

Cadence Collins

Introduction

- ❖ Please briefly describe yourself and why you are running for Knox County Board of Education.
 - *Hi, there!*
 - *I'm Cadence Collins, and I am running to represent District 6 on the Knox County School Board because you deserve someone who cares.*
 - *I care about our kids, teachers, and the future of our public schools. I care about you. Your voice matters to me.*
 - *A little bit about me: I was born and raised in District 6, in Hardin Valley. I was fortunate enough to attend both Karns and Hardin Valley schools. I am the daughter, niece, and granddaughter of educators, and I followed in their footsteps to become a theatre educator. Now, my full-time job is being a mom to my incredible 2-year-old daughter, Ottilie. Becoming a mom completely shifted my worldview. I thought I cared, but I didn't understand how deeply I could care until I had my daughter.*
 - *My daughter was 6 months old when I heard about the voucher program that would strip public funds from our public schools to subsidize private school students' education. I was immediately concerned, and I knew I needed to make my voice heard. I reached out to my school board rep, Betsy Henderson, and I never received so much as an automated email saying that she received my calls and emails. I remember how it felt to be ignored, to be told in actions if not in words that my voice didn't matter. I decided then and there that I would channel my anger, my concern, my care into action.*
 - *We, the people, deserve leaders who communicate, who are transparent, and who are of service to the people and communities they are elected to represent.*
 - *District 6 deserves so much better than what it's been getting.*
 - *District 6 deserves schools that are fully funded, that are up to code, and ADA-compliant. Schools that are not only functional, but beautiful. District 6 educators deserve to be paid their worth, to have the freedom and autonomy to teach the way they know best, to love going to work, and not be burnt out carrying burdens that are not theirs to bear. And our students, all of our students, deserve to feel safe physically, mentally, and emotionally in our schools.*
 - *District 6 deserves all of this and so much more.*
 - *So, let's get to work!*
 - *Let's create better schools together.*

Use of Active Transportation

- ❖ How often do you walk for transportation?
 - *Very infrequently*
- ❖ How often do you walk for recreation?
 - *Somewhat frequently*
- ❖ How often do you ride a bicycle for transportation?
 - *Very infrequently*
- ❖ How often do you ride a bicycle for recreation?
 - *Very infrequently*
- ❖ How often do you take public transportation?
 - *Very infrequently*

Active Transportation Infrastructure

- ❖ Please indicate your support for the following:
 - Sidewalks
 - *Strongly favor*
 - Please explain the reasoning behind your response.
 - *A major reason why I rarely walk, ride, or take public transit is that I am out in the county where we don't have many sidewalks, safe bike lanes, and zero public transportation options. I am a big believer in how the Social Determinants of Health impact everyone's health and well-being in the community, and I am an advocate for increasing sidewalks to encourage healthy habits and to provide safe areas for kids to walk to and from school.*
 - Unprotected bike lanes (bike lanes without any physical barriers providing separation from the lane of vehicular traffic)
 - *Neutral*
 - Please explain the reasoning behind your response.
 - *I would prefer a physical barrier for added safety, but I believe an unprotected bike lane is better than none (like we do not have in my neighborhood).*
 - Protected bike lanes (bike lanes with physical barriers providing separation from the lane of vehicular traffic)
 - *Somewhat favor*
 - Please explain the reasoning behind your response.
 - *I am not an expert on this subject matter, so I replied with "somewhat favor" as I am open to hearing from experts on why or why not this would be the safest option. My instinct is that in a town like Knoxville,*

and especially in our more rural areas in the county, our drivers are not accustomed to looking for cyclists in a bike lane. I would imagine having a physical barrier would better keep drivers in the driving lane and cyclists in the bike lane.

- Greenways
 - *Strongly favor*
- Please explain the reasoning behind your response.
 - *I strongly favor greenways as I believe they improve community health and are environmentally friendly. I love being able to walk in nature along the many greenways in Knoxville!*
- Traffic calming (improvements in non-motorist safety, mobility, and comfort typically achieved by reducing vehicle speeds or volumes on a single street or a street network)
 - *Strongly favor*
- Please explain the reasoning behind your response.
 - *When we reduce traffic speed, we limit injuries and save lives. I believe it is especially crucial to support traffic calming around preschools, schools, and playgrounds where we anticipate children being at play nearby.*
- ❖ Please describe your vision for active transportation infrastructure around schools in Knox County, and how you would use your position as a member of the Knox County Board of Education to achieve that vision.
 - *This is a daunting question, but I would love to work with the County Commission to build a plan that would address our infrastructure in Knox County. Where I am located in the county, we do not have adequate sidewalks, bike lanes, or public transportation to help students get to school, especially for students who live within the "Parental Responsibility Zone."*
 - *My ask to the County Commission would be to collaborate with the School Board to increase the number of sidewalks around our schools, especially within the Parental Responsibility Zone.*
 - *On the School Board, I would advocate for reducing the distance in the PRZ from 1 mile as the crow flies, to .5 mile, or to take into account if there are safe walkable paths to the school from the home to the school. It is not acceptable to not provide bus service to kids because they live within the PRZ, when they have no access to sidewalks or bike lanes. We see issues with delinquency because students in the PRZ can't find a way to school if the parents don't have the ability to drive them to school every day.*

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a program aimed at making walking and biking to school safer for students. Most often this is in the form of a Walking School Bus (WSB), where school staff and other adult volunteers accompany children walking to or from school, resulting in healthier students and a safer environment. Walking School Bus programming helps reduce traffic and air pollution surrounding schools due to a decrease in the amount of cars idling, increases regular physical activity for students, leads to better academic performance, and can reduce student absences and tardiness. A Walking School Bus is beneficial to everyone in the school environment, but especially serves students and families living in the Parental Responsibility Zone (PRZ).

- ❖ Please rank your priorities for active transportation around Knox County Schools.
 - Complete sidewalk networks
 - *Essential*
 - Complete bike facilities networks
 - *Essential*
 - Safe vehicular traffic speeds on roadways
 - *Essential*
 - Programming to support walking/biking to school
 - *Essential*
- ❖ Please indicate your support for Safe Routes to School and Walking School Bus programming.
 - *Strongly favor*
- ❖ What are your biggest concerns regarding student safety when walking and/or biking to school?
 - *I am very concerned about our children who have to walk to school without sidewalks. I've heard from students who have to cross active train tracks while walking to school. It is not acceptable to have our students take on risk to their physical safety and well-being simply to get to school. I am in support of SRTS and Walking School Buses to help offset these risks until we can invest more fully in creating safe infrastructure.*

Miscellaneous

- ❖ Please share your thoughts on Parental Responsibility Zones (PRZs) and their impact on transportation opportunities for Knox County Schools students and families.
 - *I believe the PRZ needs an overhaul. It doesn't make sense to draw the lines the way they currently do, "as the crow flies." If we insist on making the PRZ based on a distance of 1 mile, I believe that needs to be 1 mile of walking on public streets, not cutting through fields, private property, or crossing creeks*

or train tracks. There are major issues with PRZs and the impact it has on students and families. I look forward to working with other members of the school board to make amendments to the current policy.

- ❖ Please share your thoughts on how walking and biking contribute to student physical and mental health and well-being.
 - *Walking and biking contribute to students' overall well-being in many ways! Walking and biking are great for cardiovascular health, and being outside in nature is great for mental well-being! Getting outside early in the day can help with Vitamin D absorption, and having good levels of Vitamin D in the body helps with mood stabilization. Walking and biking also help establish these healthy, active habits from an early age, increasing the likelihood that these habits will continue into adulthood.*
- ❖ In respect to active transportation around Knox County Schools, what do you think the Board of Education has done well?
 - *I have seen where the Board of Education has done a walk to school along with families. I think it is important for the Board to walk the walk and not just talk the talk when it comes to encouraging our families to get active.*
- ❖ In respect to active transportation around Knox County Schools, what do you think the Board of Education could do better?
 - *I believe the Board of Education could do better at advocating for our kids who live within the PRZ and making amendments to policy that would increase safety and drastically cut down on the risks our students take just getting to school.*
- ❖ Is there anything else you would like to share related to active transportation, safety, and/or infrastructure?
 - *Thank you for advocating for better infrastructure in Knox County. The lack of sidewalks and safe areas to bike out in the County has been a great concern of mine. I enjoy walking, but I hate having to drive to a location 15 mins away to park, and then walk. I would love if everyone had access to walk safely around their neighborhoods, preferably with options that connect them to their community, schools, and shops as well.*