

Knox County Schools
Public Comments Regarding Superintendent Search 2016-2017

| Date | Category | Submitted at/by | Comments |
|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------|---|
| 3/11/2017 | Community Member, Staff | E-mail | <p>I have been a KCS fine arts teacher for 8 years and recently became a tenured teacher. I want to continue working in fine arts education in KCS and enroll my future children in this school system. I believe this would be possible under Bob Thomas. Because he is a former KCS educator, and the husband of a former KCS fine arts teacher , I feel a sense of relief when I think of him directing KCS. Under previous leadership, Fine arts teachers in KCS have been "riffed" for no reason, lost their class time and plan time during scheduling or testing, put on carts, overloaded with babysitting "duties" by out of control principals, and generally treated like less then for the past several years in Knoxville. This rejection of the arts as a key part of wholistic education is one of the reasons KCS struggles to stay ahead of surrounding counties/private schools, and why we are not the "best in the south". Please listen to teacher s, students, and parents needs, and select Bob Thomas as superintendent. I also think the contract term should be shorten, in order to avoid historical problems.</p> |
| 3/8/2017 | Fomer Staff | E-mail | <p>Dear KCS Board of Education, It's a "warm feeling" to know that even though I'm no longer an employee in the school system, I still have an avenue to reach out and voice my opinions and views on matters near and dear to my heart and know that I'll be heard by my colleagues on the board. I'm sure you've received many recommendations over the last few weeks. And furthermore, from the news media, I watched faithfully to see that your time has been monopolized with a thorough search for our next leader to move our district forward. Kudos to the vetting process and the search committee's time and diligence in rendering to the entire board two outstanding candidates, which one will be our next superintendent. Of course, it goes unsaid, but if we can't keep Buzz, we must choose the next best candidate. :) As principal of Mooreland Heights, nine years ago, I wholeheartedly supported Bob Thomas as our next superintendent. I couldn't imagine that it be anyone else. However, the board thought otherwise and elected Jim McIntyre by a tie-breaking vote as the board-chair voted for Dr. McIntyre. I thought the world had stopped, but only for a short while. Dr. McIntyre brought in his own gifts and talents and moved our school system into a new direction. However, over the last eight years, the landscape has changed, and furthermore, it's time for a change in the direction of our school system. I wholeheartedly believe that, once again, Bob Thomas is the person to be led by our school board to direct our school system in a new and challenging era that many districts are facing with the shifts and changes that are occurring in public education both at the state and national level. Superintendent Lynch has done a great job and his record in Hamblen County shows his successes. My opinion is that he needs to stay there and continue what he is doing. KCS need to support Bob Thomas and allow him with his years of relationships and knowledge move our school system that he knows so well in a collaborative effort with the board in a positive direction that can occur immediately. To my colleagues in education- my prayers are over your decisions in the next few days. Blessings.</p> |

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| 3/6/2017 | Community Member | E-mail | While serving as Dean of Workforce Development at Walters State Community College in Morristown, I had several opportunities to work with Dr. Dale Lynch. His ability to work with a wide range of people from DACA students to industry and government leaders was truly impressive. He was the major player in bringing together industry leaders and educators to put together a dynamite LEAP grant with three other directors of schools. The grant received almost \$1,000,00 from the state, and was extended to three additional counties this fall. It has been mentioned numerous times in a variety of publications including the News Sentinel. My family has been in Knoxville since the late 1800's and three generations of my family attended Sequoyah Elementary and graduated from Knox County high schools. Although I worked at Walters State for 16 years, my husband and continued to live in the home on Stillwood Drive that my grandparents built in 1930. My oldest granddaughter will start kindergarten at Rocky Hill this fall. There is no one that I would rather have as the Director of Schools when she starts school than Dr. Dale Lynch. |
| 2/10/2017 | Student | E-mail | dale p. lynch would be good but in my opinion jim macentyire was good too. |
| 2/10/2017 | Student | E-mail | I forgot to tell you that I wont be able to make it to this meting. dale p. lynch. |
| 2/8/2017 | Community Member | E-mail | Qualifications should include someone from this locality, (East Tennessee). Should possess very positive skills in Human Resources, (not a number cruncher.) Should be an advocator for the needs of students as well as teachers and principals. Plain and simple: a nice, intelligent, and humble person. Thank you. |
| 2/7/2017 | Former Staff | E-mail | Hopefully, you recall I voiced a concern of selecting an external candidate for the next Director of Schools. After spending 40 years with Knox County Schools, I can without a doubt state that the size and internal workings of the system requires a knowledge of Knox County Schools structure and past struggles. Our last Director never understood the needs of the schools and really was not friend of teachers. Selecting an outside candidate would be an error. I am asking you to support Bob Thomas as the next Director of Knox County Schools. He has been a teacher, Principal and Assistant Superintendent in Knox County Schools. He is a friend of the teachers and students. He understands the finances required to help Knox County Schools serve the communities. I have known Bob Thomas for over 20 years. I have always respected his decisions and he has always been extremely fair in his decision making. I found him honest in his conversations and very thorough with follow through. I have personally been in meetings with Bob and watched his interaction with others. He asked the questions that go to the depths of the issues being discussed. Bob uses all resources to better Knox County Schools. He has always done this from behind the scenes to this point. Now is the time to select a leader with experience. |
| 2/1/2017 | Staff | E-mail | As a former teacher of Morristown Hamblen East, I do not think Dale Lynch is a good candidate for Knox County Schools. Quite simply, I do not believe he has the teachers and students in the best interest of heart. I have never been immediately personally affected by some of his decisions but I have witnessed their effects. I also do not believe that he puts emphasis on progress and growth which Knox County has always been a steward of. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak on behalf of ourselves, our profession, and our students. |

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| 2/1/2017 | Community Member | E-mail | After reading the resumes of the final five, I realize that a difficult task is ahead for each of you. I would like to offer some food for thought after working for three different superintendents as a teacher and six different superintendents as a principal in the former Knoxville City Schools and Knox County Schools. There are many qualities required to be an effective superintendent , but as a former teacher and principal I wanted a superintendent that was available, trustworthy, honest, fair, respectful, supportive, a good listener and did what was in the best interest of the student. There is no question in my mind that Bob Thomas has those qualities as well as many other qualities and the experience to lead our school system forward. Your thoughtful consideration is greatly appreciated. |
| 1/24/2017 | Community Member | E-mail | The assignment you have begun in selecting the next Superintendent of Knox County Schools is of monumental importance to so many-students, teachers, administrators, parents, and the community at large. As One of two Directors of the Distinguished Professionals Education Institute, a program that recruits and supervises professionals who teach a limited number of classes in high need areas in Knox County Schools, I worked closely with Assistent Superintendent, Bob Thomas, for six years. I know first hand the quality of excellent leadership which sets a vision, leads the workers in collaborative efforts to enhance classroom instruction, and conscientiously cares for each area from recruitment of highly qualified individuals to grant compliance. He has a problem solving mind which he uses to support teachers in the classroom and the courage to address difficult situations including the challenging job of teacher termination. He is easily accessible and has an admirable capacity to listen and work with individuals to find satisfactory solutions to concerns. He operates with the highest level of professionalism and personal charm. I know my experience with Mr. Thomas is less than many others, but having worked in the State Department of Education and in three individual systems in Tennessee, I recognize the qualities exhibited by strong leaders. Mr. Thomas has such qualities along with an extensive knowledge of the Knox County Schools. Warm regards and deep appreciation for the importance of your work. |
| 1/19/2017 | Parent/Staff | E-mail | My preference is that we find a candidate that is an internal candidate, or at the very least, from East Tennessee. We need someone who is fiscally responsible, but is a people person at heart, one who understands the unique challenges our district faces. We also need a person willing to stand up for us as a district when the state or federal government implements anything that is not necessary or good for our children, and someone who can't be bought by corporate lobbyists, especially in regards to the over-testing of our children. Good luck in your search. Lots of us in Knox County will be sending positive thoughts and prayers for the search committee and the candidates in their difficult endeavor. |
| 1/19/2017 | Student | E-mail | homework on technology |
| 1/17/2017 | Parent | E-mail | I would like to voice my opinion on two of the candidates. Mr. Bob Thomas and Mr. Jon Rysewyk both served in Mr. McIntyre's administration. I think its best that those two not be considered for the position. The majority of the folks in Knox County were not happy with Mr. McIntyre. I think that Mr. Thomas or Mr. Rysewyk would just be a continuation of the policies and practices that Mr. McIntyre had in place. I don't think we can take that risk. |

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| 1/17/2017 | Community Member | E-mail | Qualifications Characteristics Patience Experience Cool and calm demeanor Knowledge of school system Sense of humor Leadership ability Ability to handle tough situations Former Teacher Caring attitude toward employees Former Administrator (Principal) Respected by colleagues I had the privilege of working with and for your candidate Bob Thomas for forty plus years in the former Knoxville City Schools and Knox County Schools as a Teacher, Coach and Principal. Bob Thomas is a good man and the right man to lead Knox County Schools. Your consideration on his behalf will be greatly appreciated. |
| 1/2/2017 | Staff | E-mail | I believe we all know what happens when a system hires an applicant who is not really an educator. Being a controller for a school system is not having experience as a teacher. We need someone who will really LISTEN to parents, students and educators about what is really possible and what the federal government thinks we should be doing. Instead of caving in to the pressures of the "charts," this individual should have a vision that will help all involved not be afraid of whatever stats the state keeps but lifting morale to such a high level that no one will become mired in something so basic as a growth stat. This candidate needs to have a big heart, a sense of fair play, an upright moral character and a genuine concern for the MAIN PLAYERS here, which are the students and the teachers. Find someone with a HEART. |
| 12/27/2016 | Parent | E-mail | First, thank you for taking the time to read responses posted. I can only imagine the hard work that is going into finding someone capable to captain Knox County Schools. Knox County Schools have come a long way in the past few years. I am grateful that my children are able to receive a quality education with opportunities not found elsewhere. I hope that as the committee reviews resumes and conducts interviews their main objective will be someone who has a desire to see all children succeed and provide the best education possible. The superintendent is responsible for thousands of children, staff, and other workers. Someone with experience wisely overseeing that number of people and overseeing a multi-million dollar budget is imperative to the success of Knox County Schools. A quality candidate will also have experience inside the classroom, be an effective communicator and motivator. A clear understanding of assessments is also needed in order to make sure students and teachers are on the same page with the same goals in mind. I realize that many of the benchmarks are state driven and that Knox County Schools is accountable to them. I would like to see someone who allows "outside the box" methods to be used. Each child is different just as each teacher is different. There are so many different modalities for teaching today. It would be beneficial and I believe healthy for our children to allow teachers to play to their strengths when it comes to educating students. As the search continues I hope the committee will keep the best of the children, their future and our communities future in mind. Children being educated in the Knox County School system today are our future mayors, teachers, city councilmen and women, engineers and the like. They need all of us to invest in them and the future of our community. |
| 12/22/2016 | Student | E-mail | I belive in the order of more experiments for the for all the grades to do at home. More time to do ELA and more tine for encore and other extra places in the school. |
| 12/22/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | I think it is vital for the next superintendent to have at least 5 years of teaching experience in order to connect with current teachers. |

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| 12/18/2016 | Staff | E-mail | I would like to have a superintendent who is willing to consider funding for an additional staff member to support the increasing ELL teacher department. The ELL teachers need additional staff in the form of a curriculum writer or an additional coach so that our current coach would not be spread so thin among our teachers who benefit greatly from her support, work and expertise when we have access to it. I believe this additional support would translate into better, more effective teaching, which would positively affect the learning outcomes of our county's ELL students. |
| 12/14/2016 | Student | E-mail | My superintendent has to provide more input from the students than the board. School should start at 10:30 It is scientifically proven that students how go to school at a later time improve test scores and increase fondness towards school. Plus the test scores themselves will help out the deal with Pearson and other special interests. If that doesn't happen my lawyer will sue its affiliates |
| 10/31/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | - Significant teaching experience strongly preferred - Values teachers as the professionals they are and treats them with respect - Involves teachers in decision-making to ensure ideas will work in the classroom - Excellent verbal and written communication skills; charismatic speaker - Understands the need for some teacher autonomy in order to get job satisfaction and great performance - Values transparency - Is able to lead and inspire - Understands how to meet federal and state educational requirements and leverage grant money - Is aware of continuing inequities between schools and strives to correct it - Values feedback from parents and community members |
| 10/23/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | I wanted to add my opinion about the school board search for a new Superintendent. I am hearing a lot about the importance of our finding someone familiar with our district and someone who knows how we work. While I see the merits in familiarity, I would encourage you to search for the best candidate--from anywhere. Familiarity is comfortable and can be helpful, but a person from our area can also bring his/her pre-conceived notions about what needs to be done and why. Also, I'd rather you focused on the quality of the candidate rather than on their proximity to Knox County. Knox County has good test scores in Tennessee, but I'm not certain how well in fact Knox County is doing when ranked with peers nationwide. Let's get the best person we can, someone with administrative experience, preferably also with teaching experience, the ability to communicate instead of alienate, and even to inspire. The kids deserve it. |
| 10/5/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | I feel that the next superentendent should have experience in the classroom. He/She should have several years of experience so that there is a true understanding of what takes place in a classroom. Tests should not be the factor when evaluating teachers. There is too much emphasis on Common Core and testing. The next superintendent needs to listen to the teachers and really care about them and the students. Every student has a different learning style and that is more important than tests scores. Not every student wants to go to college. Encourage those students to find a vocation that will bring them success. |
| 10/4/2016 | Parent | E-mail | Prior teaching experience,,,very important Be a parent Prefer "conservative' thinking Prior 'superintendent experience, a plus |

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| 9/28/2016 | Parent | E-mail | As teachers, our primary focus needs to be student success. However, teachers often do not have the tools they need to be successful, this can distract them from their main objective of success for all students. If teachers feel like someone is advocating for them and representing their interests, then teachers can focus on students' best interest. I would like a superintendent who listens to classroom teachers needs, not what other people decide teachers need. Some classrooms still do not have good equipment for presenting instruction. Many curriculums are in need of updating. Some programs do not have curriculums. I would also like a superintendent who will increase professional learning opportunities by providing better funding for teachers to attend professional conferences and pursue special certifications or additional degrees. The best teachers are committed to pursuing continuing education in their fields. We need to invest in our student s by investing in their teachers. |
| 9/27/2016 | Student | E-mail | I am a junior at Gibbs High School, and I would like a Superintendent who believes in funding the arts and sciences in our schools, focuses on college readiness, and who cares less about test scores and more about the students learning and well being. |
| 9/27/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I would like to see our new Superintendent connected in some way to our city and county. Someone that lives here, has personal ties, and would like to see all Knox County School's in the top 10 across the state. Letting teacher's teach instead of teaching to a test, and allowing teacher's use their own creativity. As you all know not every child learns the same. Thanks for all you do..... |
| 9/26/2016 | Student | E-mail | Donald trump please |
| 9/26/2016 | Staff | E-mail | The Superintendent needs to broaden his contacts, and not in a synthetic drop-by manner. His direct reports were all excellent teachers at one time. And all left the classroom. Some have been on staff 10 years or more, which means they never taught an EOC course, or were evaluated by our present system, or lived with the biases of TVAAS. Not their fault. But don't just listen to them. Principals need to be held accountable for teacher turnover. If the Superintendent does this, then he\she might start hearing some things for the first time. Teachers are leaving the profession; some of them are good at this profession. This is a problem. Superintendent needs to reconcile 90% graduation rate with the numbers county staff presents at in-service meetings on student readiness for 4-year undergraduate success. They are radically different. |
| 9/23/2016 | Parent | E-mail | - Please look for a superintendent who has had at least 5 years experience in the classroom. They cannot lead properly if they do not know what it is like to be on the front lines everyday as a teacher. - Please hire one that makes the teachers feel supported. Our last superintendent made the teachers feel like he was out to get them and I do not like them feeling this way. It interferes with their ability to properly teacher our children. - Please hire a superintendent who cares just as much about pushing our top/gifted students for higher achievement as they care about getting the slow ones up to snuff. I feel like our best and brightest are ignored by the school system because everyone if focused on getting the slow kids caught up. We are doing a serious disservice to our brightest kids by not pushing them to be the best they can be. - Please hire someone from the South and understands how snow works here |
| 9/22/2016 | Community Member Parent | E-mail | We would love to have somebody that is not just an educator, but someone who knows how to run a large organization. This person does not have to be from Knox county. It may be better to have someone who is NOT from Knox county. I would love it if we had someone who has done the job, successfully, somewhere else. |
| 9/22/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I would like to see a superintendent who would make it a focus for the special needs children and those students who have an IEP for other issues. The accountability for following IEPs is zero! He or she needs to understand what it takes to have a strong compliant program. |

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| 9/22/2016 | Community Member Parent Other Staff | E-mail | Some have stated we needed a superintendent from outside Knox County.....WRONG ! Hiring from far distant places would be like the process of hiring a Baptist preacher. They do great at first.....they learn the power structure of the church/school system.....They become a puppet of those who control the money. Politics gets so thick it could be sliced with a knife. Excluding current school employees, would be unfair employment practice. Needed.....focus on students ...assist all students... in being successful. thus raising graduation rate and test scores. Allow teachers to use their own talent to teach the state mandated objectives. The average students (70-80 %) get no attention from counselors or grade level principals unless they are successful athletes, or other attention getting successes. Many need encouragement and attention they do not get. We don't need to worry about what goes on in Texas or North Carolina. We need to focus on our students and their needs. Knoxville once had one of the best school systems in the south. It was called the Knoxville City Schools. It was put down the drain by the Knox County Schools administration that was in place at the time. WORK WITH ALL OUR STUDENTS TO ASSURE THEIR SUCCESS.....AND THEY WILL SUCCEED. Thanks, JMH |
| 9/21/2016 | | E-mail | To whom it may concern, I have been unable to make it to the community meetings regarding the public's input to the Knox County School Boards regarding the search, and eventual hire of a new Superintendent of Knox County Schools. I have composed a list of things below that I believe the school board should consider when going through the process to find a new Superintendent for schools. 1. Please at all cost and measure... Do not use a search firm like that in years past to find a 'potential' candidate. I believe the counties money could be better used such as supporting more schools, their teachers, and most importantly the children in those schools. In my humble opinion the search firm(s) have done a terrible job of making sure the 'voice(s)' have been heard from all those that spend so much time with the children that will be the future of this great state, and country. 2. The candidate must have classroom experience. Moreover, relevant to the K-12 environment, as well as more recent classroom experience within the K-12 environment. In my humble opinion the candidate should not be too far removed from the class room environment because there are many changes in the education business. 3. The candidate must be Trustworthy and Honest! 4. The candidate must have a working knowledge of the way Knox County runs its K-12 education program. Moreover, an outside candidate should not even come into play unless that candidate has the most relevant, and critical knowledge of the current operations by Knox County Schools. 5. The candidate must understand that looking at other areas of schools across the country, and how they have or currently succeeded in any capacity at making sure the children are meeting the 'standard(s)'. I am not suggesting that Knox County should look at making sure that test are more simple or complex for students, but what I would say is that the test, upon test, upon test that Knox County administers are on par with what Knox County is teaching to its students. For example, during the TN Ready debacle, many students and parents alike complained, because they spent so much time and effort teaching specific material(s) and skills only to find out from the students that pieces, and large portions of the TN Ready were not on the test itself or it was way different/harder/unclear/had timing issues/etc. 6.The candidate must have an understanding of business.. As Buzz Thomas spoke yesterday to Hallerin Hilton Hill on the radio, " Knox County has a little over 8,000 employees." So, the needs of the schools, the teachers, the children, and the administrators must come first before the needs of those in the downtown office or what some lawmaker who thinks they know better in regards to the education of children within the 7. The candidate must be able to let the teachers teach. I simply mean that teachers are having to do everything else that takes away from the learning environment. 8. TEST... The candidate must have, understand, etc that a test should not determine the outcome of whether the teacher continues their employment. Moreover, a test can only measure so much of a child's ability. I believe that early intervention pertaining to skills will better help students in the long run. Some students that have left the K-12 environment, and made the choice to attend college are struggling with the necessary skills of grammar, punctuation, syntax, simple math, comprehension, etc. If the county with the great supervision, and guidance from the next Superintendent makes an effort to make sure these early skills are met before a test is thrown to a child or children, then the next generation will have better leaders in and out of the community they live and eventually serve. 9. The candidate must not be 'a political' in terms of making sure what he/she has heard from its schools/teachers/parents/administrators is clearly heard by the Knox County School Board in a timely manner. 10. The candidate should, and must go to schools and teach beside current teachers so that candidate can continue to understand the pressures that are placed upon the educators of our children across the K-12 environment in Knox County. All The Best, |

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| 9/21/2016 | | E-mail | <p>I have produced a carefully written letter in pdf I am sending to the Knox County Board of Education regarding the superintendent search. I was not able to be at the meeting in Bearden last night where I had planned to speak very briefly from a prepared statement (not using anywhere near the 5 minute allotment). Yet, when I began writing, I had a little more to say, as it turns out. This letter is focused on one concern only and heavily proofread and redacted, so it should be an easy and "pleasant" read, only 1.5 pages. Thank you for your time and kind attention to my concern. A hardcopy of this letter is on its way to the Board today</p> <p>Dear Knox County Board of Education members, Unfortunately, I was not able to be at the forum last night (Tuesday) in Bearden convened to address the topic of present concern. I had planned to prepare a very brief statement, as a concerned parent of a KCS student, of the one thing I would like to see in the new superintendent more than anything else. So, if I may, I will avail myself of this opportunity to "speak" on this important subject via letter. I hope that my thoughts will be delivered to the appropriate personnel as written, rather than merely aggregated with others deemed similar with an attached synopsis of all their contents. I humbly request this, not because I think my thoughts are special. I have taken a considerable amount of time to carefully write this, because I care and want to communicate clearly, and I believe that you will find the following agreeable (if read carefully). Thank you, and I wish you all the blessings of wisdom and divine providential guidance as you conduct your search and make your final selection. Transcending all other singular issues, in my humble opinion, is the imperative that the new superintendent be an individual who has the courage and the wisdom to fight to ensure that Knox County schools reflect the wishes of the parents whose children attend them, rather than the influence and meddling of top-down federal overreach. I'm not suggesting that the Knox County Schools, under the leadership of the new superintendent, defy any federal mandates, but that, where discretion allows, and where courage, conviction, foresight, and insight can make the difference where there is doubt, that the superintendent be a person of such qualities as to strive to put as much control as possible over the local schools into the hands of the parents whose children attend them. That should be his aim, in my view. Everything else can then be worked out together among the communities, without too much involvement from Washington D.C. politicians and agency heads far removed from our district, whose agendas and views often do not align with the best interest of our students and their parents. (This is especially true when one looks beyond our congressional representatives and considers the landscape of federal education bureaucracy headed by unelected personnel who issue directives and guidance to local schools, irrespective of state and local governments, boards, administrators, and parents.) In my view, it is not enough to select someone based on other desired qualities and then instruct and push that individual along these lines suggested here. This concern should be primary, not secondary. (If a person has all of the bells and whistles in terms of education and experience, but worships at the altar of federal education oversight, then we will have failed in selecting the right candidate, in my view.) He must already be a proven "fighter" (not a troublemaker by any means) who will fight for local control of schools, choosing his battles wisely, but not shrinking away from duty for personal reasons of career or lack of courage. It is my firm believe that schools should reflect the communities in which they are located, not the determined agenda of nanny-state bureaucrats who think they are smarter than you (the Board), the superintendent, the parents, and the esteemed members of the community, bureaucrats that wish to engage in "engineering" of local schools across the nation. Again, once we select such an individual, as I suggest here, to be our new superintendent, all other matters can then be addressed among the community, especially by parents, with the local school administrators, the Board, and the new superintendent involved, without unnecessary meddling from Washington. For that matter, the State of Tennessee should have say before Washington D.C. I say this in view of the looming national election, regardless of whomever is elected. As you can tell, I firmly believe in local control of schools. I truly believe that local communities know best how to educate their own children, and I believe that parents, above all, should have the greatest say in how their children are brought up academically. I do not believe that elitists in Washington D.C. know better than we do how to raise our children and provide for their educational development. When the education is in the hands of local communities, then local school administrators can be more attuned to their concerns and more responsive, and accountability is much easier to attain. No one will be more concerned about the education of children than their parents and the local communities in which they are raised, and no one will have their best interest at stake any more than local people. This may not always be true when one views the national situation community-by-community (but even there the respective state should have say before Washington), but I believe that it is true in Knox County. It will never be perfect, but it will be better than federal overreach. Thank you for your kind attention to these concerns of mine. Sincerely,</p> |
| 9/21/2016 | Community Member Parent | E-mail | <p>I'm sure you're hearing input from voices across every conceivable spectrum -- enough to make you feel schizophrenic. Yours is a great responsibility, one I don't envy. I'm sure that being a school board member is all too often a thankless job. Please know that my family and I do thank you and appreciate your hard work and dedication to our children and our county. As practicing Christians, you will be in our thoughts and prayers as you go about your duties and through the process of hiring a new superintendent. Again, thank you for all you do.</p> |

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| 9/21/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I would like to see the next superintendent have at a minimum 5 years of teaching experience, as well as 3-5 years minimum experience as an administrator. The teachers and students need to feel like they are more than a test score. Right now, that is not the case. I want less PR and more personality. We don't want the shiny, fluffy propaganda that has recently been fed to us. I want a superintendent who will stand with teachers and students and against those who are in it solely for the money. I would definitely like to have more opportunities to meet with and question potential candidates. If possible, I'd appreciate if these meetings could be scheduled sometime after 6:00 pm. A 5:30 PM meeting is hard to attend when I don't get off work until 5:00 and have to pick up my children from after school care by 6:00. Thank you, |
| 9/21/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I would like to see a Superintendent that has a wealth of classroom, school administration and potentially even some Central Office experience. My children are juniors this year, so this will not have a big impact on their education with Knox County. However, I would like to see block scheduling go away. I feel strongly that core subjects should be year round. I would like to see excessive testing addressed. I would like to see teachers in Knox County paid on the same level as surrounding counties. We lose a lot of great teachers to these counties. I would like to see school administrators not be shuffled around so frequently. I would like to see a greater level of professionalism amongst our board members and for them to put the kids of Knox county before their own personal agenda. |
| 9/21/2016 | Parent | E-mail | The ideal candidate for KCS Superintendent would have several years of classroom experience as a lead teacher, in addition to formal leadership training and experience as an administrator. This person would balance the requirements for state testing with the reality that students must obtain knowledge and skills beyond standardized requirements. The educational needs of all students from north, south, east, and west Knox County would be top priority for the new superintendent, who would understand and appreciate the unique successes and challenges of students, teachers, and administrators from each area. This person would be open to feedback and provide multiple opportunities for teachers, principals, and others to communicate directly with her/him and with central office staff. |

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| 9/21/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>I am adding my thoughts on the superintendent search. We need someone who will be open to listening to real problems that exist within our classrooms and the teacher evaluation process. Our teachers are being evaluated many times by junior teacher peers and/or principal interns with little classroom experience with little knowledge about the grade level they are evaluating. It many times has turned into a glorified popularity contest with little objectivity and much incompetent subjectivity. We need a true leader who will fight the beauracracy of big government education that continues to try to implement a one size fits all mentality and start treating our children with the individuality that obviously is missing. Continuing on the path of putting different square pegs in the same round hole is the definition of insanity. We have to focus more on educating these children, instead of attempting to raise them as good little government dependent m inds of mush. We need to stop spending money on parenting classes and more on quality textbooks and good curriculum instead of bowing to the idiocracy of teaching whatever the money is behind whether it works or not. Our schools need to be places where teachers will partner with parents and respect that parents are the final say in all instances because they are the legal guardian and get out of the business of treating parents like they are too stupid to know what is best for their children. We need a superintendent that will change the way current teachers are treated as far as transfers to other schools as many are never offered the opportunity to interview for open positions as they are filled before they are publicly posted. We need a much more common sense approach to leadership and stop the ungodly amount of data mining with testing which is of no real benefit other than creating an image on paper and not be in any way indicative of a child's true ability. We need a superintendent that will look our state Board of education in the eye and point out the mindless stupidity that comes out of that office which is never more evident than the new standards being put forward with Social Studies. They are not grade level appropriate in 70 to 80 per cent of the grades especially in elementary school. We need a superintendent who will listen to parent and staff concerns and not dismiss them as our former superintendent clearly did.</p> |

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| 9/21/2016 | Parent/Other | E-mail | <p>Hello- Thank you for allowing public input. I was an award-winning, level 4-5 math teacher for 21 years and spent 12 of those in the Knox County system, with the exception of two years off after the births of my children who are now Knox County students. So, while I'm a parent stakeholder, I'm writing this mostly from the perspective of having been a staff member and well-respected teacher for the system as recently as last year. As a staff member, I can tell you that what I'd like to see in a superintendent is someone who: * Has not only had classroom experience, but had exemplary or recognized classroom experience. That is, they received accolades, outstanding evaluation scores, and advanced student achievement scores. * Has worked in a school during recent years--specifically, has experienced the pressures of assessments, newer standards, large class sizes, staffing shortages, aging technology, and sub-par building spaces. I don't mean this to sound critical of current conditions--they are factual. Classes are sometimes 35 students each, Smartboards or projectors often don't work because they've aged or are expensive to replace, many rooms are windowless and/or too small to accommodate the number of desks needed. A superintendent who has lived in the current conditions can best problem-solve for or encourage staffers. * Lastly, I would like a superintendent to make people his/her top priority. Specifically, it is my opinion that the school leader should reform the hiring/transferring processes and therefore have knowledge of running a large organization. I also believe that while the superintendent should be able to entrust principal's with much responsibility, s/he should have more oversight into principal decisions as they relate to staffing and care of people. (And I'm not just speaking from a place of experiencing great disregard for myself and my position, but for the many situations I've witnessed over the years that didn't involve me at all.) Thank you again. Please take great care in hiring someone with a vast educational background who is a natural leader and respected individual.</p> |
| 9/21/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>We need someone local not brought in from out of state. Surely across Knox county we have some one highly qualified. The person being local has a lot of perks. I definitely feel they need to have had at least 5 years or more in class teacher experience as well as supervisor skills and financial experience. Wouldn't hurt if they became involved in the class rooms periodically to see what the teachers are up against especially with discipline issues in the inner city class rooms. Actually all over the county though we don't want to have consequences for these kids. Then those kids that aren't discipline problems are suffering from the teacher having to stop try to correct the situation so the teaching has come to a halt. We also need to bring back voting in our superintendent instead of being appointed politics are and play to much a role in our offices. Why are we considering paying an enormous price for a company to search for a superin tendent? Though we can't afford raises for our teachers somewhere our priorities are all screwed up for sure! As a student said as a 7th grader if we would get back to the basics of Math, reading and writing then we would see our scores go up because if you can read and write and add then you can do anything in other subject. Common sense goes along way out of the mouths of babes. Listen testing isn't the answer teach two days test 3 days it is a vicious cycle that needs to be broken! If they don't get it we are just to move on and keep bogging them down with material they don't understand and if you haven't figured it out our scores want come up. Took my time typing all this which I am sure this will not impact what will be decided in a search for the next superintendent.</p> |

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| 9/21/2016 | Staff | E-mail | <p>We need a superintendant who holds sacred our pledge to educate the WHOLE child. We need a candidate that will work with principals and teachers to ensure we have programs that nurture students emotional and creative abilities. This includes offering orchestra, band, chorus, art, health, tech and PE to students at every middle school and high school in Knox county. Special Ed and ELL students and other at risk students often find their "safe place" in the fine arts, becoming part of a team and performing publically. The performing arts gives them a sense of confidence and provide opportunities for public accomplishment. These essential programs would be protected by a superintendant who recognizes that thriving fine arts programs can make KCS an outstanding school system in the state of Tennessee.</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Hello, I am a parent of a child who began kindergarten this fall at Carter elem. First and foremost air can't say enough good things about the school and it's faculty thus far. Addressing the current issue of our future superintendent, I would ask that the candidate selected maintain consistent communication with parents, teachers and the supporting communities on real topics and issues that need to be addressed. I feel as though in the past you never hear from the superintendent until after the fact ,in response to a situation that has already taken place. Parents and faculty, I feel , desire for more pro-active communication. Answer emails and letters personally and not have someone else do it for you. I'm aware as much as I can be that a superintendents job entails a lengthy description and all needs cannot be met every single time, however taking steps to bridge these gaps with communication would be helpful. Try doing a monthly or at least quarterly newsletter for each school addressing goals, recent achievements, recognition of staff that go above and beyond, as well as immediate needs in community just to name a few. Thanks in advance for your time.</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Staff | E-mail | <p>I am the social worker for West High School and West Haven Elementary. I was previously employed at DCS so have a different view of what is needed in and for the schools. A superintendent that places focus on trauma & mental health training for teaching staff is very important for the youth in our schools. There is alot of trauma affecting our kids that is preventing their learning, and many teachers have no real understanding of how trauma, neglect, and mental health issues affect learning. Thank you!</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Staff | E-mail | <p>If you are not already working with Bill Johns, you need to be working with him as he is one of the most knowledgeable people about the future of education. He was years ahead of everyone on our school matters, the needs of students and teachers, and was literally on point and behind the removal of the previous superintendent. He is one of the most candid, educated, and political-savy / public relations people you will ever meet and he is absolute fearless. We need all the help we can get on getting a new superintendent. Knox County Teacher</p> |

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| 9/20/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | <p>Thank you for requesting comments on the superintendent search from the community. I have a 10 year old in 5th grade. Although we are zoned for some of the best schools in Knox County, my husband and I along with thousands of families in the county have opted out of the Knox County school system. We moved here 10 years ago from another college town, Ann Arbor, Michigan. In Michigan, we paid 1.3% of our home's value in property taxes, 4.25% in state income taxes and 6% in sales taxes on purchases. As you know, in Tennessee we pay no state income taxes, and the property taxes are a third of what we paid in Michigan. Each year we save several thousand dollars in property taxes and several thousand dollars in income taxes. We pay for private school through this tax difference with change in our pockets. Let me say that again, we pay for our daughter's private school education by paying less tax here in Knox County. It's a great deal for us- a deplorable deal for the students in Knox County public schools. I would like the county government and the school board to think about that. I have no idea how much state or federal dollars you lose per pupil, but this simple math seems like the Knox county school district is on the losing end of the equation. The Knox County schools already have many features attractive to my family. The schools are more diverse than private schools. The high schools offer more programs than private schools, for example, the IB program at West High School, is impressive. Imagine if the Knox County schools had better buildings and more, but smaller neighborhood schools in densely populated areas? Imagine no more trailers. Imagine if the teachers were inspired by the administration and not bogged down in red tape. Imagine a classroom where kids sped through the curriculum because behavioral problems were addressed at the root cause and managed fairly, outside of classroom time. Imagine teachers who wanted to come in early and stay after school to tutor those students that just need a little extra help to understand a concept. Imagine parents who send their kids to school on time every day, fully prepared to learn. Imagine parents who were inspired to support and work with the school system rather than battling the school system. Imagine kids happily and safely taking the bus to school and traffic around school zones becoming a thing of the past. (The bus situation is one of the most visible problems this school district faces, I hope it is high on this body's priority list, children were promised a free, safe ride to school and most of the students are opting out of taking the bus right now). Imagine if we inspired kids to rise to expectations rather than congratulate them for showing up. Imagine if the superintendent, (whether that person is chosen from the district or not), was willing to implement great ideas on education from across the country and around the world and inspire students, parents, teachers and school system employees to be better and work harder everyday. In my opinion for the new superintendent, you need an educator who inspires, who can set the tone for the district and who engenders trust within and between the school district, the community, and the county government. As one of the several thousand parents in this county who have opted out of the school system, we are watching and hopeful for a bright future for all the children in the county. Thank you for listening.</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent/Staff | E-mail | <p>I would like to see a superintendent who has NO POLITICAL CONNECTIONS, and no connections to large testing companies and outside sources such as the Broad Foundation. A superintendent should be able to discern that excellence is not connected to a test score, but comes from hard work, perseverance and excellent, well rounded student learning and communities. I would like to see a superintendent who uses resources, especially money, to work for the students and not creating new and unnecessary positions downtown, as well as ancillary positions in a school like coaches, who do not directly impact student learning. A superintendent should have most of his experience in the classroom and building level, not corporations.</p> |

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| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>I would like to see more emphasis on hiring highly qualified teachers (with at least a minor but preferably a degree in their subject) instead of hiring warm bodies with education degrees. I would like them to have the freedom to act like professionals in the classroom. I am extremely concerned about the elementary math program and the blatant, unabashed attention principals and teachers devote to teaching - and grading!!! - according to what they think will be on the state tests. The curriculum is not rigorous enough. It focuses on trivialities and time-wasting "strategies" and presents algorithms or formulae as an afterthought, one option among many. Fourth graders don't know their multiplication table. Fifth graders cannot find the volume of a cube. Second graders think it's ok to have 42 "ones." These are students at one of the best elementary schools in KCS. This math curriculum is a laughingstock among local physicists, chemists, engineers, professors, etc. It is the source of unnecessary frustration for students and parents. And all for nothing. Because make no mistake, this is not going to lead to higher scores and it is certainly not going to lead to well-qualified students who are prepared to learn even something as simple as algebra. Local STEM professionals know this is a misguided waste of time. Parents are fed up and beginning to talk about organizing. I want a superintendent that will not just nod, smile and say s/he understands our concerns before patting us on the head and telling us to go away. I want a superintendent who will listen to actual experts (not just so-called educational experts) and take their advice instead of following the political trend du jour.</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Dear Sirs and Madams, the search for a new superintendent is the chance to find a person that has a solid background in education research. Specifically, we need someone who prioritizes simple but effective ways of improving the learning experience for students at Knox county schools such as more and prolonged breaks for students. Such a superintendent can make such simple changes but will also provide teachers effectively with resources to help failing students.</p> |

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| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Dear members of the Knox County Schools Board of Education, I would like to share my hope that the new superintendent fully understands the implications of not protecting the rights of students with disabilities in our schools and possesses the skills to address the longstanding community concerns regarding systemic practices by the KCS Special Education Department. As a volunteer advocate for students with disabilities in this system for over a decade, I've been able to help resolve many educational disputes through meetings with the school. Resolution is always my goal. But when these disputes go beyond the scope of my volunteer efforts, the parents are forced to file suit against the school system. Before these cases move to litigation, there is always the opportunity for Dispute Resolution and settlement. However, the parents I serve tell me that settlement offers that should be made to the school board for consideration receive no response. These offers are either dying with this board, or, the parents fear, these offers are never being presented to the school board by the KCS legal department. I therefore come to you as a taxpayer with some knowledge of the growing mountain of cases involving KCS. Here is the problem I see: These cases grow exponentially if not settled. Cases like Rosasco and I.L. have contingent attorney fees, so the longer a case is litigated the more expensive the taxpayer liability. I am deeply troubled that the school board may not even be informed of this litigation. I hope I am wrong. My own records search reveals a growing number of cases: Rosasco, et al v. Knox County Board of Education, et al, Case Nos. 3:15-CV-6-TAV, 3:15-CV-98-TAV-CCS, (E.D. Tenn.) (Complaint filed March 2015) N.S., et al v. Knox County Board of Education, Case No. 3:16-cv-0610 (M.D. Tenn.) (Complaint filed Mar 16, 2016); Order denying motion to dismiss, http://www.leagle.com/decision/In%20FDCO%2020160715D91/N.S.%20EX%20REL.%20J.S.%20v.%20DEPARTMENT%20OF%20EDUCATION I.L., W. H. et al v. Knox County Board of Education, et al, Case No. 3:15-cv-00558 (E.D. Tenn.) (Complaint filed Dec. 17, 2015) I.L., et al v. Knox County Board of Education, et al, Case No. 3:15-cv-00558 (E.D. Tenn.) (Complaint filed Dec. 17, 2015) D.C. et al v. Knox County Board of Education, et al, Docket No. 07.03-139653J (Due Process Hearing Request filed Sept. 13, 2016) Considering Knox County has the highest number of isolations of students with disabilities in the state as well as the highest number of students with disabilities who are segregated, parents filing related cases will likely win. A review of cases that are not settled but allowed to proceed through trial shows parent attorney fees alone can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars - not to mention the cost of educational reimbursement (including the cost of private school) - and Knox County has no insurance. As a taxpayer, I'm worried that millions of dollars in unsettled claims are growing and growing unchecked. I hope you are aware. Again, I hope I am wrong. The superintendent needs to be fully aware of these cases because the Law Director's office is not neutral and detached. That is not to blame them -- they are opposite the parents and they take on an adversarial role by necessity. Certainly, though, the superintendent and school board must know of settlement offers or else these cases will keep mushrooming. On the topic of needed neutrality, I also wanted to share my perspective on the recent KCS Special Education "Parent Liaison / Ombudsman" position (posted August 1, 2016 - please see below). Much of this position requires and entails what I have been doing on a volunteer basis since 2005. I have attended dozens of IEP meetings and consulted with parents behind the scenes in many more. I routinely submit administrative complaints to the Tennessee Department of Education in a genuine effort to correct systemic violations and promote best practices in our school district (my two most recent submissions are included at the end of this email). I think this Special Education Parent Liaison / Ombudsman position is absolutely needed and could help in many situations where parents require support and guidance. However, the job requires two elements that together, in my opinion, negate any potential for benefit. Requiring the applicant to possess "knowledge of IDEA and other related laws pertaining to serving students with disabilities" (under Qualifications) and at the same time "Report to Executive Director of Student Support Services" (under Essential Function / Job Duties) leads us back to the same sort of problem I outlined above regarding unchecked practices. An ombudsman is put in place to serve as a neutral party or "citizen's representative." Reporting to the director of the special education department would likely do nothing more than add another "Special Education Facilitator" to the mix, so oftentimes at odds with parents in disputes regarding issues such as those in the cases listed previously. I would strongly urge the School Board and Superintendent to create a different path of authority for this new position. Again, I feel that introducing a Special Education Parent Liaison / Ombudsman position is a good step forward for our district, but one that should require the Head of Knox County Schools and/or the School Board as a whole to be the entity to which this position reports. Thank you for considering my input as you seek to hire a permanent superintendent. Respectfully yours,</p> |

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| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>To Whom It May Concern: Thank you for allowing Knox County parents and others to express their hopes for what we seek in a new Superintendent. As the mother of elementary-age and middle school-age children, it is my hope that you will bring someone in who has a strong desire to improve our public school system academically. Our schools are in need of more offerings for children who excel in academics so they can be challenged and reach their highest potential. Of course, students of all academic levels are of importance and it's critical all are placed, encouraged, and challenged appropriately. With the recent problems related to academic testing, I'm concerned current needs likely aren't being met or addressed because there isn't up-to-date data to place students, nor do we know areas where our schools and students are thriving and where they need attention. I am hopeful our new Superintendent will continue to address the transportation issues that have affected our community and schools, as well as hopeful that he/she remains diligent about protecting our children's moral standards - including those related to the dress code and what is/isn't appropriate to wear. Our youth are plagued by messages that lure them into thinking that wearing less is more, among other things. In addition, it is my sincere desire that the new Superintendent will seek to improve the safety, facilities, technology, and other offerings at our schools. Thank you for carefully searching and identifying the right candidate to fill this important role. Sincerely,</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Transcending all other singular issues, in my humble opinion, is the imperative that the new superintendent be an individual who has the courage and the wisdom to fight to ensure that Knox County schools reflect the wishes of the parents whose children attend them, rather than the influence and meddling of top-down federal overreach. I'm not suggesting that the Knox County Schools under the leadership of the new superintendent defy any federal mandates, but that, where discretion allows and where courage and conviction and foresight and insight can make the difference where there is doubt, that the superintendent be a person of such qualities as to strive to put as much control over the local schools into the hands of the parents whose children attend there as possible. That should be his aim, in my view. Everything else can then be worked out together among the communities, without too much involvement from Washington D.C. politicians and agency heads far removed from our district and whose agendas and views might not align with the best interest of our students and their parents. Please do not merely collect this suggestion with ones thought similar with a synopsis of their aggregate content, but please forward these concerns as written to the appropriate individuals. Thank you.</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | <p>Engaged in process and has skills to address issues with students with special needs Maybe a legal background</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | <p>Good handle on educational technology Help develop a central "hub" for technology programming/assignments Broad technology understanding and assess whether it is working</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | <p>Pushes back on state whenever necessary Educates parents rather than providing "fluff"</p> |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | <p>3 to 5 year living overseas Students need to understand finance - learn how to make a living</p> |

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| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | 5 years of actual classroom experience 5+ years of experience in administration Means what they say - no buzz words or edu-speak Someone who understands test scores Communicate clearly Stands with parents/teachers against state when necessary Encourages creativity in classroom |
| 9/20/2016 | Retired Teacher Grandparent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Allow teachers to teach how they need to for their students Students are more than just test scores |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Understands 1st amendment and will keep classrooms religion free, church is the place for that |
| 9/20/2016 | Student | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Encourage teaching ideas to be applied in real world, not just for testing More heart, less by book |
| 9/20/2016 | Future Parent (adopting) | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Aware of local industries Further develop technology and engineering programs East Tennessee with experience outside of East Tennessee Special education experience Emphasize talented and gifted programs Military experience or physical education experience |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Better communication with parents about student assignments/due dates/ scholastic processes (ex. Math) |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent/Teacher | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Understands that preparing kids for tests is not the same as preparing them for their potential Actually listens to what is being said at these forums - not just a "dog and pony show" Process needs to be completely transparent Lots of healing to do |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent/Teacher | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Makes student achievement a top priority Strategic and tactical leader Ensure every student has access to an effective classroom teacher - teacher is single most important factor to student success Understand role of assessments - need them but should be timely and efficient Seeks wisdom collaboratively |
| 9/20/2016 | Former Teacher | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Brave Use democratic principles and foundations |
| 9/20/2016 | KCEA President | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Stay focused on student achievement, but beyond achievement on tests Courage to examine schools hierarchies - lead teachers, supervisors, etc. - dig out best and brightest teachers |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Create inclusive environment (elected officials, business leaders, parents, teachers, etc.) Good financial steward Differentiated instruction - superintendent needs to do the same with parents Be aware of how tides will change with re-zoning after Hardin Valley middle school is finished Have a pulse on all of our communities With last superintendent search, candidates when to high schools and answered questions - would like to see that again |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Would like for superintendent to be "homegrown" or at least from the region and familiar with area and community |

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| 9/20/2016 | Parent/Teacher | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Ultimate decision must be made by Board, but community should have a voice Selection committee should include teachers, parents, and students Should build community coalitions All should have a voice at the table |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Listen to related arts educators, don't pull students from these classes for intervention |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | Hiring process should be transparent, but work to maintain confidentiality for applicants in their current jobs Put processes in play to involve parents (School Messenger for example) |
| 9/20/2016 | Parent Former Board Member | Public Meeting-Bearden MS | More community meetings for public input, not just private meetings with Chamber or Commission and special interest groups Community support and buy-in for who is chosen - need to give them input Allow community to ask questions of final candidates - possibly through Board Board should take their time and not rush to get it right Should use a search firm, but not pay too much |
| 9/19/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I believe the most important qualifications for a superintendent are: communications leadership interpersonal skills ability to inspire staff problem solving experience building relationships and teams experience as a superintendent |
| 9/19/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | I agree with comments already presented pertaining to minimum of five years teaching in a classroom. We have educational professionals with a doctorates already within the school system. The committee should actively seek the next superintendent from within our community. A person who understands Knox County students, the neighborhoods our students live in, and the parent's educational expectates within our county. A superintendent who understands and respects our professional teachers, as well as the important jobs our classified personnel perform. |
| 9/19/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | The superintendent should have teaching experience--the best way to understand the issues in the schools is to have worked alongside students and teachers. Knox County Schools has a documented history of racial disparities in discipline. We need a superintendent who has experience addressing these issues elsewhere, documenting that they will take action to address the disparities--by enacting restorative justice and other alternatives to arrests and suspensions at school. Communication is key. We need a superintendent that is open and accessible to the public and willing to collaboratively address problems with transparency. Willing to not just listen to employees, parents, and students in the schools but actually willing to implement their suggestions and ideas. |

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| 9/19/2016 | Staff | E-mail | <p>I am a music teacher at Farragut Primary School. I want to begin by saying that my experience at my school has been an extremely positive one - we have a caring administration, supportive parents, and a staff that is like a family. This has been something that I have cherished for the past several years. However, I have been noticing that, as a special areas teacher, we are being given last consideration in several different ways. This year our art teachers have been forced to combine into one room and team teach. This will be my third year team teaching. While there are some positives that can be gained from team teaching, I truly believe the negatives far outweigh any positives. Just to name a few - enormous class sizes, less space, less one-on-one attention, and more behavior issues. I personally know several KCS teachers who share my feelings about this. I also know several KCS teachers who are being forced out of their classrooms entirely and asked to teach on a cart. I even know several KCS teachers who teach in a space that is not meant to be a classroom. All of these trends seem to be getting more and more common within our district, and it is deeply concerning to me. As a special areas teacher myself, I know that we are more than just the classroom teachers' planning time. We provide for our students creative play, gross and fine motor movement, divergent thinking, and many other vital skills that strongly pertain to our classrooms. But, most importantly, we provide art, music, PE, and other subjects that are often the most enjoyable part of our students' days. Therefore, an ideal candidate for superintendent of the Knox County Schools would be one that values ALL teachers - classroom, special areas, ESL, special ed, and so on. An ideal candidate will value the importance of the arts in all of our schools. An ideal candidate will provide a plan to give all students and staff the facilities they deserve. My dream for our schools is for them to be known as great supporters of the arts - so much so that the best and brightest teachers in the country WANT to teach here.</p> |
| 9/19/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>I would like to see someone that will be interested in every child to achieve success in the class room. I would like someone that doesn't want to do what every other state is doing. Just because it works somewhere else, doesn't mean that it will work for Knox County. I would like for our children not to be tested every few days. I would like for the person to know and understand what it takes to run a class room. Put in better discipline policy for children that are problematic. Someone that can get common core out of our schools.</p> |
| 9/19/2016 | Staff | E-mail | <p>Someone with extensive experience working with special education students and staff, and is familiar with the policies with the understanding that not all students are college bound due to limited intellectual and cognitive abilities and forcing these students to follow the same cookie cutter curriculum plan as their general education peers is unfair and inappropriate who understands that advocating for the students is the main priority when going before the state, not making them-self look the best in the state who recognizes that teachers are completely overstretched in their roles right now. who has read "Hillbilly Elegy", by J.D. Vance, and understands the quote, "They want us to be shepherds to these kids. But no one wants to talk about the fact that many of them are raised by wolves."</p> |
| 9/19/2016 | | E-mail | <p>I will not be able to attend either meeting, but you can have my input now: I would urge the school board to hire someone from within the school system. Someone that knows the schools and families and our community, and has demonstrated a commitment to public service. There are a number of talented principals and administrators to consider. Why not try this approach, instead of bringing in another high paid "hot shot" with no ties to Knox County? Thank you,</p> |

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| 9/19/2016 | Parent | E-mail | Good evening I am a parent of a student at Karns elementary. And I would like to give concerns for the new superintendent. I feel that he or she should not make over 200,000 dollars and our educators I mean teachers and teacher assistants are not in my opinion not making enough. I feel that you need to pay your teachers and teacher assistants a competitive salary because other districts pay much more than Knox county. And also the superintendent should show more compassion than our last one did. I really do enjoy and recommend Karns elementary school. I also have one more concern why do some schools have free meals and others do not? If we reduce the superintendent salary maybe we can allow all schools to provide free meals. Thank you for your attention and time. |
| 9/19/2016 | Parent | E-mail | We have been involved with Knox County Schools going on 5 years now. We have a daughter in 4th grade and a son in 1st grade. One of my biggest frustrations with the public school program is the rapid turn over of staff at specific schools, most specifically with the principals but also with the teaching staff. It seems counterproductive to have this constant turn over. There can be little growth or cohesion in a group that is constantly changing or more specifically who's leaders are changing. I would like to see a superintendent who makes school stability of staff a priority, so that each school can grow and tackle its own problems more directly and consistently. |
| 9/19/2016 | Student | E-mail | One thing I would like is for the superintendent to be open with partnering more with the Education professors and programs at the University of Tennessee. When there are issues at a school or decisions to be made, it would be logical to ask those who are at the top of the educational field, researching, writing, and teaching future teachers. This is a resource that Knox Co. schools does not take advantage of. I also hope that we look for a superintendent who values cultural competency and promotes it. The teaching staff and curriculum is largely homogenous, and I think our diverse student body needs teachers and books who reflect and value their cultures as well, not just the dominant culture. Thank you for your consideration, |
| 9/17/2016 | Other | E-mail | CASTIEL |
| 9/16/2016 | Community Member Parent/Staff | E-mail | I would like the new superintendent to have several years of teaching -classroom experience. I would like for KCS to explore promoting from within the system. If unable to promote from within please choose a superintendent as local as possible. Someone who has a good understanding and respect for the Knox County community. As a parent I want a superintendent that is very personable, open and willing to listen to parents. Someone who attends school events, visits schools and is more hands on. I understand Knox County is very large, but the superintendent should be in the school buildings more than just the beginning of the year media short drop ins. I want a superintendent that supports vocational education, returning programs that were lost. Plus expanding current vocational programs. I want a superintendent that has the leadership to stand up for what is best for the students in Knox County, less testing, smaller classrooms ect. As a tax payer I want a superintendent who eliminates waste and fraud within the system. Knox County Schools has been plagued over the past several years with fraud and spending waste. I want someone to ensure the public every dollar going into the system makes it to the classroom. |
| 9/16/2016 | Grandparent | E-mail | I am a devoted grandparent of a Knox County student. Please select a superintendent who has walked the walk. If a person has taught in a classroom, he or she knows what needs to be done to teach students. Hopefully, there will be a number of capable applicants from which to choose. A progressive attitude will be a plus. Thank you. |

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| 9/16/2016 | Former Student Former Parent Former Staff | E-mail | Someone who allows principals to make site-based decisions and develop a community without being transferred every few years... We do not need a "corporate model" for our school system. Each community has its own personality, and each needs a unique type of leadership. Someone who knows teaching and learning... We need someone who has been a public school teacher and administrator. Someone who values relationships... We need someone who fosters relationship-building and leads people in a non-threatening way, holding them accountable, but from a supportive standpoint. Someone who values data, but understands that numbers are not the only thing. Data, in perspective, is valuable, but data only tells part of the story. |
| 9/16/2016 | Parent | E-mail | The next superintendent should have at least 5 years classroom experience...more would be better...along with extensive administrative experience. He/she should have a "students first" mindset, with the understanding that TEACHERS and parents are the biggest factors in a students success. He/she should have excellent communication skills and possess impeccable people skills. He/she should not only strive to implement programs to help the "challenged" student, but should also strive to promote more growth opportunities for the advanced students. |
| 9/16/2016 | Parent | E-mail | My gratitude for seeking input in this process. I would like the following to be used as qualifications for the next superintendent: Very important is to have a superintendent who has a minimum of five years of actual classroom experience. Evidence of being innovative in this or her thinking--someone who excels in thinking 'outside the box.' Someone who is able to understand and apply research on education objectively, and NOT cherry pick research to support current ways of thinking about education or administrative/fiscal needs. Evidence of seeking and applying teacher input. Ability to recognizes differences in students aptitudes and values vocational/career paths other than a college track. A firm attitude toward poorly performing teachers. Someone who shows an appreciation for cultural diversity. I have heard many say that they do not want a superintendent from outside of this region (Southeast) which I find to be rather discriminatory and provincial. It is more important to have someone who is capable and appreciates cultural diversity than to be prejudicial. |
| 9/16/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I think most parents are looking for transparency, cutting the bureaucracy and being real with us. I always felt like Dr. McIntyre was never fully integrated into the community. It would be nice to have someone local fill that position IF anyone is qualified. I personally don't agree with hiring an interim superintendent with religious degrees etc. Separation of church and state is important for our country (and it's the law). I can't imagine having Buzz Thomas in there long term because of this conflict of interest. We need someone who is more objective. Also, we do not need a businessman we need an educator. What we need 1. A superintendent who supports our teachers, parents and students. 2. Leadership that is transparent and fair 3. Someone who has been in the school either as a teacher or principal. 4. Someone who know the education field. 5. Someone who does not call off school for 5 snowflakes in the air. :-) Thanks! |

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| 9/15/2016 | Community Member | Public Meeting-Central HS | <p>Should be from outside Knox County Superintendent experience and 5+ years classroom experience Work well with others Strong supporter/committed to public education Guided by what is best for ALL students Great collaborator socused on community involvement and community partnerships Strong leader with a vision Care about the arts Focused on preparing students for the real world; less focus on data Strategic thinker and problem solver Possess excellent interpersonal skills Excellent communicator High moral character Highly competent professional Public should be informed of who is on initial screening committee, which should be made up of Board Members including the Student Representative</p> |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Central HS | <p>Hopes there is not already a list of candidates Not just focused on academic data, but nurture the arts 5-15 years of previous experience Willingness to surround self with exisiting/experienced teachers Willingness to incorporate STEAM concepts Have classroom and administrative experience Important to have students, parents, teachers and business owners on screening committee Wants public meetings to allow community to meet the short list of candidates</p> |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent/Former Staff | Public Meeting-Central HS | <p>Committed and focused on providing students with real world skills through CTE Brave - looks after and cares for students Wants parents, teachers, and students involved in every tier of hiring process Lots of people in KCS capable of the job Note comments on SPEAK Facebook page</p> |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | <p>Wants a hiring freeze on central office until new superintendent is appointed Superintendent should focus on students and know students well Believes currently only students at top and bottom are served, but none of the ones in between Wonderful people in KCS who are capable of being superintendent - they deserve a chance</p> |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | <p>Local candidate would be okay Should not be from Broad Academy Should be child-focused - not data-focused Should focus on students and not waste time on mission statements or visions Should have teaching/administrative experience Willing to work with KCEA</p> |

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| 9/15/2016 | Grandparent | Public Meeting-Central HS | Kids that do well are pushed and teachers pay lots of attention to them Students need to know the basics first for a good foundation Knox County could have a great school system if the superintendent has teaching and administrative experience Don't necessarily have to go outside of Knox County, but okay if we have to Just need to get the best person for the job |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent/KCEA President | Public Meeting-Central HS | Knox County needs to attract the best and brightest teachers and a superintendent who values them and stops them from leaving Wants a superintendent who is not just focused on scores, but who is a champion for the arts and CTE and college and career readiness Wants a superintendent who supports all |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent | Public Meeting-Central HS | Should have at least 5 years of teaching experience Should surround their self with great teachers KCS needs to support and bolster their STEM/STEAM programs |
| 9/15/2016 | Staff | Public Meeting-Central HS | Should have classroom and administrative experience and do a good job of retaining teachers Students need options other than attending the University of Tennessee KCS needs more CTE options |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | SPEAK's recommendations for superintendent can be found on their website Superintendent should be brave and clearly speaks for students |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | Superintendent should have a good understanding of special education system and laws and know RTI process well Believes that KCS is not currently compliant with federal law now Knox County students with Dyslexia need help now |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | Board should not worry about demographics Superintendent should let teachers teach The standards should be set, but the teachers should have the autonomy to decide how to teach their students - this is the most important thing after giving children what they need |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent/Staff | Public Meeting-Central HS | Should work on disparities and be fair and equitable Needs to be able to balance the budget and do what's best for kids first Be able to balance a budget Kids first, district last KCS doesn't have enough funding - the superintendent needs to be collaborative and be an advocate for public schools Hiring process should include educators, parents and students to give them a voice Sometimes folks from outside of Knox County do not know what our citizens want Build community partnerships |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | Hiring process should be transparent Board should not engage an outside firm to hire a superintendent - can be decided by the Board After a small list of candidates is comprised, the public should have input |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | Parents, teachers and students should have a voice on hiring process and the candidates should have no political ties |
| 9/15/2016 | | Public Meeting-Central HS | Important to have students, parents, teachers and business owners on selection committee |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent | E-mail | We need a super fully committed to academic success. We need a super to continue the good work of Dr. McIntyre. We need a super not afraid to ruffle feathers for the betterment of our students. |

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| 9/15/2016 | Parent/Staff | E-mail | I would like for the next superintendent to have at least 5 years experience as a classroom teacher. I don't feel like someone from the business sector knows what goes on inside a classroom unless he/she has experienced it-including discipline, lesson planning, evaluations, etc. I would also like to see someone from the Knoxville area or at least East Tennessee rather than someone from another state or region of the country. Knox County Schools are made up of students from all economic levels so a good understanding of this situation is imperative. |
| 9/15/2016 | | E-mail | I will be unable to attend but would like to request that the next superintendent be someone who will defend public education from corporate and right wing efforts to undermine funding and curriculum. She or he should also stand up for and defend diversity, inclusion and access as public values. |
| 9/15/2016 | Parent | E-mail | How about drug testing every student and making a good faith effort to keep drugs out of the schools. Drug are in all your schools. Stop doing things that do not fix the problem. Drug testing wont fix the problem but might enhance in school education by having a class on how drugs WILL ruin your life. I can develop one for the schools and you can contract me to provide information and go school to school and give the class. I'm a Registered Nurse for 20 plus years. Also I would have an officer, law enforcement accompany me. At least if there's mandatory drug testing we can catch these kids before they get addicted. It would be drug testing without punishment. As long as the kids agree to attend the class and allow for retesting. Cut one event or two that is less important than this and it will be paid for. (1-2 events in each school) or an equivalent expense. My son Tommy and Lauren Cassio are in Halls High. Drugs are in all your schools. Is your meeting tonight an expense? Use that money. Hire a superintendant who has the courage to do the above for if he can tackle that issue, all the other issues will fall into line. |
| 9/15/2016 | Student | E-mail | I would like to see a Superintendent that will reduce the standardized testing that our kids have to be put through. The testing that the teachers give the students throughout the school year is stressful enough for the kids by itself and to subject them to even more testing is very stressful for them. I also would like to see a Superintendent that would do away with and/or put a limit to the homework that the kids are given. I feel that these kids are in school 7-8 hours a day and that is sufficient enough. Kids should not have to go to school all day long and then come home to 2-4 hours of homework every night!!! The kids need to be allowed to be kids instead of "school robots". And also the kids that play sports or have other activities need to allowed to participate in those sports/activities and not have to come home to 2-4 hours afterwards. In my opinion it makes kids not want to go to school and that affects their learning while they are there and also their testing performances due to the lack of sleep that most are getting. I would also like to see an end to the common core way of doing math and be taught more ways of functioning in the real world. |
| 9/15/2016 | Staff | E-mail | More transparency in hiring of Knox Co. School admin employees, school board should have input. Seek input on how to reduce teacher stress on evaluation process. Teachers should not evaluate other teachers. Increase pay for substitute teachers (good ones). Financial responsibility to county and schools. Be more receptive to teacher input. Continue to Improve county grade scores . Better job of developing programs for tech students, not all students are college material. Develop community input group to assist school board. |

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| Date | Category | Submitted at/by | Comments |
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| 9/14/2016 | | E-mail | I would very much like for the next Knox County School Superintendent, to have a Phd degree in education, several years of actual teaching experience, and most importantly someone from East Tennessee. I also think it's very important the next time a High School is built, that it is actually built where the students are actually currently living. I think it's a very bad idea to build a High School where there are basically very few potential students living there, and then the School Board has to go to other areas of the county to locate students to occupy the new school building, which is several miles from where the students live. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request. |
| 9/14/2016 | Parent | E-mail | not a politician, but someone that is highly educated, with a heart for children, strong financial knowledge or background, people-person |
| 9/14/2016 | Parent | E-mail | Our family would like to see someone that cares about all of the departments, not just TEST SCORES! The transportation department should be run by someone that cares. Kids should not have to wait after a long day at school to be stuffed into a hot, unsafe, and overcrowded bus. Teachers seem to be stressed out and some of them unload it on the children. When I called the superintendents office with issues last year, I felt very stonewalled and they just passed the buck. I called with concerns about bathroom access. We need someone that understands people. Core needs to be looked at very carefully and parents need better information. We feel like Core has been pushed on all of us. Why serve food that kids just throw away because of the quality? I pack three lunches a day and we take and pick up all three of our children because our tax dollars are going towards testing? They even botched that last year. Our family was stressed out hearing we are testing oh no wait its will be another day. You all know what happened. What a failure. We have good teacher, and they need to be able to teach with out fear of the evaluations that also should be evaluated. Teachers do not have control over students diets, or sleep. They can only do so much. We need someone who will engage with the students, and here what the STUDENTS feel about their school environments. Thank you for your time. |
| 9/14/2016 | Parent/Staff | E-mail | I think the new superintendent needs to focus mostly on how the kids are archieve than more about the structure of out line a proposal. Also a lot of KCS parents are wanting to see change. Like for instance the coupon sale not all schools should sell the coupon books. It has alot cons as for as pros. I have heard so many parents complain about the coupon books this year than last. Also try to seek ways in improve pay for the classification employees. |

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| Date | Category | Submitted at/by | Comments |
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| 9/13/2016 | | E-mail | I cannot attend such a meeting as scheduled whereby the time conflicts/abuts with the normal working schedule. That approach is overly opportunistic on the part of this KCSS office. In light of this issue, your KCSS office should offer a contingency plan encompassing feedback for inclusion into this meeting agenda; such as via this e-mail chain. Please consider this option in subsequent, scheduled meetings. For this opportunity for feedback, let me be the first to use it by saying that the next superintendent should be experienced with program/resource provisions offered to students with learning disabilities. This should go as far as having awareness techniques to inform not only the school system faculty, but the student bodies therein. I find the existing resources "ineffective/esoteric" being that, although the placed faculty in special education/needs have a basic psychological background, they do not have sufficient experience (educational, clinical) to form schooling techniques for students with ASD and/or Asperger syndrome. The end result is that all affected parties suffer: student, teacher/faculty, and parent. Most of these students leave their basic schooling period with barely enough skills to manage in group home settings and menial job placements...they could acquire much more with the proper school resources attuned to their needs. The breadth and depth of what I am attempting to convey to you about this problematic matter may be hard to grasp...I understand...so I'll end my reply by stating, "You do CANNOT fully understand nor appreciate this issue until you experience a life's journey with a mentally disabled child." Thank you for your time and attention...now I hope you have yourself a pleasant day! |
| 9/13/2016 | | E-mail | Absolish the Behavior Report! That is all. |
| 9/12/2016 | | E-mail | I cannot make it to this meeting. My only comment is that Jim Macintyre was pretty good. I appreciate that he really cared about our kids and was not part of the East Tennessee bureaucracy. You will probably not find another one better than him. So glad my kids are seniors and don't have to deal with this. |
| 9/12/2016 | | E-mail | Buzz Thomas |
| 9/12/2016 | Parent | E-mail | I will not be able to attend either one of these meetings, however I feel that it's very important for a superintendent to be diligent about getting seatbelts put in the school buses. That is the number one reason why I will not let my son ride the school bus every day. I think the lives that we have lost and the injured children that we had a year ago should be the sole reason reason as to why we get them put in our school buses. |

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| 9/12/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Hello. I suspect that we will be unable to attend, so I wanted to share some thoughts now. First, I want someone who cares. I DON'T want someone whose primary goal in taking the position is to use it as a stepping stone or a filler, until something better comes along. I couldn't care less about his/her teaching experience—I want someone with leadership skills and organizational experience who can motivate and lead a large group and hold employees accountable and direct them toward the goals of the organization and its highest expression of what a school system can be. I want him/her to live the excellence that he/she should demand of all involved in the teaching and care of our children. I want someone who truly values parental input and who insists that adequate notice be given to parents so that those of us who are willing and interested in helping our students and our schools have plenty of opportunity to do so (I can't tell you how many times I get a last minute notice of something that I'd like to be involved in, but cannot swing it because I need time to make arrangements in order to attend...it just happened today, as a matter of fact. My daughter presented a form as I picked her up from school that was due to be turned in TODAY for registration for a meeting at 6 pm tomorrow evening! It was the first that any of us had heard about it, and it was an informational meeting about a trip to Spain in 2018 (you'd think there would have been enough time before 2018 to allow for some notice!). These frustrations are so unnecessary, but are the norm. There are many others, too, that appear to be a pattern in the Knox County School system. Anyway, I want a true leader who still listens to ALL "stakeholders," and who respects all members, especially the students. I want someone with the guts to stand for what is right and to look out for my kid's interests as if his/her life depended upon it. I want someone who will put NOTHING above the safety and well being of our children, and who will go the extra mile when it takes it. I want someone who dares to have a vision that he/she believes in strongly enough to compel others to believe in it, too and with the skills to marshal the forces needed to bring that vision to fruition. I know such people exist, but they are hard to find. I hope that the search committee leaves no stone unturned until such a person is identified. Thank you for allowing an opportunity to voice my opinion. I always have one!</p> |
| 9/12/2016 | Parent | E-mail | <p>Gain some control of the transportation department. Expand STEM to other areas of the county. Keep costs under control.</p> |
| 9/12/2016 | | E-mail | <p>You all could give 2 shi_ _ what we have to say your gonna pick who u want and keep that stupid idiotic core math that is truly retarded and I will say it too any of u...and guarantee I have teachers backing me up!!!!!!you all are morons too think that way is any better.stupid but I guess when all u do is sit behind a desk hell it makes sense now...Imao</p> |
| 9/12/2016 | Community Member | E-mail | <p>We need a new Superintendent who is NOT from the Local area. A NEW person with no connections to local schools or local politics. Nashville new Superintendent is from the D.C. / Maryland area. It is time for Knox County to move forward... No more of the old ways...</p> |