

## Kathy Lennon - School Board Member Goals Remain the Same Despite Recent Distractions

In today's world of constant communication, it is very easy to lose sight of what is important, what is real, and what is meaningful. In the midst of sound bytes and confrontation, we risk ignoring what we should be focused on: the necessity of working together to create solutions for even the most divisive issues.

Despite recent distractions and conflict, and despite my own personal frustrations at the inharmonious stances expressed among other school board members, my goal remains the same:

I believe that a school board must be responsive and receptive to students, teachers, parents, business leaders, partnerships, and the community at large. We should encourage an open, nonpartisan dialogue and work together with the shared goal of ensuring all our students are given the same opportunity for success.

I believe our school board serves all of the students in the community; one student is no more or less important than another. We are a diverse community and should embrace that diversity, because doing so makes us all stronger.

Our schools are here to serve the educational needs of all the students. We are here to serve our schools. Imagine if all of the opportunities, resources, and facilities were equitable for schools, students, and teachers in all districts.

Imagine all the possibilities if we work together to make change happen, instead of focusing on the arguments that divide us.

When I decided to run for school board, I wanted to bring new ways of thinking, new perspectives, and innovation to the school board. I have always believed we should learn from the past, and keep our focus on ensuring ALL our students have the same opportunities.

It is difficult, at times, to move forward with the burdens of past failures, but inequities do still exist, and this is an issue we are obligated to continue to address.

I do believe that we should continue to partner with community-based organizations to expand what is already offered in our school system, while continuing to improve that system from within.

I am enormously encouraged by the recent strides made in our school systems through the collaborative efforts at HCDE. When we work together, we create Future Ready Institutes that challenge the traditional approach to education in high schools by developing career-themed small learning communities. When we work together, we bring complex, hands-on science and

advanced problem solving into the classroom through partnerships with local organizations and businesses like PEF, Chattanooga 2.0, and Volkswagen. When we work together, we bring more art into our students' lives, we increase open enrollment in our schools, boost funding for ESL students, find the best teachers for our Opportunity Zone schools, great leaders in every school and much, much more!

**When we work together, we can create the educational opportunities our children need and deserve.**

We should never say we can't change something because it's too expensive or complicated or difficult. We cannot dismiss the past, but must learn from history to ensure we do not repeat it. We have an obligation to acknowledge inequity and explore solutions. And work together to effect change that will benefit us all.

The inequities that affect our schools must be corrected for the benefit of every single student. We can't close our eyes to that. As your school board member, I will continue to address these tough issues and have hard conversations about finding solutions. Dr. Johnson is committed to make Hamilton County Schools the fastest improving school district in the state of Tennessee. Change is coming to Hamilton County Schools to bring educational opportunities our children need and deserve.

***Kathy Lennon***  
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