



### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF RICHARDSON

300 North Coit Road, Suite 125 • Richardson TX 75080

972-470-0584 • Website, including a *VOTERS GUIDE* with more questions: <http://www.lwvrichardson.org>



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This *VOTERS GUIDE* is a community service to voters of the City of Richardson and the Richardson Independent School District. Candidate responses published in this guide were obtained by means of a questionnaire sent to each candidate. Responses are printed exactly as received and must meet word limits. Excess words in a candidate's response have been replaced with an ellipsis (...).

This guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Richardson and funded by the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund through donations from Richardson area residents and businesses. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government and works to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

#### Important Election Dates:

Last day to register to vote:	April 10 (Thursday)	
In-person early voting period:	April 28 – May 3 (Monday through Saturday) May 4 (Sunday) May 5 – May 6 (Monday through Tuesday)	8:00am - 5:00pm 1:00pm - 6:00pm 7:00am - 7:00pm
Last day to <b>receive</b> application for Ballot by Mail:	May 1 (Thursday)	
Election Day:	May 10 (Saturday)	7:00am – 7:00pm
Runoff Election, <i>if necessary</i> :	June 21 (Saturday)	

**Early Voting:** Early voting by personal appearance is conducted by your County Elections Department. In the Richardson ISD, polling places are located at:

Richardson Civic Center  
411 West Arapaho Road  
Richardson, TX 75080

Fretz Park Library  
6990 Belt Line  
Dallas, TX 75254

Bethany Lutheran Church  
10101 Walnut Hill Lane  
Dallas, TX 75238

You may vote early at any polling place located throughout Dallas County. For a complete list of early voting times and locations, go to the Dallas County Elections Department website listed below.

Early voting will use touch screen electronic voting devices.

**Election Day:** Polls are open at your local precinct polling place from 7am to 7pm. For a complete list of polling places, go to Dallas County Elections Department website, listed below.

Election Day voting will be by optical scan ballots (paper ballots) in Dallas County.

Dallas County Elections Department  
(214) 637-7937  
<http://www.dallascountyvotes.org>

#### **Richardson Independent School District Board of Trustees**

Richardson Independent School District voters elect seven (7) board members to serve three-year staggered terms. All seven are elected at-large and serve without compensation. Service on the board is voluntary and members must complete extensive orientation as well as continued training throughout their terms.

The Board of Trustees has the executive power and duty to govern and oversee the management of RISD. Acting as a collective body, the Board sets the direction for the school district. Some of the Board's general responsibilities include:

- Setting district policies and supporting administrators and teachers in the execution of those policies.
- Adopting the annual budget.
- Employing and evaluating the superintendent.
- Levying/collecting taxes and issuing bonds.
- Performing specific duties imposed by the state.

Place 6 and Place 7 seats are being contested in the May 10, 2014, election. Candidates filing for those positions (*in ballot order*):

Place 6: Justin Bono ♦ Rachel Chumney

Place 7: Kristin Kuhne ♦ Judy A. Yarbrough ♦ Bonnie Abadie

The 2014 Richardson ISD Board of Trustees who remain on the board:

Place 1: Adam Meierhofer

Place 3: Kris Oliver

Place 5: Karen Holburn

Place 2: Kim Caston

Place 4: Lanet Greenhaw

<b>RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b> <i>For candidate responses to more questions, go to <a href="http://www.lwvrichardson.org">www.lwvrichardson.org</a></i>	
Place 6, Ballot Position 1 (2 candidates on the ballot)	Place 6, Ballot Position 2 (2 candidates on the ballot)
<b>Why do you want to serve the community as a School Board Trustee? (75 words)</b>	
 <p><b>Justin Bono</b></p> <p>As a son of two public school educators, I have grown up with a keen awareness of the power of education. I believe there is no more important cause to support, and am excited to combine my passion with my significant business background to make a contribution to the RISD Board of Trustees in order to ensure that RISD continues remain a premier district for my children and the other 38,000 students in the district.</p>	 <p><b>Rachel Chumney</b></p> <p>I'm committed to being a positive force for RISD. I have demonstrated my commitment through my extensive involvement in our community and schools. This commitment is fueled by my strong vision and passion for enhancing public education and RISD. As a mother of 3 children in our schools, I'll bring a valuable and unique perspective to the Board. I'm a creative thinker and problem solver. My vision and experience make me an ideal Trustee.</p>
<b>What decisions could the school board make to encourage creativity and critical thinking by the students? (100 words)</b>	
<p>The district has done a great job in beginning the implementation of initiatives such as Differentiated Instruction, School-Wide Enrichment and Project Based Learning. These tools provide a change of pace for students, excite them around topics they are learning about, challenge their creativity, and help with critical thinking. We need to continue to bring more "real world" scenarios into our classrooms to help our students link what they are learning with the outside world. The business community would be a great asset in this regard providing real world problems to solve with these critical thinking skills as well.</p>	<p>We can begin by placing less emphasis on standardized testing. If we are able to spend less time teaching test-taking skills, we will have more opportunities to create innovative learning environments that are tailored to each student's individual needs and interests. This student-focused approach will enable students to develop their own learning style at their natural pace. While memorization does have its place in education, we must strive to equip our students with the skills that will prepare them for the workforce. We must provide a meaningful curriculum that fosters creative and critical thinking and problem solving.</p>
<b>What are the two (2) most important challenges facing the RISD? What decisions can the school board make that are needed to meet these challenges? (125 words)</b>	
<p>The Mission of RISD is to serve and prepare all students for their global future. Given that mission statement, we must (1) ensure that students are fully prepared for college or a career after high school and (2) that this preparedness extends to all our students regardless of their background or the challenges that they come to us with. The new degree plans and the examination of our career and technology programs being done by the career and technology task force are big steps in the right direction. Additionally, our district recently commissioned audits that yielded recommended improvements for our gifted and talented, dyslexia, and special education programs. The resulting changes will literally touch each student and the board must ensure that all are implemented ...</p>	<p>Our students and teachers are the two areas that are most deserving of our attention. It is my mission to ensure that each student in RISD is given every opportunity to reach his or her full individual potential. I want our students to love learning and to be successful throughout their educational careers. We must support and honor our teachers by giving them the resources and flexibility they need to do their jobs effectively. It is imperative that we continue to recruit and retain high quality and dedicated educators. Happy and competent teachers make happy and competent learners.</p>
<b>How should the school board handle space-needs issues? (100 words)</b>	
<p>This is very difficult challenge to manage and can't be met with a one size fits all approach. With the projected growth in many areas of RISD in the coming years, space changes are inevitable. We must ensure that we are making all decisions with long term vision while looking very carefully at all potential factors including demographics, transfer policies, construction related issues, magnet programs, and new school construction. Nothing should be off the table, but we should make well informed, careful, deliberate decisions to ensure that the resulting action is in the best interest of each individual neighborhood.</p>	<p>The first thing we need to do is make sure we have a long-term strategic plan in place (based on reliable demographic studies) so that we aren't forced to make quick fixes that take parents and residents by surprise. We need to make every effort to maintain our treasured neighborhood schools because they can have a tremendous positive impact on our children's education as well as home values. It's vital that stakeholders are given a meaningful opportunity to participate in the decision-making process when it comes to expanding existing schools or building new ones.</p>

**RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

*For candidate responses to more questions, go to [www.lwvrichardson.org](http://www.lwvrichardson.org)*

**Place 7, Ballot Position 1** (3 candidates on the ballot)

**Place 7, Ballot Position 2** (3 candidates on the ballot)

**Why do you want to serve the community as a School Board Trustee? (75 words)**



**Kristin Kuhne**

I'm an RISD alum and parent who chose to raise my family here because of the great schools. I believe in public service and want to give back to the school district that has given my family so much. My commitment to public education is grounded in my personal and professional experiences. I've studied and worked in education policy and practice for 10+ years, and I'm eager to use that knowledge to serve my community.



**Judy A. Yarbrough**

When two sets of parents approached me about running for the Board of Trustees, careful consideration led me to agree to the task. My relationship with parents at all levels of the education process in RISD allows me to understand the current issues of the district from a parent's perspective. My education and training equipped me to deal with the challenges of the changing demographics of the district and need to interface with all nationalities.

**What decisions could the school board make to encourage creativity and critical thinking by the students? (100 words)**

The school board should continue to embrace the use of innovative instructional strategies such as differentiated instruction and project-based learning to engage students in their own learning, at their own pace. Strategies like these provide students with rigorous and relevant educational experiences that allow them to think critically, solve problems creatively and engage them in their own learning. While there will be adjustments to be made with these new instructional strategies as they're rolled out, research has shown them to be successful in engaging and challenging students to achieve at their highest potential.

I believe RISD already does an excellent job of challenging students who qualify for TAG levels. Special attention is also given to those with special needs, such as dyslexia, English language learners, and those requiring special education. It seems, however, that additional resources should be provided for those who are great students but not at the level of TAG students and not in need of special services. The Vision 2020 plan calls for school wide enrichment and the board should prioritize offering more opportunities for creative and critical thinking among students who are not covered by the existing enrichment programs.

**What are the two (2) most important challenges facing the RISD? What decisions can the school board make that are needed to meet these challenges? (125 words)**

One important challenge facing RISD is expanding the use of technology to differentiate instruction. Allocating resources to the expansion of digital tools is an investment that will enhance student learning and offer cost efficiencies. In addition to digital fluency, we must ensure all students have a pathway to meaningful employment after high school. Recent studies have shown that 60% of all new jobs created in the next decade will require more than a high school diploma, but not all will require a four year degree. The board must support rigorous and relevant CTE programs that provide students with "on ramps" to all types of postsecondary education, valuing them equally, in order to provide each student an education that enables them to reach their highest potential.

The growing number of students in the RISD is an immediate challenge that must be addressed. Although the Superintendent and Board of Trustees are attending to this issue, the need for more teachers and more classrooms is escalating. Balancing the use of the appropriated funds with the teacher support and physical needs is critical.

**How should the school board handle space-needs issues? (100 words)**

The revitalization of many RISD neighborhoods is a positive trend that reflects the strength of our schools, yet presents space needs that require thoughtful consideration. Neighborhood schools are highly valued by RISD residents. This value will be a chief consideration for me in any decisions made about school expansion. As a trustee, it is imperative to me that the board's decision-making process includes time to gather and consider all the relevant data and community input in order to craft long-term, sustainable solutions that best meet the needs of our students and families.

Providing more classrooms and/or schools presents a challenge. As the population of the district grows the schools must keep pace. The parents and community can be a good support group for making decisions as to what type spaces will best meet the needs of the district and the particular area in which the space is added. An example of this is the Lake Highlands Freshman Center. The Board of Trustees, Superintendent, parents, and community members were a part of the decision making process and the plan has been well received and successful.

<b>RICHARDSON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b> <i>For candidate responses to more questions, go to <a href="http://www.lwvrichardson.org">www.lwvrichardson.org</a></i>	
<b>Place 7, Ballot Position 3</b> (3 candidates on the ballot)	
<b>Why do you want to serve the community as a School Board Trustee?</b> (75 words)	
 Bonnie Abadie	<b>Richardson ISD</b> <b>Board of Trustees Candidate Forum</b>  <b>Thursday, April 24, 2014</b> <b>7:00pm</b>
<b>What decisions could the school board make to encourage creativity and critical thinking by the students?</b> (100 words)	
The creativity and critical thinking instruction strategies have been proven by researchers to work in every classroom with all children. I believe every teacher needs to receive the 30-hour gifted training and 6-hour annual updates necessary for ensuring differentiated instruction occurs in all general education classrooms. Gifted training offers high-level professional development for teachers, who have asked for such support, according to education researchers, time and again. With special education student inclusion in general classrooms, children of all socioeconomic statuses and cultures will benefit on high-stakes tests like STAAR if critical thinking and differentiated instruction strategies expand to all classrooms.	<b>Richardson ISD</b> <b>Administration Building Auditorium</b> 400 S. Greenville Avenue Richardson, TX 75081
<b>What are the two (2) most important challenges facing the RISD? What decisions can the school board make that are needed to meet these challenges?</b> (125 words)	
(1) Even though RISD is known for its best practices with students of all socioeconomics and cultures, it loses too many teachers annually. Retaining teachers for the long term requires providing ongoing administrative support and professional training as strategies leading to positive morale and longer-term retention. (2) RISD must adapt to growth due to new residential developments and the opening of State Farm's headquarters. RISD has the resources in place to support expanding schools through online learning and creative instruction because of its magnet schools and programs. To ensure our reputation for excellence, the families living within the district who offer suggestions for improving the district and retaining bright students living within its boundaries, I will advocate for all parents and teachers.	Sponsored by:  <b>League of Women Voters of Richardson</b> and <b>Richardson ISD Council of PTAs</b>
<b>How should the school board handle space-needs issues?</b> (100 words)	
In the 2016 bond election, the board should strongly consider funding new magnet schools and programs, including gifted and online magnets. Lake Highlands families may attend only one nearby elementary magnet school and must travel to the other side of the district geographically to attend junior high and high school magnets. I want to make enrollment at any magnet school more accessible to all students, no matter the attendance area. This blurring of the boundary lines does not negatively affect the smaller neighborhood schools and offers greater benefit to children from all socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds.	Do you have a question you want the candidates to answer at the forum? Email it to  <a href="mailto:voterservice@lwvrichardson.org">voterservice@lwvrichardson.org</a>  Questions that are emailed are given the same consideration as questions submitted at the forum. Questions will be screened according to <i>League of Women Voters of Texas Guide to Candidates Forums.</i>