

## Help Wanted: File for School Board

Are you interested in good government, smaller government, ethical government, lower taxes, family values, what is taught your children and grandchildren and other children in public schools? Do you want to have a voice in the largest government agency in Greenville County, with the largest budget, the largest number of employees and the largest debt with power to increase your taxes every year even in a severe recession?

If so, you have an opportunity to do just that without paying a filing fee, without having to run in an expensive primary election, or having to get more than 50 percent of the vote in some instances. Just file as a candidate for the Greenville County School Board.

The filing period is open and will be open until noon on August 16, 2010. There is no political party affiliation, racial, ethnical or religious requirement. You must only be a registered voter in one of the even number districts. They are Districts 18, 20, 22, 24, 26 and 28.

Six of the 12 school board members are up for reelection in November. All will likely file for reelection. This is a four-year appointment for those who are elected. The Greenville County School Board is the most powerful body in Greenville County. They approve salaries and preside over thousands of employees, determine what thousands of children from age three through 18 are taught in school, and choose their textbooks. They determine how an annual budget in excess of four hundred million dollars is spent and preside over a debt they created for county taxpayers of approximately one billion dollars. They have their own paid person to lobby the state legislature for more funds, and as a group frequently lobby for legislation opposed by the majority of Greenville County residents.

They schedule 11 regular meetings per year and for their services are paid \$8,400 each. That amounts to \$763 per meeting held on the fourth Tuesday evening each month except July, when no meeting is held, and December meetings are sometimes optional due to conflict with "Winter Holidays." They also have an expense account and are reimbursed for transportation, meals and lodging when attending meetings and conventions away from the area. The chairman elected by board members receives an additional thousand dollars for chairing the meetings. There are also monthly scheduled meetings of the Committee of the Whole; however, some board members frequently skip committee meetings.

If you are the liberal aggressive type and not sensitive about ethical matters, you could use the school board to climb the corporate ladder or make some big bucks by becoming a full partner in a school construction management company, get appointed vice president of a school construction company or publish children's books to sell to schools. Don't say it hasn't been done.

To file as a candidate for one of the Greenville County School Board seats, simply go to the county election office with your voter registration card and say you want to file for the school board in your district. They have maps and will assist you in determining your district.

Any number of candidates may file for a particular school board seat. There is no education

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equipment, no primary election and no runoff. The candidate with the largest number of votes in the November 2, General Election wins the appointment for the next four years.

Incumbent school board members in Greenville County have a well-financed constituency that represents clients who “feed at the public trough,” or have other vested interests in the status quo. They will defend their political and financial investments no matter the cost.

Incumbents usually run a low-key campaign hoping not to attract opposition. If a conservative opponent files, the incumbent may recruit a third candidate to split the opposition vote to insure their win in November.

Well-qualified candidates who can communicate with voters and are aware of the voting record of the incumbents should be able to win easily this year. The board has voted for increased taxes, approved a \$30 million additional increase in debt, and at the same time cutting funds going to classrooms.