



Online VOTERS GUIDE responses for the  
May 10, 2014, Richardson ISD Board of Trustees election:

**Place 7, ballot position 2: Judy A. Yarbrough**



**BIOGRAPHY: (175 word maximum)**

Dr. Judy Yarbrough is a native Texan who has lived in the Richardson Independent School District for a total of 29 years. During those years, she has been involved in school activities with her 4 children for a combined 42 years. Those activities include PTA in 5 schools, high school band fund-raising chair, chaperone, mentor, classroom teacher aide, library aide, and other roles. While raising her children, Judy also earned Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry degrees. Although she has served in a variety of ministry roles, she is currently focusing her ministry on racial relations. Judy is a member of the Dallas Disproportionality and Disparities Advisory Committee of Dallas County that addresses disproportionality and disparity issues in the areas of education, housing, healthcare, and the economy. Judy is also participating in the Dallas Conversations on Race, which is designed to speak to the effects of racial differences. Judy has been married for over 41 years to Charles, an executive with an energy company.

- 1. **Campaign contact information:** [judyarboroughcampaign@gmail.com](mailto:judyarboroughcampaign@gmail.com)  
**Campaign website address:** N/A, [www.facebook.com/judyforplaceseven](http://www.facebook.com/judyforplaceseven)  
**Length of residency in RISD:** 29 years

- 2. **Why do you want to be a Richardson ISD Trustee?**  
 When two sets of parents approached me about running for the school board, careful consideration led me to agree to the task. My relationships with parents at all levels of the education process in RISD allow me to understand the current issues of the district from a parent’s perspective. My education and training equip me to deal with the challenges of the changing demographics of the district and the need to interface with all nationalities.

- 3. **Are you a parent of a past/current/future RISD student?**
  - a. **What grades did your child/children attend a Richardson ISD school?**  
 One attended K, 6-12; one attended 4-12; one attended 2-12; one attended K-12
  - b. **In what ways have you been involved in public school(s) prior to becoming a candidate for the school board?**  
 PTA Lake Highlands Elementary, PTA Moss Haven Elementary, PTA Forest Meadow Jr. High, PTA Lake Highlands Freshman Center, PTA Lake Highlands High School, chaperone for numerous events at all of these schools, mentor, classroom teacher aide



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for clerical as well as student needs, library aide, Lake Highlands Band fund-raising chair, teacher appreciation, Market in the Meadow, other roles as needed

**4. How many RISD school board meetings have you attended in the last year?**

One

**5. Outside of regularly scheduled meetings and work sessions, how many hours per month do you think an RISD Trustee should commit to the job?**

According to information from the current board members, it is not unusual to spend 30-40 hours a month above and beyond regular board meetings and study sessions.

**6. Have you served on any RISD district-level committees? If so, which ones?**

None

**7. What other civic responsibilities have you undertaken?**

**a. What other offices have you run for? When?**

None

**b. What community organizations do you belong to?**

I am currently a member of the Dallas Disproportionality and Disparities advisory committee of Dallas County. This is an action-based committee that addresses disproportional and disparity issues in the areas of education, housing, health care, and the present economy. Educators, health care providers, housing experts, and other community leaders join parents and concerned citizens to advocate for changes in Dallas and state policies that contribute to ongoing disproportional inequities in these areas of society. I have been actively involved in various community outreach projects in an effort to promote awareness among those in my sphere of influence, particularly white people. I am excited to take part in the Dallas Conversations on Race conducted by Mayor Mike Rawlings and City Councilman Dwaine Caraway. These conversations are designed to address the effects of racial differences locally in preparation for the National Conversations on Race Conference to be held in Dallas, in November 2014.

**8. What is your motivation for running for office?**

I am a long time member of the RISD community and have relationships at all age levels. When two sets of young parents approached me about running for the school board, after careful consideration I agreed to the task. At this time in my life, I have the time to devote to the extra responsibilities required of an RISD trustee. As a member of this district I recognize the importance of supporting our school system although I no longer have children in the schools of RISD.



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9. **Board members must, at times, decide to support or to oppose controversial issues that have vocal supporters on both sides. What process(es) would you use, and with whom would you consult, in making such decisions?**

The board is body corporate, and in such a position, must work to accomplish unity within the board and then decide how to approach the controversial issue. In preparation for making such a decision, I will listen to those who support each side of the issue, consult those who are aware of the issue but not a part of the controversy, and then work with the board to reach a fair and just decision.

10. **Describe your experience in the areas of legislative advocacy and education policy.**  
None

11. **The State of Texas passed new graduation requirements for next year's ninth graders and beyond. What are your thoughts on implementing those in RISD and how they will impact students and campuses? Are there other specific changes you want to see made in our schools' curriculum?**

As allowed by the State, RISD has decided to allow students to opt out of Algebra II in the graduation requirements. While I think this is appropriate I also think we should strongly encourage students to take Algebra II because it is a requirement for admission to most colleges and universities. Recognizing that some students ultimately do not desire to attend college, we need to offer additional courses to prepare these students to pursue vocations after high school. The goals of Vision 2020 adequately address changes needed in our curriculum.

12. **Describe how you would provide quality education for a diverse student population. (e.g., the gifted and talented, the average student, special needs students, the physically challenged, the academically challenged, English language learners, and those with cultural differences). How will your solution impact the budget?**

The district does a good job in all these areas, but additional enrichment is needed for those great students who are not in the TAG program and do not need the special attention given the academically challenged student. Both of these needs can be met with increased mentoring and other forms of assistance from community volunteers, which will reduce the impact on the budget.

13. **How important are Fine Arts and extra-curricular activities, such as Athletics, to a student's education? How should they be funded?**

Extra-curricular activities are very important. The district should be the primary funding source for extra-curricular activities, with supplemental funding through booster clubs and parents.



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14. **What are your financial priorities for the school district? (e.g., reduction in class size? improved technology in the classroom? maintaining current programs? increasing school employee compensation? other?)**

Reducing class size is a top priority. This can be accomplished with a combination of adding classrooms and more teachers.

15. **What skills do you have that will enable you to manage the budget?**

I have managed my family budget during the addition of children, job loss, college educations, graduate school, and planning for retirement and the possible need for long term care. I also managed the budget of a preschool and children's ministry that included the oversight of a weekday program, supply purchases such as classroom furniture and equipment, provisions for creative learning experiences, and training for teachers and other staff.

16. **Should RISD continue to provide the Optional Homestead Exemption to taxpayers?**

Yes, at this time I believe the exemption should be continued. We may want to revisit this exemption depending upon the outcome of the current lawsuits concerning state school financing.

17. **The District is anticipating a Bond Election in 2016. What do you think are RISD's needs and areas that should be considered for inclusion in this potential Bond Program?**

Increasing the number of classrooms is an ongoing priority. Additionally, building classrooms for vocational courses will be helpful to meet the needs of students who are not college bound. The ongoing implementation of technological needs as described in Goal 1 of Vision 2020 should also be considered.

18. **What can a trustee do to deal with less effective teachers?**

An individual board member should have no involvement with specific teacher decisions related to classroom effectiveness. As a board, we can continue to offer professional development opportunities to our teachers.

19. **What can a trustee do to help a non-technology-savvy teacher become more technologically literate?**

Professional development courses can be provided or made available for those teachers who need assistance in this area.