




LSR-7 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES

A photograph of the Lee's Summit R-7 School District Leadership Center building. The building is a large, modern structure with a tan stone facade and a glass-paned upper section. In front of the building, there is a landscaped area with a small tree, a flagpole with the American flag, and a parking area. The sky is blue with some clouds.

LEE'S SUMMIT R-7 SCHOOL DISTRICT
TONY L. STANSBERRY
LEADERSHIP CENTER

2025 Lee's Summit R-7 School Board Elections

Four candidates have filed to run for three available three-year terms on the Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education. The Chamber is hosting the LSR-7 School Board Candidate Forum from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, at the Missouri Innovation Campus, 1101 NW Innovation Pkwy. The forum offers a great opportunity to meet the candidates and learn more about their stances on certain issues. The candidates are:

- Michelle Dawson
- Jennifer Foley
- Nicky Nickens
- Leon Weatherby

The Chamber encourages residents to make an educated vote on Tuesday, April 8, 2025. Contact Chamber President, Matt Baird, at 816.524.2424 or mbaird@lschamber.com for more information.

Current School Board



Jennifer Foley
President



Heather Eslick
Vice President



Regina Garrett
Member



Kamile Johnson
Member



Erica Miller
Member



Bill Haley
Member



Stacie Myers
Member

Special Thanks to our Forum Sponsors



MISSOURI ASSOCIATION
OF TRIAL ATTORNEYS



For more information about the School Board or School District, visit LSR7.org.

Lee's Summit Chamber Supports LSR7 No Tax Increase Bond Initiative

The Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted in approval of a resolution endorsing the LSR7 No-Tax Increase Bond initiative which will be on the April 8, ballot. The LS Chamber believes the continuation of the current debt service tax rate and the approval and issuance of bonds as contemplated by LSR-7 would enhance and support the economic eco system of the Lee's Summit community, which necessarily lends to the furtherance of the LS Chamber's mission, vision and values.

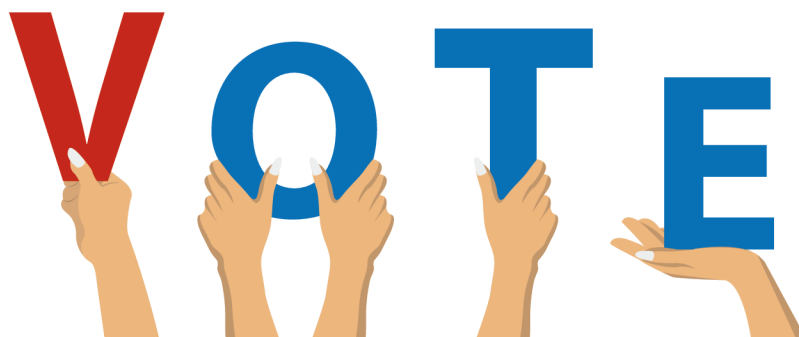
The LSR7 no tax increase bond initiative is designed as a no tax rate increase, and if approved, will authorize the district to issue bonds to borrow money to fund capital projects to be repaid through property tax revenue, keeping the debt service tax rate at \$0.87, which is intended to pay for capital projects approved by the Board of Education and recommended by the Citizens' Advisory Committee, including the construction of new buildings for Hazel Grove and Greenwood elementary schools, Pleasant Lea Middle School, and Miller Park Center, as well as high school athletic field upgrades, safety and security improvements, and critical maintenance and repairs throughout the district.

"This ballot initiatives is extremely vital to the growth, development and future of Lee's Summit, said Matt Baird, President of the Lee's Summit Chamber of Commerce." "The LSR7 school district is a key partner and contributor to the success of the Lee's Summit community and by approving this bond we will ensure our community is still a top-rated destination for businesses to grow and flourish."

The Lee's Summit Chamber supports the LSR7 No Tax Increase Bond initiative and we encourage the citizens of Lee's Summit and our business community to show their support for by voting yes on April 8!

The Lee's Summit Chamber was incorporated in 1968 and is a member-supported organization of businesses dedicated to creating opportunities for business success through networking, advocacy, and business and professional development. For additional information, call the Chamber at 816-524-2424. Interested in other legislative priorities supported by the Chamber? Visit lschamber.com to learn more.

Make your vote on April 8, 2025





Michelle Dawson

Education: B.S., Physics, Boston College

Business Name: St. Margaret of Scotland Church, Lee's Summit

Occupation: Project Assistant

Political Experience: Volunteer, 2022-2024 school board candidates' election campaigns

Memberships/Activities: 2024 R7 Parent Academy attendee, 2024-present BCMS Archery team coach, 2022-present BCMS PTSA member, 2022-2024 Parent D-Team and World Café participant

Campaign Web Address: <https://dawsonforlsr7.com>

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

As a parent of two R7 students, I'm invested in the success of the district, and I will bring my project management, operations and Parent Academy experiences to the role. Our district needs an informed, collaborative school board to oversee the operation of the district, with members who will govern through the lens of the district's mission, to prepare each student for success in life.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

1. **Vote to maintain resources and support for the 2024-2027 Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) strategies.**
2. **Shift the board further toward informed decision making by raising the visibility and understanding of data and by considering input from educators, building-level staff, committees, and students.**
3. **Challenge the board to vote and draft policy through the lens of preparing the most vulnerable students in the district for success in life.**

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

School board members have three key roles: 1) to supervise and hold accountable the superintendent and their administration, 2) to oversee budget expenditures, improvement plans, and policies, and 3) to be an interface with the community for the district.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

1. I am an experienced engineering project manager, so I understand budgets, planning, and working successfully with diverse teams to achieve a common goal.
2. I am an experienced operations project manager and I completed the 2024 R7 Parent Academy, so I understand the complexity and challenges of managing a district this large. I will be able to ask the right questions of the right people to be an informed board member.
3. As a decision maker, I listen to the voices of those who are closest to the work and represent the voices of those most impacted by the decision. I will represent educators, building staff, students and caregivers when making decisions as a school board member so that as a board, we are safeguarding resources needed for the success of each student.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

In addition to meeting individuals at district events and on district committees, I'll also talk with caregivers, students, and staff in school communities: PTAs, student-led events, and school activities, to meet people who are at the heart of the district's work. I will also represent the district to enhance relationships with community supporters and to be an additional voice in support of the district with local and Missouri legislators.

6. Although standardized test scores show increasing improvement in our schools, significant differences among economic and cultural groups still exist. What can the District do to continue the overall success in academic achievement while significantly closing the achievement gap?

As a board member, I would have voted to put this no-tax-increase bond on the April ballot because a bond is one of the primary ways the district funds one-time projects. The projects this bond will fund were proposed by district administration, and the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) gave input on the prioritization of some of those projects. As a voter, I support the bond and will be voting in April to approve it. (The projects surrounding Lee's Summit Elementary and Westview Elementary have been included but put on hold to gather further input from the communities most affected.)

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

What the R7 District does well:

- I think the district has excellent educators and building-level staff. As a board member, I would advocate for competitive pay and benefits, and for maintaining the resources they need to support each student.
- I also think the district offers excellent academic paths and career programs. I would like each student to be aware of all their options and have the opportunity to pursue them.

What the R7 District could improve on:

- I think the school board is divided and has different agendas, impeding good governance practices and nonpartisan decisions. Diverse viewpoints, debate, and dialogue are all signs of healthy governance, as long as every board member is truly seeking the same objective, which is to oversee the superintendent in achieving the mission of the district for each student. I would like to see a return to nonpartisan, collaborative governance for the good of the students.



Jennifer Foley

Education: Healthcare Administration - Ottawa University
Nuclear Medicine Technology - University of Kansas Medical Center
Radiologic Technology - Saint Luke's College

Business Name:

Occupation: Director of Professional Sport

Political Experience: Board Member, Lee's Summit R-7 Board of Education

Memberships/Activities: Woodland Elementary PTA, Auxiliary Member of VFW Post 5789, Lee's Summit Youth Court Advisory Board, Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging, Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Campaign Web Address: <http://jenniferforLSR7.wordpress.com>

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

When I first applied for this role, I leaned on my leadership experience from formal training and prior board service alongside my passion for quality education for the next generation.

During my time on the board, I have been involved with many positive changes for the district. We increased veteran staff pay through modifications of policy GCBA to give credit for all years of experience, proposed a levy transfer that when voted on by the community allowed us to make significant increases to staff salaries, increased community engagement by hosting "Dinner with the Board" sessions, requested an audit of all LSR-7 facilities for ADA accessibility, created the role of Student Representatives to the Board of Education, advocated for additional math support specialists for our buildings and increased access to structured literacy resources for our elementary educators.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

Over the next 3 years, I would like to see us continuing to make progress in literacy, particularly for secondary students. We have made significant advances for our elementary readers and I would like to see us really dig into how we can help older students who might enter our district without that foundational knowledge.

I would like to see more curriculum resource alignment across the district so that educators have access to all the tools that they need and can learn effective practices from their talented peers and from proven methods. The less they have to reinvent the wheel, the more time they can spend focusing on customization for their specific student populations' needs.

I would like to see a continuing increase in transparency. The recent proposal from district administration to consolidate two schools together created understandable frustration by many in the community that did not know such a proposal was coming and that they did not have the opportunity for their voices to be heard. We have charged district administration with creating a long-range strategic plan to address these concerns to ensure that the future planning has community involvement.

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

As a school board member, the primary job is overseeing the superintendent to ensure that the district is meeting its goals. The board provides governance to the school district and guidance to the superintendent by setting priorities and policy for the district to guide our students to success.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

Listening - Over the past several years, I have built relationships with many families and teachers within the district. I am active in the Lee's Summit community, and I care about the views of all of our citizens. I will take their views and perspectives into consideration when it comes to decision-making. I am always willing to listen to understand community values.

Empathy - My personal and professional background has given me intense exposure to incredible diversity. I understand many challenges that people face when they do not fit societal norms. When you spend time with someone that has faced incredible adversity, it fosters a greater appreciation of what you have and it motivates you to advocate for improving situations whenever possible.

Collaborative Experience - Over the past few years I have held roles on the Board of Education, professional executive boards, committees, and in a homeowner's association. I know how to work together with teams to write or evaluate policies, procedures, guidelines, and budgets in order to accomplish the goals of the organization.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

Our board has made significant improvements in community engagement through our "Dinner with the Board" sessions that have allowed community feedback on a variety of topics. Additionally, I attend local events, such as parent-teacher organization meetings, school festivals, and community gatherings, to listen to concerns and ideas from parents, teachers, and students. I also use email and social media to continue to share information on relevant topics or to highlight some of the district achievements.

6. Please explain your position on the proposed bond initiative that will be on the ballot in April 2025?

I support the proposed bond initiative because I believe it presents an opportunity for our district to address pressing infrastructure needs and enhance educational facilities.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

Our district has made significant strides, with notable achievements including the expansion of our Diploma Plus program, a partnership with other districts in the state as part of the Success-Ready Students Network, and receiving the highest APR score from DESE among 20 districts in Jackson/Cass Counties. I'm also proud of our progress in literacy, where we've addressed concerns from parents by creating a positive partnership with the Parents of Struggling Readers, implementing MTSS, providing LETRS training for staff, and acquiring UFLI Foundations as an added tier 1 resource.

One area for improvement is communication, where we've taken steps to address fatigue from over-communication through a communications audit and streamlining our communications, but still have room to refine our strategies to ensure effective communication across the district.



Nicky Nickens

Education: BS Psychology/Child Development, Truman State (Northeast MO State University), MA & PhD Educational Psychology, University of Missouri-Columbia

Business Name: n/a

Occupation: Professor of Educational Psychology; Real Estate Agent

Political Experience: None

Memberships/Activities: n/a/

Campaign Web Address: <https://www.nickynickensforlsr7boe.com/>

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

I am a believer in public education and as it faces various threats, I feel compelled to play a part in advocating for it. My background in education/teacher education also provides a strong background for contributing as a board member.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

(1)Academic excellence (specifically focused on reducing identified achievement gaps)

(2)Empowering students and educators (specifically awareness of/interventions for mental health concerns and other trauma-related psychological, behavioral and social-emotional issues)

(3)My third top priority is to stand as a representative of LSR7 in consistent and active support and defense of public schools

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

The job of a school board member is multi-faceted and the primary priority will rearrange according to circumstance; however, I believe that along with overseeing and working with the superintendent to set goals and make decisions, and setting/enforcing policy, the individual board member serves an essential role in facilitating communication among stakeholders and ensuring accountability of the district to all stakeholders.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

(1)My education: (PhD in Educational Psychology which is the study of teaching and learning)

(2)My work experience: helping to develop future teachers, 10 years as administrator in higher education

(3)I am a parent of 4 awesome LSR7 grads. I have a sense of humor, a strong work ethic, the ability to critically think and problem solve, and a love of working with all kinds of people.

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

I plan to attend many district events and host LSR7 community members to promote consistent communication between the various stakeholders and the Board. Interpersonal interaction and discussion is essential along with maintaining good communication habits via email and social media.

6.Please explain your position on the proposed bond initiative that will be on the ballot in April 2025?

I support the proposed bond initiative that will be on the ballot in April and also support putting the prop C waiver question on the ballot in April (four board members voted against placing the prop C question on the ballot, at the Jan 16 Board of Education meeting, despite the recommendation of the Citizen's Advisory Committee to place it on the ballot. Even placing it on the August ballot will delay salary increases for another year.) Effective teachers are the single biggest in-school correlate of academic growth and achievement for all students. Teacher compensation is a shameful topic in Missouri, and the bottom line is that we must support competitive pay for our teachers and other essential staff in order to attract and maintain qualified and effective teachers.

7.What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

LSR7 has a lot of really good things going on, including advanced and enrichment opportunities, extensive special education services, strong fine arts & athletic programs, opportunities for career-ready pathways, a strong alternative MS/HS, ability to attract/retain effective teachers and leaders, really great facilities for the majority of schools especially the high schools, and involved parent/family/community stakeholders. Areas for improvement include efforts to reduce existing achievement gaps, ensure that all subgroups of students have equitable opportunities, and increase pay for teachers and essential support staff.



Leon Weatherby

Education: Mechanical Engineering and Design

Business Name: Honeywell FM&T / L3I Design Solutions

Occupation: Mechanical Designer

Memberships/Activities: MBIT / PTC User Group / USPRA

Political Experience: n/a

Campaign Web Address: leonforlsr7.com

1. What compelled you to run for the R7 School Board?

I have a passion for education and wanted to invest in my community. I have a vested interest in the district because I have two daughters currently in the district and another studying to become a teacher in the district.

2. If elected what would be your top three priorities during your term?

- Support for Teachers and Staff
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Student and Staff Safety

3. What do you see as your primary job as a school board member?

Representing the interests of the community by providing strategic guidance and ensuring results support district goals.

4. What three qualities do you have that you think will allow you to be a successful school board member?

- Passion for Education
- Strategic thinker
- Integrity and Honesty

5. How will you as a school board member connect, engage and communicate with the community?

I will engage with the community in person at various school and community events, online via social media accounts and community groups, and through one-on-one communication at the request of community members.

6. Please explain your position on the proposed bond initiative that will be on the ballot in April 2025?

I feel the bond initiative is vitally important measure on the ballot. It will allow the district to afford much needed upgrades to some of our ageing infrastructure as well provide metro leading amenities to students.

7. What do you think the R7 District does well and what do you think they could improve on?

I think the district does a great job of recruiting top quality teachers and staff. I think the district could improve their community engagement and communication in relation to their strategic goals and projects.

Map of Lee's Summit R-7 Schools

For detailed boundary maps or to search your address and determine your school, visit lsr7.org.



Elementary

1. Hazel Grove Elementary
2001 NW Blue Pkwy
Lee's Summit, MO 64064

2. Underwood Elementary
1125 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

3. Mason Elementary
27600 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

4. Meadow Lane Elementary
1421 NE Independence Ave
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

5. Longview Farm Elementary
1001 SW Longview Park Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

6. Cedar Creek Elementary
2600 SW Third St
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

7. Westview Elementary
200 N Ward Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

8. Lee's Summit Elementary
110 SE Green St
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

9. Richardson Elementary
800 NE Blackwell Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

10. Prairie View Elementary
501 SE Todd George Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

11. Pleasant Lea Middle School
630 SW Persels Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

12. Highland Park Elementary
400 SE Millstone Ave
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

13. Sunset Valley Elementary
1850 SE Ranson Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

14. Woodland Elementary
12709 Smart Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

15. Hawthorn Hill Elementary
2801 SW Pryor Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

16 Summit Pointe Elementary
13100 E 147th St
Kansas City, MO 64149

17. Trailridge Elementary
3651 SW Windemere Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

18. Greenwood Elementary
805 W Main St
Greenwood, MO 64034

Middle

19. Bernard Campbell Middle School
1201 NE Colbern Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

20. Pleasant Lea Middle School
630 SW Persels Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

21. Summit Lakes Middle School
3500 SW Windemere Dr
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

22. East Trails Middle School
1001 SE Bailey Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64081

High

23. Lee's Summit North High School
901 NE Douglas St
Lee's Summit, MO 64086

24. Lee's Summit High School
400 SE Blue Pkwy
Lee's Summit, MO 64063

25. Lee's Summit West High School
2600 SW Ward Rd
Lee's Summit, MO 64082

STUDENT JOB FAIR

This job fair is designed to help local businesses connect with eager high school students and recent graduates to fill summer, part-time, and full-time positions.



Saturday, March 23



9 a.m.-12p .m.



Missouri Innovation Campus



*Sponsored by Lee's Summit Area High Schools
Parent Teacher Student Associations*

LS LEE'S SUMMIT
CHAMBER



Important Dates

March 12: Deadline to Register to Vote

27 days before Election Day by mail, online, and in-person

March 25: First day for No Excuse Absentee Voting (in-person)

March 26: Deadline to send in request for Absentee Mail-In Ballot

April 8: Election

Voter Information

Jackson County residents may register at any Mid-Continent Public Library, any Missouri license bureau, all area city hall offices, at the Jackson County Election Office on the Independence Courthouse Square and at the Jackson County Election Office's Independence Center site.

Cass County residents may register at all area city hall offices (including Lake Winnebago), public libraries and the Cass County Election Office in Harrisonville.



For more information about registering to vote, scan the QR code above or call 325-4600 (Jackson County voters), 380-8100 (Cass County voters) or 842-4820 (Kansas City voters).



LEE'S SUMMIT CHAMBER

LEE'S SUMMIT R-7 SCHOOL DISTRICT

TONY L. STANSBERRY LEADERSHIP CENTER

301 NE TUDOR ROAD

220 SW Main Street, Lee's Summit, MO 64063 | 816.524.2424 | lschamber.com

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