

**1. What is your name as it will appear on the ballot?**

Karen Carson

**2. Do you have a campaign website?**

Campaign website is [www.carson08.com](http://www.carson08.com)

**3. What position are you seeking?**

School Board representative: 5<sup>th</sup> District

**4. What is your political party affiliation?**

Republican but school board is a non-partisan race

**5. Why did you choose to enter the race?**

I have an absolute passion for the health, education, and welfare of children and youth. I am a true advocate for public education and believe that our success in providing adequate and appropriate education is essential to the success and well-being of our community. Throughout the previous 3.5 years of service as the school board representative for the 5<sup>th</sup> district I have become even more aware that the policies and directions that the Board sets in the next few years will be crucial to the success of our schools, our community, and most importantly-our children. I have managed to develop some strong working relationships with our business community leaders that I believe will help form a true collaborative working partnership with Knox County Schools. This infusion of business with education will be a benefit for all in our County.

**6. What is the most pressing issue facing Knox County today? How would you address this issue?**

Two very pressing issues facing our county right now:

- **Education Reform**

The most important task facing the Knox County School System today is reforming our education to fully meet the needs of our students in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Providing this adequate education equips students to enter into secondary education or the work force with the skills and knowledge that are necessary to function and succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, without the need for remedial course work.

- **Budget:** The School Board oversees a system of 54,000 students, 8,000 employees, 88 schools, and an annual budget of 357 million dollars. Data which are collected and then disseminated as useable management information must be accurate, credible, accessible, sufficient, and relevant. Currently, the Knox School System accounting and reporting systems focus on satisfying the compliance requirements of government accounting standards. To manage the school system successfully, the compliance reporting model must be supplemented by a Management Information System (MIS). A comprehensive MIS will provide the information necessary for the active, ongoing, systematic management and improvement of all core

education processes, as well as the business processes supporting educational activities. We must be able to determine what works well-utilizing objective measurements- and duplicate it throughout the county. Just as importantly, we must be able to determine what does not work well and eliminate it from our system.

**7. What sets you apart from your opponent(s)?**

Experience: My experience as a mom, a nurse, and a community volunteer bring unique perspectives to the Board of Education. Numerous years as a PTA volunteer/leader have served well in representing a parent's viewpoint. I work very well with diverse groups and work hard to make sure communication is two-way and meaningful.

**8. Have you ever run for office previously or served in elected office in Knox County?**

I am completing my first term as the 5<sup>th</sup> district school board representative.

**9. Do any of your family members currently work in paid or elected positions within Knox County government or its agencies?**

No

**10. Describe your personal philosophy of openness and transparency in government.**

I absolutely believe that the process the Board utilizes to make decisions must be open. Some changes that I have instituted while serving as Chairperson of the Board included:

- Placed public forum (opportunity for community to speak) on the agenda for every meeting and every workshop.
- Every meeting and every workshop is televised live and video archives are available on the web site for replay. Also, we are working to have live podcasts of the meetings and workshops of the Board available on our website.
- Sponsored a resolution supporting the Open Meetings Act and requesting that it not be diluted or changed.

**11. How - if at all - should Tennessee's open meetings and public records laws be improved or changed? Please be specific.**

I do not believe it needs to be changed. I have serious concerns about increasing the number of elected representatives (from the same body) who can meet without public notice and media attendance. I do think that a more clear definition of "deliberate" could be helpful to all.

**12. What concrete steps should Knox County leaders take to restore a sense of trust and confidence in the county's government?**

Act with the public's best interest at the forefront. In education, we need to make all decisions based on what will facilitate our meeting our goal of providing adequate education that equips students to enter into secondary education or the work force with the skills and knowledge that are necessary to function and succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, without the need for remedial course work. All meetings, all discussions, and all work should be done with the community in attendance. Additionally, we need to work to develop more avenues for effective and meaningful two way communication with our constituents.

**13. Please write 100 words below telling a bit about who you are and why you believe voters should cast their ballots for you.**

I have worked tirelessly to lead the school board effectively, efficiently, and ethically to provide the best educational opportunities for our children. Parental involvement and meaningful two way communication with my constituents has been and will continue to be a priority. I invite you to visit my web site at [www.carson08.com](http://www.carson08.com) to learn more about my background, accomplishments and goals for our district. I also welcome your feedback via email, [carsonk@tds.net](mailto:carsonk@tds.net) or my home phone 675-0236. Please support my re-election to office so I can continue to advocate for our schools, our community and most importantly, our children.