

Pell City Board of Education Application – Brian Jennings – 2/28/2025

1. Why are you interested in serving on the Pell City Board of Education?

There are many reasons that I would like to serve on the Board of Education. First and foremost, I believe education is the foundation for success in life, and a strong school system is the foundation on which we can build a flourishing community. Having two children who graduated from Pell City Schools and two more children currently attending Pell City Schools, I would like provide them and their classmates every opportunity to grow and succeed in life. As an employer, I know a strong school system will help our community develop and will attract more growth. Finally, I would like to serve Pell City and its young people. Investing in our future will make Pell City strong for years to come.

2. List your prior involvement with the Pell City School System or other public or private school system.

In Pell City, I volunteered to help coach the varsity basketball team with Coach Bowman for a couple of years. I have volunteered in many capacities as a parent through Parent-Teacher organizations, booster clubs, and as a field trip chaperone. As an employer, I have worked to sponsor students in extra curricular activities in Pell City and multiple other school systems as well as working with Pell City High School through student co-op education classes. While in college, I volunteered as a varsity basketball assistant coach for two years at Auburn High School. I was employed as a social studies teacher and coach for three years at WF Burns Middle School in the Chambers County(Alabama) School System. I was also employed for two years as a social studies teacher and coach at Northgate High School in the Coweta County(Georgia) School System.

3. Disclose any potential conflicts that may arise during your service, including, but not limited to

- a. Do you have any children or relatives enrolled in the system?
 - i. I have two sons attending Pell City Schools. Wyn is currently an 8th grader at Duran Middle School, and Caleb is currently a 10th grader at Pell City High School.
- b. Do you have any relatives employed by the system?
 - i. I do not have any relatives employed by the system.
- c. Do you provide any services or conduct any business with the system?
 - i. As an employer, I have multiple employees who are students in Pell City Schools.
 - ii. As an employer, I have and continue to work with Pell City High School through their Cooperative Education programs where students get credit through work experience.
 - iii. As an employer, I wrote a letter of recommendation for the potential Culinary program at Pell City High School.
 - iv. Through my business, I have sponsored and continue to sponsor multiple athletic and other extra-curricular programs in the Pell City Schools by providing money and food donations through sponsorship programs. In addition, I offer food donations to every school within the Pell City School System each school year.
 - v. Through my business, I have and continue to conduct Catering business with the Pell City Schools. This includes but is not limited to providing catering services

to multiple schools as well as the Central Office, providing catering for meals for extra curricular activities, and providing discounted catering for groups within the school system to resale as a fundraiser.

- vi. I participated in community stakeholder meetings with Pell City School Central Office and administrative personnel.
 - vii. I participated in Reality Check at the CEPA for 8th graders as a community stakeholder.
 - viii. I participated in Mock Interviews for Junior and Senior students at Pell City High School.
 - ix. Through my business, I sponsored a Leader Academy at Pell City High School.
 - x. Through my business, I sponsor a Teacher of the Month program in both Pell City Schools and other schools in the area.
4. What strengths, abilities, education, or experiences uniquely qualify you to serve? Include any significant contributions to Pell City and /or the community at large.

I graduated with honors from Auburn University with a Bachelor's degree in Secondary Social Sciences Education, and I spent 5 years teaching and coaching in public education. Both as a teacher and as a parent of four children in public education, I learned what it takes for students and schools to be successful. I have demonstrated a willingness to serve people within Pell City. I have the ability to mentor students and others in the community and the vision to see where we can improve. I have demonstrated an ability to lead large groups of people, develop people, and build consensus to align people together towards achieving goals.

5. What goals should the Pell City School System prioritize over the next 3-5 years? Include things you think the Pell City Schools are doing well and should be supported, and things you seek to improve.

I believe that Pell City Schools have the potential to be an excellent school system. We need to prioritize the students and what provides them the best opportunities for success and growth in the classroom, in extra curricular activities, and, ultimately, in life. From the Board of Education to the administration to the faculty and staff that interact with students on a daily basis, we communicate to students that we value them and believe in them through our actions. Therefore, we owe it to them to provide the best environment in which to learn, including facilities as well as the learning atmosphere. If the building is falling apart or dirty, how are students to believe they are valued? We owe it to students to challenge them academically, instilling in them a belief that we believe they can do more than they thought possible. We owe it to our students and our community to tell each of them, with our actions, that they can excel in all areas, and we need to provide them the resources to excel in the classroom, on the athletic fields, in the workplace, in areas of artistic performance, and in competitions across the state and nation.

There are several programs, within Pell City Schools, that I believe have been productive to these ends. We should look to support or expand these programs. For college track high students, I found the college interest student-parent meetings for 10th graders insightful and educational to prepare my son, my wife, and I for the college application process. I love that the high school has engaged All Pencils Down to better prepare our students for the ACT. I also

believe vocational education is under utilized in America, but we have several opportunities in Pell City through the Ag program, welding program, and busing to vocational academies in the Birmingham area. Whether a student is college bound or bound directly for the job market, we need to set them up for success. We have multiple elementary schools with strong grades in our system. We should seek to learn best practices from them that we can apply systemwide.

I believe we should prioritize upgrading our physical school facilities. As a parent, I have found it frustrating to visit my child's school and find it in disrepair and dirty. My son played two years of middle school football, dressing in a building with no running water and a portable toilet. What does that communicate to our children when they see that every day? My children often visit other local schools for events, only to find a much better facility. My children seemed to be desensitized to the problems within their own school, and I find that disturbing. In addition, our community and schools are growing rapidly. I think we need to prioritize making a long term 20-25 year Master Plan for the entire school system and its present and future buildings. Our actions need to communicate to our children that they deserve the best, and we need to show our community how we plan to provide that for our present and future students.

I believe that the most important piece to a successful school system is fantastic teachers in the classroom. We need to create teaching opportunities in the Pell City Schools that reward, retain, and attract high performing teachers, teachers that are engaged in building, developing, and loving our students. Those teachers will be the best tool in providing opportunities and growth for our students, and our administration needs to address teachers that are disengaged. The beauty of a classroom is having a subject matter expert to drive students forward. We can learn best practices from other school systems on what attracts good teachers, and we need to look at what opportunities we have to fund extra teaching units. A strong classroom teacher is the strongest tool in our tool belt.