



Republican Party of Rutherford County

— **May 2026** —

Republican Primary Voter Guide



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Please consider donating today to help fund initiatives like our Voter Guides, debates, leasing and maintaining our Headquarters, etc. We appreciate your support!

In Liberty,
Daniel Gammon, Chairman



***Republican Party of
Rutherford County***



***Republican Women of
Rutherford County***



***Rutherford County
Young Republicans***



Republican Candidates on the May 5th Ballot

**In order by last name*

** (I) notates an Incumbent*

<u>Circuit Court Clerk:</u> Melissa Harrell (I), Jeff McKinney	<u>Commissioner Dist. 14:</u> Wayne Irvin (I)
<u>County Clerk:</u> Lisa Duke Crowell (I)	<u>Commissioner Dist. 15:</u> Shawn McGowan
<u>Commissioner Dist. 01:</u> David Gammon, Jamie Knight	<u>Commissioner Dist. 16:</u> Phil Dodd (I)
<u>Commissioner Dist. 02:</u> Steve Percy (I)	<u>Commissioner Dist. 17:</u> Terry Hodge
<u>Commissioner Dist. 03:</u> Rick Hall (I)	<u>Commissioner Dist. 18:</u> Allen McAdoo (I)
<u>Commissioner Dist. 04:</u> Brian Burns, Robert Peay, Jr. (I), Michael Rodgers	<u>Commissioner Dist. 19:</u> No Republican Candidate
<u>Commissioner Dist. 05:</u> No Republican Candidate	<u>Commissioner Dist. 20:</u> Trey Gooch (I)
<u>Commissioner Dist. 06:</u> Eddie Arnold, Jonathan Beverly (I)	<u>Commissioner Dist. 21:</u> Jeff Lloyd, Clarence Santini
<u>Commissioner Dist. 07:</u> Michael Kusch (I)	<u>County Mayor:</u> Randy Allen, Joe Carr (I), Craig Harris
<u>Commissioner Dist. 08:</u> John Gaessler, Bill Tollett	<u>Murfreesboro City School Board:</u> Barbara Long (I)
<u>Commissioner Dist. 09:</u> Joshua James (I)	<u>RC School Board Zone 1:</u> Chuck Isbell, Tammy Sharp (I)
<u>Commissioner Dist. 10:</u> Phil Wilson (I)	<u>RC School Board Zone 4:</u> Katie Darby (I), Clarissa Smith
<u>Commissioner Dist. 11:</u> Anthony Johnson (I)	<u>RC School Board Zone 7:</u> Frances Rosales (I), Julie Wishing
<u>Commissioner Dist. 12:</u> Carl Boyd (I)	<u>Sheriff:</u> Kenneth Barrett, Trey Mansfield, Steve Spence
<u>Commissioner Dist. 13:</u> Brian Stoll	



Murfreesboro City School Board

District: City Wide

Length of Term: 4yrs, with the terms staggering

Murfreesboro City Schools (MCS) serves approximately 10,000 students from Pre-K through 6th grade across 13 campuses.

Key details about the district include:

- **Focus & Structure:** MCS is dedicated to PK-6th grade education, providing a specialized focus on early childhood and elementary learning, with a strong emphasis on arts, science, and hands-on learning.
- **Academic Performance:** The district has an overall "above average" rating, with roughly 43% of students proficient in math and 40% in reading.
- **Magnet & Specialized Programs:** The district operates several specialized schools and magnet programs to foster specific interests.
- **Demographics:** The district is noted for its diversity, ranking 10th out of 131 districts in Tennessee.
- **Extended School Program (ESP):** A highly utilized, year-round program operating from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. for, offering enrichment activities and, in some cases, safe, school-based care.
- **Governance:** It is a municipal school district (a department of the City of Murfreesboro) governed by an elected seven-member board.



Candidate Name: Barbara Long

Phone: (615) 607-5146



Background I am Barbara Hutchins Long. I am a native of Murfreesboro TN. I attended Hobgood Elementary, Central Middle and Oakland High School. I have my masters in Early Childhood Education and Curriculum and Instruction. I am a widow. I was married my late husband Dr. Tony Long for 25 years. We have 2 amazing daughters- Michelle Austin and Mendi Wrather and 5 grandchildren. We founded Crossway Baptist Church of which I am still hold many leadership roles. I lead and teach a multigenerational Connect class at Crossway each Sunday.

I taught 1st and 2nd grade at McFadden School of Excellence for 31 years. It was a great career. I had the privilege of being on the steering and development team to design the magnet school curriculum, and educational structure as it is today.

Why am I running for office? I am running for my 2nd term for Murfreesboro City School Board. I have truly enjoyed representing Murfreesboro citizens on our School Board. I'm sure I have ruffled a few feathers during my first term, but I have brought experience of being a teacher in the classroom. That experience gives me an insight into decision making of our school district. I bring a knowledge to the table of efficiency, common sense, and student and teacher wellbeing. I see clearly financial needs for our district as well as where waste can be eliminated.

Biggest challenges? One of the challenges we face in Murfreesboro is growth as well as the diverse population who we have the responsibility to educate.

What goals would I want to achieve? I want to ensure we offer the best education possible in Murfreesboro. We want to offer parents a choice of which city school they prefer to send their child. I want to monitor our curriculum to make sure the teachers have cutting edge materials, and training. I want to protect tax payer dollars by teasing out any unnecessary spending.

Why did I choose to run republican? The public deserves to know WHO I am. My outlook and values align with the Republican Party. I am a Christian unashamedly. I believe education is a partnership with parents. It takes a village/community to raise a child. The schools' teachers and support staff are a part of that village. I want my community to be safe, efficient, supportive with high moral standards. That's why my family and I have chosen to live, work and play in Murfreesboro my entire life.



Rutherford County School Board

District: There are 7 designated Zones across the county

Length of Term: 4yrs, with the terms staggering

Estimated Annual Budget: \$625.8 Million, accounting for approx. 75% of county budget

Candidate(s) Zone 1: Charles Isbell, Tammy Sharp (I)

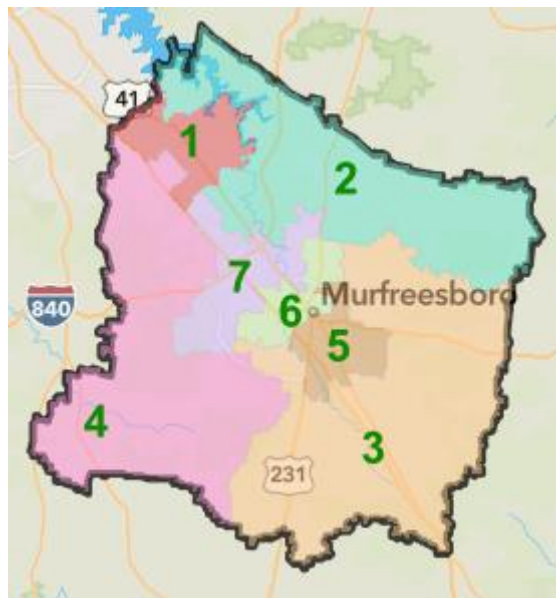
Candidate(s) Zone 4: Katie Darby (I)

Candidate(s) Zone 7: Frances Rosales (I)

The Rutherford County School Board is responsible for governing the school district by setting policies, adopting annual budgets based on student growth, and hiring the Director of Schools. The board ensures academic standards, manages employee contracts, and oversees the district's overall strategic direction.

Key aspects of the Rutherford County Board of Education include:

- Governance & Policy: The board adopts policies and sets goals for the district.
- Budgeting: They determine budget priorities for the General Purpose (GPS) budget, which is then ratified by the Rutherford County Commission.
- Leadership: They appoint and evaluate the Director of Schools.
- Operations: They handle the hiring/dismissing of employees, school consolidation, and procurement of materials.
- Public Meetings: The board holds meetings where citizens can address them, provided they follow set procedures.



Zone 1

Candidate Name: Chuck Isbell

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/share/1B5FyiyJra/>



Background: My name is Chuck Isbell. I am the father of three children—David, Maggie, and Nate, who is forever 13. We lost Nate in 2020 after he was struck by a speeding, distracted driver. I am also blessed with two wonderful grandchildren, Lilly and Noelle. I attend Hope Fellowship Church in Smyrna and am proud to come from a long line of Tennesseans, with family roots tracing back to the First Families of the State of Tennessee. I have been a resident of Rutherford County for over 29 years (Smyrna & La Vergne) Professionally, my experience as a Site Supervisor in Gallatin during the day and an HVAC Instructor at a Nashville trade school in the evenings brings practical, real-world experience and a strong work ethic to the board. I am also active in my community, serving as Treasurer for the La Vergne Housing Authority Committee and as a member of the La Vergne Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. In my spare time, I am an active member of Families for Safe Streets. I fought to end the irresponsible “Parental Responsibility Zones” that removed bus service for certain students to save money. My record of volunteer service and professional career has prepared me well for this position.

Why am I running and what qualifies me? I am running for school board to bring a fresh perspective focused on safety, stability, and strong leadership. Keeping our children safe must always be a top priority. I will continue working closely with our School Resource Officers, building strong relationships so they remain top of mind when it comes to staff training, active shooter preparedness, and safety drills. Having our SROs conduct this training not only strengthens preparedness but also saves taxpayer dollars because it is provided at no additional cost to the district. Proactive training and collaboration are critical to protecting our schools.

Our district is performing well, and we need leadership that recognizes effective leadership and works to retain it. I support our Director and believe that maintaining stability at the top also protects taxpayer dollars. Strong, consistent leadership benefits students, staff, and our entire community.

I will continue putting students, teachers, bus drivers, and school staff first. I fought to end the irresponsible “Parental Responsibility Zones” that removed bus service to cut costs, and I will always advocate for decisions that prioritize children and families. We can continue building on the progress our district has made and move our schools forward with steady leadership.



(Chuck Isbell continued...)

What do I see as the biggest challenges? Rapid Growth and Capacity: Educating children requires adequate space. Our district is growing rapidly, with elementary enrollment increasing and high schools projected to grow by 14% by 2030. We need long-term planning that creates stable school zones that are not adjusted every two years, ensuring students have the space and resources they need while providing consistency for families.

Teacher Support: We must support our teachers by being fiscally responsible, providing the tools they need to succeed, and ensuring they have a voice in their working conditions. Teaching is demanding work, and when educators feel unsupported, it affects morale and retention. As we face rising costs and construction decisions, we must keep teachers in mind along with students and families.

Balancing Growth and Cost: District leaders work to keep pace with enrollment growth, while county commissioners evaluate the long-term financial impact. Both share the responsibility of balancing student needs with fiscal sustainability.

Budget Pressures: As enrollment increases, so do educational costs. The district has faced projected deficits, including a recent \$6.1 million shortfall partly due to rising transportation expenses. While the fund balance has been strengthened, careful decisions must be made about when to use reserves and when to adjust spending.

Competitive Pay: Rising living costs and increasing healthcare premiums create pressure on teacher retention. Remaining competitive in compensation and benefits is essential to keeping high-quality educators in our district.

What goals would I like to accomplish? My approach is rooted in common-sense solutions that prioritize students and responsible leadership. My goals include:

- Building a new high school to serve La Vergne and Smyrna, relieving overcrowding and keeping pace with growth.
- Providing schools with strong academic support, well-maintained facilities, and balanced opportunities for athletics.
- Practicing fiscal responsibility through disciplined budgeting and working with county leaders to manage construction costs wisely.
- Strengthening student safety by reinforcing bus discipline policies and installing exterior cameras to hold drivers accountable.
- Maintaining firm standards against bullying and violence while promoting respect, accountability, and discipline.



(Chuck Isbell continued)

I chose to run as a Republican because... I have chosen to run as a Republican because I believe in faith, family, and personal responsibility. I believe parents — not government bureaucrats — should have the primary voice in their children’s education. Taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely, and our schools should reflect values of respect, discipline, teamwork, and accountability, with students at the center of every decision.

I am running because I am committed to using my experience and skills to ensure our schools remain the centerpiece of the Rutherford County community. Keeping the education, safety, and well-being of every student and the families we serve at the forefront of every decision is not just a priority. This is a responsibility.



Zone 1

Candidate Name: Tammy Sharp (Incumbent)

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Background: I am currently single and the proud mother of a son, and I understand firsthand the importance of strong schools and a stable, values-based learning environment.

I spent almost 20 years in the commercial banking industry, focusing on fiscal accountability, transparency, and responsible financial management — experience that directly supports overseeing the 5th largest public school district in Tennessee.

I have proudly represented LaVergne and Smyrna for the last 8 years on the Rutherford County School Board.

I am currently attending Springhouse Church in Smyrna, TN.

Why am I running and what qualifies me? I am running for the Rutherford County School Board because parents deserve a strong voice, students deserve meaningful career pathways, and taxpayers deserve responsible stewardship. As School Board Chair, I worked to expand school choice, strengthen vocational programs, improve curriculum oversight, and help bring our district to a balanced budget.

What do I see as the biggest challenges? Key challenges include maintaining fiscal discipline amid rising enrollment, protecting parental choice, and strengthening vocational opportunities while managing continued growth. My eight years on the board and more than two decades in banking have prepared me to lead in these areas.

What goals would I like to accomplish? When re-elected, I will work to expand school choice, strengthen career and technical training, maintain a balanced budget, and build stronger partnerships with local businesses so students graduate ready for college or the workforce.

I chose to run as a Republican because... I chose to run as a Republican because I believe in fiscal responsibility, local control, and parental rights in education. These are the principles that guide my service to students and taxpayers.



Zone 4

Candidate Name: Katie Darby (Incumbent)



Background: My name is Katie Darby. 22 years ago my husband, Jay and I put roots down in Rutherford County and it has been home for our family ever since.

We are blessed with three children who were and are in the Rutherford County school system—Garyn (19), Brylie (15), and Halen (13). We actively attend church and are members at LifePoint. Our faith community has been a steady source of support and perspective. I'm a believer in Jesus Christ, and my faith is the foundation of who I am, how I make decisions, and how I try to serve others. My kids are my heart! They are a constant reminder of why I care so deeply about the safety, education, and future of every child in our schools.

Why am I running and what qualifies me? I'm running because I care deeply about the students in our district and I believe strong schools are built when families, educators, and leadership work together with trust and clear communication. I first decided to run after one of my own children was impacted by a school safety situation that left me wanting more timely information and clarity. That experience motivated me to serve, and fueled a desire to strengthen how we communicate, respond as a district & to give parents a voice.

I've been on the school board for almost 4 years and I bring a steady, objective approach to the work and I'm willing to do the homework—read the material, ask thoughtful questions, and look at issues from multiple angles. I'm a parent with two children currently in the district and one who recently graduated, so I understand the day-to-day reality families experience. I'm known for logical thinking, removing emotion from debate, and focusing on what's best for students while also being a careful steward of taxpayer dollars.

What do I see as the biggest challenges? One of the biggest challenges is ensuring the board stays focused on independent, objective oversight. That can be difficult when decisions are sometimes made too quickly, without fully exploring options, asking for more detail, or considering different viewpoints.

Another challenge is increasing parent engagement. When more parents show up, speak up, and stay informed, it strengthens accountability and helps the board better understand what families are experiencing. I'd love to see more parents involved.



(Katie Darby continued...)

What goals would I like to accomplish? If I'm re-elected, I want to help keep our district moving forward in a few practical ways - ways that I've consistently advocated for:

- Keep student safety a top priority by supporting clear protocols and strong communication with families.
- Strengthen transparency and parent partnership so parents feel informed, respected, and heard.
- Finding new avenues to help support our district and save money
- Elevating the nutrition program
- Support academic excellence by focusing on data-driven solutions that improve learning outcomes and student success.
- Promote responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars through careful budgeting and thoughtful evaluation of spending decisions.
- Encourage healthy, respectful discussion at the board level so decisions are well-vetted and reflect the needs of the whole community.

I chose to run as a Republican because... I chose to run as a Republican because it aligns with my values: faith, family, personal responsibility, and a belief that parents should have a strong voice in their children's education. I also believe in fiscal conservatism, being careful and transparent with taxpayer dollars, and keeping the focus on strong academics and safe schools.

I will continue to represent the community with integrity and common sense, strive toward collaboration, ask thoughtful, probing questions when needed, and always keep students at the center of every decision.



Zone 4

Candidate Name: Clarissa Smith

Why am I running and what qualifies me? I am running for School Board because I care deeply about our children, our families, and the future of Rutherford County. As a 56-year-old Christian woman with decades of experience in Human Resources and as the owner of Smith Bus Services, which has proudly served this county for nearly 50 years, I understand both the people and the practical needs of our school system.



My professional background in HR has equipped me to navigate personnel matters, policies, and organizational leadership. My experience as a bus contractor gives me firsthand knowledge of how school operations impact students and families every single day. I believe in steady leadership, strong values, and practical solutions that support students, parents, and educators.

What do I see as the biggest challenges? One of the biggest challenges facing our community is growth. Rutherford County continues to expand rapidly, and with that growth comes increased pressure on transportation, school capacity, and infrastructure. We must address overcrowding, the need for new schools, and the difficulty in finding suitable and affordable locations for those schools.

Transportation is also a critical issue. Ensuring safe, efficient, and reliable transportation for students requires thoughtful planning and responsible budgeting. As someone directly involved in student transportation, I understand the complexity of these challenges and the importance of proactive planning.

What goals would I like to accomplish? If elected, my goals would be to promote responsible fiscal management, long-term planning for growth, and a strong partnership between schools and families. I want to ensure that we are building schools strategically, selecting appropriate locations, and planning transportation routes effectively as our county grows.

I also want to support policies that maintain high academic standards while respecting parental involvement and community values. Our schools should be places where students are safe, challenged academically, and prepared for future success.

I chose to run as a Republican because... I chose to run as a Republican because my values align with the principles of fiscal responsibility, local control, accountability, and faith-centered leadership.



(Clarissa Smith continued...)

I believe government works best when it is efficient, transparent, and responsive to the people it serves.

As someone who is physically conservative in my political beliefs, I support practical, common-sense solutions that protect taxpayers while ensuring our children receive a quality education. I believe strong families, strong communities, and responsible stewardship are foundational to a successful school system.



Zone 7

Candidate Name: Frances Rosales (Incumbent)

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Background: My name is Frances Rosales. I have been married for over a decade, and my husband and I are raising four children. Our children attended Blackman schools and graduated from High School, and our youngest attends Poplar Hill Elementary. As both a longtime parent in Rutherford County Schools and the mother of a current elementary student, I understand firsthand the opportunities and challenges facing our district. Of all my roles, being a mother is the most important.

I have called Tennessee home since 1985, when I moved from Puerto Rico as a child. After first living in Miami, my family settled in Tennessee, where I built my education, career, and family life. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and bring more than 20 years of experience in management, business development, and marketing—including work with Fortune 500 companies—to my service on the school board.

Faith and service are central to our family. We attend Bethel Murfreesboro, where we serve in children's ministry and hospitality, and I serve as a Spanish translator. We also founded BreakThru Tennessee, a nonprofit serving local families for over 15 years. Murfreesboro is our home, and we are committed to investing in this community for generations to come.

Why am I running and what qualifies me? The philosophy that drove me to run initially remains unchanged. I believe every child, regardless of socioeconomic background, deserves a quality education, as it forms the foundation for future success. My motto continues to be: Together, we can give our children the future they deserve. I am running for re-election as both a parent and an educator. For the past three years, I have served as a substitute teacher in the city schools, while also being the parent of a child currently in elementary school.

My combined experience in the classroom and as a public-school parent provides me with practical, real-world perspective and a strong commitment to ensuring students receive a high-quality education. In addition, my background in business and management has strengthened my ability to develop thoughtful policies that support Rutherford County Schools, analyze fiscal impact, and focus on long-term sustainability.

That experience has also equipped me to effectively collaborate with fellow board members and district staff, build consensus, and move policies forward. Beyond the local level, I have worked to



(Frances Rosales continued...)

advocate for legislative solutions, lobby for needed laws, and help secure the passage of bills that benefit our schools and protect students. By combining classroom insight, parental perspective, and business leadership, I bring a balanced and results-driven approach to serving our community.

What do I see as the biggest challenges? Rapid growth remains one of our district's biggest challenges. When I first ran for office, overcrowding led to rezoning every two years, creating instability for families—including my own neighborhood.

After being elected, I worked toward long-term solutions. Through collaboration and strategic planning, we secured land and built two new schools to address capacity needs.

However, Rutherford County continues to grow by roughly 1,000 students each year—nearly the equivalent of adding a new school annually. Rising construction costs and inflation make simply raising property taxes unsustainable.

This is a complex issue that requires coordination among multiple government entities. We must pursue innovative funding strategies and thoughtful legislative solutions to manage growth responsibly, provide stability for families, and ensure strong schools for future generations.

What goals would I like to accomplish? During my service, I have delivered results and remain committed to building on that progress. My accomplishments include:

- Strengthened school safety by securing funding for SRO training, implementing key safety policies, firmly advocated for safety training conducted by our School Resource Officers at no cost to taxpayers.
- Championed statewide legislation requiring active shooter training for substitute teachers, which was signed into law by Governor Bill Lee.
- Supported educators by voting for pay raises and a competitive salary structure to help keep teacher shortages low.
- Addressed overcrowding by securing land, supporting new school construction, and establishing policies to protect taxpayer dollars during site selection.
- Expanded opportunities for students through the creation of the Rutherford County Schools Foundation and championing financial literacy education beginning in elementary school.
- Advanced parental rights policies by reviewing 150 library books for age appropriateness, removing materials deemed inappropriate, and requiring parental consent for select titles.



(Frances Rosales continued...)

- Secured passage of a Fourth of July instructional observance resolution in our schools and am currently working to make it statewide.
- Supported leadership stability through the Director's contract extension.
- Supported opening school board meetings with prayer.

If re-elected, I will continue prioritizing safety, fiscal responsibility, strong academics, and long-term planning. I will also focus on expanding CTE partnerships with Motlow and TCAT, pursuing a dedicated CTE center, investing in renovations for older schools, providing zoning stability for families in our growing communities through the construction of a new high school in the Smyrna and Blackman areas, strengthening financial literacy, and ensuring parents, educators, and students have a strong voice in decision-making.

I chose to run as a Republican because... I chose to run as a Republican because I have consistently voted Republican since I was eighteen years old, and my voting record reflects that commitment. The Republican Party most closely aligns with my core values, which are rooted in my faith and shaped by biblical principles.

I believe in limited government, fiscal responsibility, and the idea that higher taxes are not always the solution to every challenge. I believe strong families and strong communities — not expanded government — are the foundation of a healthy society. The principle seen in the early church in the Book of Acts, where people voluntarily supported and helped one another, reflects my belief that communities are most effective when individuals step up to serve and support each other. This belief is one of the reasons my family and I started a nonprofit organization.

My decision to run as a Republican is rooted in long-held convictions about personal responsibility, local control, and empowering families and communities.



Zone 7

Candidate Name: Julie Wishing

Background: My name is Julie Wishing. My husband, Anselm "Ans" Wishing -a former Navy pilot- and I have been married for 40 years. We have proudly called Murfreesboro home since 1993. We raised our two children in Rutherford County Schools and both graduated from Siegel High School. For more than 30 years, I have been actively involved in our community as a volunteer tennis coach at Siegel High School (several state championships with Coach Jeff Martin), founder and president of the Murfreesboro Tennis Association, Girl Scout leader, Realtor, and community organizer.



My love for this community helped fuel me to build partnerships with the Murfreesboro city, Rutherford county, and MTSU officials to establish the Adams Tennis Complex at Old Fort Park and I currently serve as an area league coordinator for the U.S. Tennis Association.

Our family has been deeply involved in our church community for 30+ years, from World Outreach Church to The Olive Tree Church. My Christian faith shapes my commitment to service, integrity, and putting others before self.

Why am I running and what qualifies me? Rutherford County needs principled, conservative leadership that keeps students first and politics second. As a mother of public school graduates, a longtime community leader, and Christian I believe leadership is about responsibility, accountability, and service.

I have experience building partnerships, leading organizations, managing budgets, and working with local government and families. I understand how board decisions impact classrooms, teachers, and parents. I will bring steady judgment, thoughtful questions, and a practical, solutions-focused approach to the board.

What do I see as the biggest challenges? Rutherford County continues to grow rapidly, and we must expand capacity without lowering standards. Student safety must remain non-negotiable. We must carefully balance taxpayer-funded education with maintaining a strong, effective public school system. And we must strengthen trust between families and the school system through transparency, communication, and consistency.

These challenges require disciplined leadership and a clear focus on what matters most — our students.



(Julie Wishing continued...)

What goals would I like to accomplish? If elected, I will prioritize safe, orderly learning environments where teachers can teach and students can succeed. I will push for responsible budgeting that protects core academic priorities while respecting taxpayers. I will work to improve communication so parents feel informed, respected, and heard. I support measurable strategies that raise academic performance and prepare students for college, careers, and responsible citizenship.

I will also advocate for professional, respectful board leadership rooted in integrity and common sense.

I chose to run as a Republican because... I am running as a Republican because my Christian faith and conservative values align with the principles of accountability, parental rights, fiscal discipline, and limited government. I believe parents are the primary influence in their children's lives and should have a strong voice in their education.

As a Republican candidate, I am committed to protecting families' involvement, maintaining high academic expectations, safeguarding students, and ensuring taxpayer dollars are managed wisely. I believe strong families + strong schools are the foundation of a strong Rutherford County. Phil 2:3

