemployment rates and employers are struggling to find qualified workers, especially in technical and skilled trades. How do you see the school district helping to meet the business community's future workforce needs through technical education and training? (100 words or less)

In technical and skilled trades, I favor apprenticeship programs like the joint BMW and North Carolina venture to train high school juniors and seniors while paying them for highly technical jobs inside the auto manufacturing plant. They are well paid jobs in the high five figures. We need to encourage bright students by providing opportunities, even if they are not college bound.

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

Funding is not an issue. We are awash in money. We need to reorient spending in order to retain the best teachers and bring the best equipment and curriculum to the class room. Our elementary math curriculum does not prepare our own kids for a different middle school math curriculum! (Based on conversations with an 8th grade teacher.) That is an untenable position to be in.

15. Why are you seeking this public office? (100 words or less)

To make sure all students are given every advantage to be successful in life and to spend money on people and resources to advance that goal. No money should be wasted on fiefdoms and unnecessary layers of management.

16. What makes you uniquely qualified to serve on the Board and most distinguishes you from your opponent(s) in this race? (100 words or less)

I have served on boards, and chaired them. I understand the board is not a micromanager, but is to set policy. We need to change that policy and I have experience to leverage. Further, as a finance expert I have the skills to work through multimillion

dollar budgets, understand them, and find the waste and opportunities to adjust spending to meet the vision of helping our kids get the best start in life. I will make sure the budget is fully transparent and not hidden in the depths of district websites.