

Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees candidates

On Tuesday, the Columbus City Council will choose from among four candidates for a position on the Columbus Municipal School District Board of Trustees.

We asked each candidate to respond to a series of questions designed to give our readers a sense of what each candidate will bring to the job.



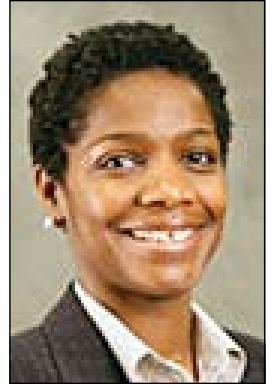
Tommy Prude



Antwann Richardson



James Samuel Sr.



Angela C. Verdell

<p>Personal Information</p>	<p>Age: 68 Occupation: Retired Ties to Columbus: Lifelong resident. Education: BS, MA, EDS Family: Married, 3 children Community service: Volunteer Chaplain, Baptist Memorial, radio talk show host, Board of directors, MS School Boards Assn</p>	<p>Age: 27 Occupation: Regions Bank Branch Manager/Small Business Relationship Manager Ties to Columbus: Resident of Columbus for 27 years Education: Mississippi University for Women, Bachelor of Science in Communication Family: NA Community service: Link'd Young Professionals, Link Ambassadors, Kiwanis, Leadership Lowndes County Graduate, and Board Member of Father's Child Ministry</p>	<p>Age: NA Occupation: NA Ties to Columbus: NA Education: NA Community service: NA</p>	<p>Age: 41 Occupation: Director of Diversity Programs and Student Development, College of Engineering (Mississippi State University) Ties to Columbus: Hometown Education: Primary Education (Columbus Public Schools), Bachelor of Science, Finance (Jackson State University), Master of Engineering (Industrial & Systems Engineering) Mississippi State University Family: Son, 4th Grade (Franklin Elementary); Daughter, 9th Grade (Columbus High School); Married Community service: Boys & Girls Club Golden Triangle Board Secretary, Columbus-Lowndes Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., PTA Treasurer (Franklin Elementary), PTO (Columbus High School); North East MS Coalition of 100 Black Women, etc.</p>
<p>Why do you want to serve on the CMSD board?</p>	<p>Assist in student achievement and district growth to star status.</p>	<p>My effort to become a part of the school board stems from my belief of education being the gateway to a better life. A great education and a solid foundation of knowledge is essential. It plays a vital role in the development of an individual's character, future and their commitment to the community. I am not seeking to attain a position for status, but for the impact I can have on future generations.</p>	<p>I am a product of this school system. In addition I've had two sons, two granddaughters, and soon a grandson will be entering. My concern is that the school board be populated by parents with a vested interest in its processes, products, and paradigm.</p>	<p>I would like to serve as a Board member to assist the District in ensuring that all students of the CMSD receive a high quality education in a safe environment that is most conducive to learning.</p>
<p>What in your background qualifies you for this appointment?</p>	<p>14 years board membership, over 200 hours of CEU credits, two advanced degrees in education and related work experience.</p>	<p>As leaders within the community, I feel as though it is our duty to invest time and resources to enhance and improve our community and future generations.</p>	<p>Basic Education, Military Service, Community College of the Air Force Training, USAF Leadership Training and other academia. I am a life-long citizen of Columbus-Lowndes County, and a taxpayer.</p>	<p>As an actively engaged parent of children in this district for over 6 years, I've had the great fortune to experience every level of education provided by the District and to serve in multiple capacities ranging from PTA leadership to Site Council participation. With a sound parent perspective and a professional background in finance and engineering, my desire is to assist the District in pragmatic financial decision making and provide insight on streamlining processes which will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness within the CMSD.</p>
<p>What is the biggest challenge facing the CMSD and how would you address it?</p>	<p>Academic achievement and dropout rates. These are being addressed by actively monitoring classroom instructions, parent-community involvement, use of grant funds for classroom technology, consultants from state dept of education, and grant funded programs such as Lace Up/ 20/20 (dropout prevention)</p>	<p>Although my first priority is the education of our youth, I feel that the biggest challenge facing the CMSD is obtaining a balanced budget and creating accountability to how we spend taxpayer dollars. In my opinion, the school tax is too high, which directly affects the city's ability to raise capital for needed projects. The answer to how to better the schools is not investing more money, but instead, it is to maximize the potential and work more efficiently. I want to ensure the hard-earned money the citizens of Columbus pay is being invested and utilized responsibly. I feel that one of the greatest investments you can make is in people and their future. I am a true believer that education starts at home, but "It takes a village to raise a child." My background in banking and finance and my commitment to my community are assets that will enable me to serve and be successful as a school board member.</p>	<p>For me ... education of my posterity (grandchildren and other related children). My desire is to assist the superintendent to carry out her agenda, in any way I may be effective.</p>	<p>I don't believe that there is a silver bullet solution for the challenges that we face in the CMSD. Our district has great potential to capitalize on the things that we have done really well and to use those successes as opportunity for positive growth. I'm sure there are challenges and aspects of the District that are unknown to the everyday citizen; however, a concerted effort of all stakeholders and a focus on excellence across all sectors of the District, will allow us to successfully meet the need of our students.</p>

Let your councilman know which candidate you prefer

Ward 1
Gene Taylor
662-329-1227

Ward 3
Charlie Box
662-327-1270

Ward 5
Kabir Karriem
662-328-3063

Ward 2
Joseph Mickens
662-251-8882

Ward 4
Fred Stewart
662-328-9584

Ward 6
Bill Gavin
662-243-1919