



Voter Guide for Elections on May 7, 2022

Blanco County

League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan civic organization and does not support or oppose any candidate or candidates or political party or parties. This Voter Guide provides voters an opportunity to read about candidates who have filed for an office in local Primary Elections. All responses to questions come directly from the candidates and are not edited by League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas.

Deadline Dates for Election on May 7, 2022		
Register to Vote/Change Address		
Thursday	April 7	Last day to register to vote
Voting by Mail		
Saturday	January 1	First day to request Mail in Ballot
Monday	April 25	Last day to apply for Mail in Ballot
Saturday	May 7	Last day to return Mail in Ballot
Early Voting		
Monday	April 25	First day to vote in-person
Tuesday	May 3	Last day to vote in-person
Election Day		
Saturday	May 7	In-person at voting precinct location

The League of Women Voters of Hill Country Texas produced this Voter Guide, which includes information on the following elections on Saturday - May 7, 2022: two proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution, Blanco City Council, Blanco ISD School Board & Bond, Fredericksburg ISD School Board & Bond, and Johnson City ISD School Board.

The voter guide is available in printed form in Blanco County at the two libraries and online at the website: lwvhillcountrytexas.org. The League of Women Voters of the Hill Country Texas also provides election information on the proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution and local elections at the website: VOTE411.org. A voter enters the address on their Voter Registration card to access the information.

Voter Guide for the May 7, 2022 Elections in Blanco County

Voting Information for Elections on Saturday - May 7, 2022

A voter needs to check their blue voter registration card to determine which elections apply to their residence address. Sample ballots and other Information from the Blanco County Election Department posted online: <https://www.co.blanco.tx.us/page/blanco.Elections>

Take a photo ID with you to the voting location.

Curb-side voting is available for Early Voting and on Election Day.

Remember: no cell phones, no texting, no photos, no campaign material, no loitering

ELECTION CONDUCTED BY THE BLANCO COUNTY ELECTION DEPARTMENT: CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Early Voting in two locations:

Blanco County Courthouse Annex - Hoppe Room 101 East Cypress Street Johnson City

Blanco County South Annex 402 Blanco Avenue Blanco

Sunday April 24	Monday April 25	Tuesday April 26	Wednesday April 27	Thursday April 28	Friday April 29	Saturday April 30
	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	

Sunday May 1	Monday May 2	Tuesday May 3	Wednesday May 4	Thursday May 5	Friday May 6	Saturday May 7
	8am-5pm	8am-5pm				Election Day

Election Day: Saturday - May 7 Locations open 7:00am to 7:00pm

The blue voter registration card details the elections for the voter residence address and the voting precinct where the voter must go to cast a ballot on Election Day.

Precincts	Location	Address	City
102	Faith Baptist Church	1200 4th Street	Blanco
201	Good Shephard Catholic Church	285 Highway 281 Loop	Johnson City
302 & 302	Blanco County Annex - Hoppe Room	101 East Cypress Street	Johnson City
401	Blanco County South Annex	402 Blanco Avenue	Blanco

Proposed Amendments to the Texas Constitution

Proposition 1

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the homestead."

Explanatory Statement per the website for the Texas Secretary of State

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of property taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled in order to reflect any statutory reduction in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the person's homestead from the preceding tax year.

Explanation by the League of Women Voters of Texas

The Texas Constitution puts a ceiling on school property taxes paid by homeowners who are disabled or at least 65 years old. This means that for disabled and elderly homeowners, certain property tax rates cannot be higher than what they were the year they first qualified for this exemption. Since school property taxes make up most of a homeowner's tax bill, their property tax bills are essentially frozen unless improvements are made to their residence or they move.

In 2019, the Texas State Legislature passed a law which provided a property tax reduction to many homeowners. However, this reduction did not apply to disabled or elderly homeowners because under the Texas Constitution, their tax rate is frozen.

Proposition 1 would amend the Constitution to allow disabled and elderly homeowners to receive the benefits from the 2019 property tax reduction that other homeowners received. This amendment would result in freezing their tax rate at a lower rate. This will allow all homeowners to benefit from the lower tax rates passed in 2019.

The law related to this proposed amendment requires that the state reimburse school districts for revenues lost due to this proposition.

Arguments For:

- The proposed amendment would provide significant property tax relief to disabled and elderly homeowners.
- This amendment would allow more people to benefit from lower tax rates passed in 2019.
- Many individuals who are disabled or elderly live on fixed incomes. The proposed amendment would provide them with financial relief as well as budget certainty.

Arguments Against:

- Opponents argue that this proposition does not resolve the problem of relying on property taxes to fund public schools.
- While school districts are to be reimbursed by the state for any revenues lost, the proposed amendment could reduce funds for public schools if proper formulas are not put in place.
- There may be other Texans more in need of tax relief, and some homeowners in the groups given tax relief by this proposition may not be in need.

Proposition 2

"The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000."

Explanatory Statement per the website for the Texas Secretary of State

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from property taxes for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000.

Explanation by the League of Women Voters of Texas

Currently, homeowners are able to reduce the market value of their primary residence by \$25,000 when calculating their annual school property taxes. The proposed amendment would increase the amount of that reduction to \$40,000. This could lower homeowners' annual property tax bills.

The law related to this proposed amendment requires that the state reimburse school districts for revenues lost due to this proposition.

Arguments For:

- This amendment would save homeowners money in the form of property tax relief.
- This proposition should not impact public school revenues because the state would be required to make up any shortfall.
- This decrease in property taxes would particularly help low to moderate-income homeowners.

Arguments Against:

- The proposed amendment could reduce public school revenues if the formulas put in place by the state do not fully reimburse the local school districts for the losses.
- This property tax reduction will cost the state money if they reimburse lost revenue to school districts. The cost to the state will depend on the laws passed to make up any shortfall.
- The proposed amendment does not benefit those who are not homeowners, including renters who send their children to public schools.

CITY OF BLANCO:
CITY COUNCIL - 3 COUNCIL MEMBERS (AT-LARGE)

Early Voting in one location: Blanco City Hall 300 Pecan Street Blanco

Sunday April 24	Monday April 25	Tuesday April 26	Wednesday April 27	Thursday April 28	Friday April 29	Saturday April 30
	8:00am-5:00pm	8:00am- 5:00pm	8:00am-5:00pm	8:00am-5:00pm	8:00am-5:00pm	

Sunday May 1	Monday May 2	Tuesday May 3	Wednesday May 4	Thursday May 5	Friday May 6	Saturday May 7
	8:00am-5:00pm	8:00am-5:00pm				Election Day

Election Day: Saturday - March 7 Locations open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Voting in one location for city election: Blanco ISD Administrative Office 814 Eleventh Street Blanco

City Council Members for three positions

Blanco is a General Law (Type A) city with a charter and elected city council and mayor form of government. The five members of the city council are elected at large, and each council member represents all residents within the city limits of Blanco. The election is for three at large positions, and the three candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared as elected. The term of office is two years.

Duties: appoint the city manager; oversee the city manager and the direction of the city; approve the city budget and the tax rate; set salaries and benefits of city employees; pass ordinances and resolutions; appoint members to advisory boards. The term of office is two years.

Deda Devine	Ryan Moses
Website:	Campaign email: ryan36roo@yahoo.com

Mike Smith	Rodney Thrailkill
Campaign email: mtexsmith@gmail.com	Campaign email: rbt76@hotmail.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a Council member for the City of Blanco?

Devine: Candidate did not respond.

Moses: I feel what qualifies me to serve on the Blanco City Council is my genuine care and concern for this community. I have lived here for more than twenty-five years. I have seen the changes the city has gone thru in those years, and the challenges that go with them. I was born and raised in Ft. Collins, Colorado. I witnessed the path and cost of that city while growing and improving. I intend to offer the people of this city an avenue to be heard. My patients and knowledge will be an asset for this city.

Smith: Mike Smith has over 40 years of business experience and 50 years experience in real estate. Mike has served on municipal boards, commissions and councils for over 20 years. He brings knowledge of business and financial accountability needed to help the City of Blanco.

Thrailkill: Before moving to Blanco I started and was elected president of a neighborhood association serving approximately 10 thousand citizens. During this time I worked closely with our district city councilman advocating for the neighborhood and it's residents. This included ushering in a five acre park from land acquisition to development. Additionally I completed the City Works Academy familiarizing myself with city government. My most important qualification however is my ability and promise to listen to the community and it's long time residents.

What are the most pressing issues facing the City of Blanco?

Devine: Candidate did not respond.

Moses: I believe the most pressing issues facing the Blanco City Council is progress. The current City Council has had to tackle many issues that affect the heart of our community. It's no secret that Blanco has been behind the times for a long time. That is what most of us love about Blanco so much. The world has changed around us, and now Blanco is trying to catch up. My knowledge in construction can help guide this city wisely over those hurdles.

Smith: The City of Blanco faces unprecedented demands due to the monumental growth of the Texas Hill Country. Whether we want it or not, it must be dealt with wisely. Mike Smith will work to provide a plan for controlled growth

that will benefit our community. This growth will impact our water, sewer, infrastructure, traffic and river. If not addressed correctly now, it will become unmanageable in the future. Taking care of all these areas is a necessity.

Thraikill: Population and development pressure are straining the Texas Hill country including the Blanco river. Our city is special and we must preserve our small town rural character, it's resources, and the close knit community which supports each other and makes Blanco home.

What are citizens of Blanco telling you about the problems of the city?

Devine: Candidate did not respond.

Moses: The list of concerns from fellow citizens is quite long. Most who have lived here for more than ten years want the town to stop changing. We don't want to lose the small quiet town that we love. We do want clean safe drinking water. We want reliable sewer service to all city residents. We want better roads with curb and gutter. Underground utilities. We want the safest city possible. We want our Police, Fire Department, EMS, and City Employees to be properly funded and happy to serve this community. Don't dare raise taxes.

Smith: Blanco citizens are concerned about traffic, streets (infrastructure), water and sewer. Protecting the integrity of the Blanco River by controlling our uses and by keeping it sound and pristine now and in the future is of the utmost importance to our citizens. The financial reform, we began 2 years ago, needs to be completed.

Thraikill: People want access to goods, services, jobs, and housing while preserving the city's character and way of life. Citizens expect infrastructure that works: water in our pipes we can drink, roads we can drive on.

**BLANCO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:
SCHOOL BOARD (PLACES 5 & 6 & 7) AND BOND ELECTION**

Early Voting in one location: Blanco ISD Administrative Office 814 Eleventh Street Blanco

Sunday April 24	Monday April 25	Tuesday April 26	Wednesday April 27	Thursday April 28	Friday April 29	Saturday April 30
	7:00am-6:00pm	7:00am- 7:00pm	7:00am-6:00pm	7:00am-7:00pm	7:00am-6:00pm	

Sunday May 1	Monday May 2	Tuesday May 3	Wednesday May 4	Thursday May 5	Friday May 6	Saturday May 7
	7:00am-6:00pm	7:00am-6:00pm				Election Day

Election Day: Saturday - May 7 Location open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Voting in one location: Blanco ISD Administrative Office 814 Eleventh Street Blanco

Blanco Independent School District - Board of Trustees

The Blanco ISD Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees elected by eligible voters to serve a three-year term. Each trustee serves in a numbered position and represents the entire school district. Elections are held annually on the May uniform election date. Blanco ISD boundaries are in Blanco County, Hays County, and Kendall County.

Duties: adopt goals and priorities and monitor success; adopt policies and review for effectiveness; hire and evaluate the superintendent; adopt a budget and a calendar for the school year; set the tax rate; and communicate with the community.

Blanco ISD School Board Place 5

Joe Hernandez	Joshua Mann
Website:	Facebook: Joshua Mann for BISSD School Board

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a member of the Blanco ISD School Board?

Hernandez: I have continuously represented and participated in numerous organizations in our community. More importantly, I have 6 years of active experience on the Blanco ISD school board to include yearly Board Member training and team building, training provided by the Texas Association of School Boards. Because of the training, I am and will be an effective and successful school board trustee for the students, teachers/staff, and community.

Mann: I have always wanted to be a part of the school board and help serve the community of young learners. I believe in the quality of public education and want to help make sure that our students, current and future, get the greatest possible education that can be offered. With our small town growing every day it is essential to make sure that the district is prepared with the appropriate facilities, educational programs, and most importantly, the necessary staffing.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Blanco Independent School District?

Hernandez:

Recruiting and retention of teachers
Aging Facilities

Mann: The biggest issue that any district faces is prioritizing expenditures (from the administration down to the teachers) and while BISD district leaders must use these priorities to keep up with the growth of Blanco, they must make decisions with the student in mind.

What are citizens and parents telling you about the problems of the school district?

Hernandez: From speaking with citizens and parents, they are concerned about the growth of the student population, teacher retention and pay, and the aging facilities. Blanco ISD constantly monitors student growth and is working to keep class sizes within reasonable and controllable limits. The district has provided pay raises and retention checks to staff over the last few years. Blanco ISD has a Strategic Facilities Plan in place and steps are being taken to resolve the issues. In May of 2022, Blanco ISD will hold a \$40 Million Dollar Bond Election, WITHOUT A SCHOOL TAX RATE INCREASE!

Mann: I am hearing concern about the class sizes in the elementary and the lack of support our teachers are receiving. There seems to be a lack of trust as to if the board ask questions regarding spending and decisions making coming from the administration. Many feel what the admin presents to the board the board approves without asking questions or digging deeper. They would also like to see some of the educational programs return that were lost back when the district cut staff and more communication between the community and the district.

Blanco ISD School Board Place 6

Chad Meyer	Candidate is unopposed and candidate name is on the ballot.
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Blanco ISD School Board Place 7

Kathy Kersten	Candidate is unopposed and candidate name is on the ballot.
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Blanco Independent School District - Bond Election

Proposition A

"The issuance of 40,000,000 of bonds by the Blanco Independent School District for school facilities (including renovations of existing school facilities, construction of an educational center for the arts and athletics building at the high school, construction of a new gymnasium at the elementary school, and district-wide accessibility, security and technology upgrades) and the levying of a tax in payment thereof. This is a property tax increase."

Explanation

The Blanco ISD School Board voted in February 2022 to call for a bond election on May 7, 2022.

The bond proposal will address projects throughout the district, including:

- All schools - safety and security
- Academic spaces - upgrades
- Building improvements
- Kitchens - renovations
- Parking - improvements
- Sidewalk canopies - additions
- Baseball Complex - improvements
- Educational Center for the Arts
- Elementary School - gym/PE facility
- Middle School - renovation of gym
- High School - alternate gym

The website for the Blanco ISD Bond Election states the following: Even though this 2022 Bond will NOT increase the school tax rate, legislation passed in the 2019 Legislative Session requires that school districts place the following language on the ballot: "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE." Therefore, the state required language will be on the ballot even though there will be no impact on the district's tax rate.

There will not be an increase in taxes for senior citizens or disabled persons as a result of this proposed bond. School property taxes for senior citizens and disabled persons are frozen and would not be affected by passage of the bond election, as long as they have applied for and received the Over 65 Homestead Exemption with the appropriate appraisal district.

More detailed information is available on the website for Blanco Independent School District.
<https://sites.google.com/blancoisd.org/bond/home>

FREDERICKSBURG INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT: SCHOOL BOARD & BOND ELECTION CONDUCTED BY THE GILLESPIE COUNTY ELECTION DEPARTMENT

Early Voting: Gillespie County Annex 3 Building - Meeting Room 95 Frederick Road Fredericksburg

Sunday April 24	Monday April 25	Tuesday April 26	Wednesday April 27	Thursday April 28	Friday April 29	Saturday April 30
	8am-5pm	7am-7pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	
Sunday May 1	Monday May 2	Tuesday May 3	Wednesday May 4	Thursday May 5	Friday May 6	Saturday May 7
1pm-3pm	8am-5pm	7am-7pm				Election Day

Election Day: Saturday - March 7 Location open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Voting location: Fredericksburg Middle School Cafeteria 110 West Travis Street Fredericksburg

Fredericksburg Independent School District - Bond Election

Proposition A

"The issuance of \$82,000,000 of bonds by the Fredericksburg Independent School District for school facilities, the purchase of the necessary sites for school facilities, and the purchase of new school buses, and the levying of a tax in payment thereof. This is a property tax increase."

Explanation

The Fisd School Board started the bond election process in 2020 with the formation of a Bond Steering Committee (BSC). The 27-member committee included parents, staff, community leaders, and residents. The group studied the needs of the district by touring schools and analyzing conditions.

On December 14, 2020, the committee recommended that the School Board call for a bond election, including the construction of a new middle school on a new site. After more study to refine the project list, the School Board voted to call for an \$82 million-dollar bond election on May 7, 2022.

The bond proposal addresses projects throughout the District, including the proposed projects below:

- Fredericksburg Primary School - inclusive playground
- Fredericksburg Primary School - outdoor playground restrooms
- Fredericksburg Elementary School - inclusive playground
- Stonewall Elementary School - gym improvements
- Stonewall Elementary School - inclusive playground
- Fredericksburg Middle School - new building
- Fredericksburg High School - additions for Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Fredericksburg High School - addition for Softball/Baseball Dressing Room
- Fredericksburg - addition for Weight Room
- Fredericksburg High School - renovations
- Safety & Security
- Technology - infrastructure improvements
- Transportation - upgrades and additions

The website for the Fisd Bond Election states the following: "If approved by voters, there is no anticipated school tax rate increase." However, ballot language will include the statement "THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE." Legislation passed in the 2019 Texas Legislative Session requires that school districts include this language, regardless of the bond's impact on the district's tax rate.

There will not be an increase in taxes for senior citizens or disabled persons as a result of this proposed bond. School property taxes for senior citizens and disabled persons are frozen and would not be affected by passage of the bond election, as long as they have applied for and received the Over 65 Homestead Exemption with the appropriate appraisal district.

More detailed information is available on the website for Fredericksburg Independent School District: <https://www.fisd.org/domain/922>

Fredericksburg Independent School District - Board of Trustees - One Year Term

The Fredericksburg ISD Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees elected by eligible voters to serve a three-year term. Each trustee serves as an at-large position for the term and represents the entire school district. Elections are held annually on the May uniform election date. Fredericksburg ISD boundaries are in Blanco County, Gillespie County, and Kendall County.

Duties: adopt goals and priorities and monitor success; adopt policies and review for effectiveness; hire and evaluate the superintendent; adopt a budget and a calendar for the school year; set the tax rate; and communicate with the community.

The election is for one position on the Fredericksburg ISD Board of Trustees and will fill a one-year term (unexpired).

Natalie Bowman	Jake Whittington
Website:	Website: jakeforfisd.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a member of the Fredericksburg ISD School Board?

Bowman: I have been blessed to work in education for over 40 years. I taught high school English for 33 years, 27 of them at Fredericksburg High School. Since my retirement, I have served on the school board for seven years and am currently serving as board president. I have continued to mentor and work with groups that serve our teachers and students. We have an amazing school district with a reputation for excellence and a wonderful community of support. I am invested in our schools and their continued success, and I am proud to be a Billie.

Whittington: My 22 year career as a CPA and my strong work ethic would be my primary qualifications. In my career, I have poured over tax laws and rules and regulations to find resolutions to complex issues. I don't like to leave any rocks unturned in looking for answers. I am also willing to put in whatever time is necessary to complete a job. I think these qualities will translate well into dealing with complex school issues and playing a part in finding the best way to achieve the best results for our schools.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Fredericksburg Independent School District?

Bowman: The most immediate issue is passing the bond so that we can make the needed improvements on every campus and build a new middle school and CTE building. Second, we need to hire and retain the best teachers. At a time when more teachers are leaving education than pursuing a career in it, we must find ways to recruit qualified and experienced teachers. Third, although we were able to have in person learning this year and last year, we still have students with gaps in learning, especially in reading and math, that must be overcome.

Whittington: Reopening the lines of communication between teachers, administration, and parents
Budget Management – squeezing as much as we can out of our budget, finding optimal ways to manage our money (even under Robin Hood), and retaining teachers and employees
The Middle School Bond - Community outreach and education are vital to the bond receiving the votes to pass.

What are citizens of Fredericksburg ISD telling you about the problems of the school system?

Bowman: I believe that Fisd is a proactive district that listens to problems and works to resolve those issues. Citizens are concerned about certain books in our school libraries being inappropriate for students. The district has listened to these complaints and has removed books that were deemed pervasively vulgar or age inappropriate. The district is working to establish a better process for vetting books before they are put in our libraries. Citizens concerned about safety of students and sex education have been added to the SHAC (Student Health Advisory Committee) to give a voice to parents.

Whittington: That our children should be protected in FISD taxpayer funded schools and not put in a world where anything goes. There are a lot of political and agenda driven winds blowing in our country and in our state. Citizens of Fredericksburg want people with a backbone to be in positions of advocating for our children and making sound decisions regarding our children’s education. In addition, teachers' salaries and retention, budgets/school finances, the Bond, Critical Race Theory, and growing the Fredericksburg ISD Education Foundation have been brought up most frequently by citizens.

Fredericksburg Independent School District - Board of Trustees - Two 3 Year Terms

The Fredericksburg ISD Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees elected by eligible voters to serve a three-year term. Each trustee serves as an at-large position for the term and represents the entire school district. Elections are held annually on the May uniform election date. Fredericksburg ISD boundaries are in Blanco County, Gillespie County, and Kendall County.

Duties: adopt goals and priorities and monitor success; adopt policies and review for effectiveness; hire and evaluate the superintendent; adopt a budget and a calendar for the school year; set the tax rate; and communicate with the community.

The election is for two at-large positions on the Fredericksburg ISD Board of Trustees, and each position will serve a three-year term. The two candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared as elected.

Mark Cornett	Adam Riley
Website:	Facebook: Adam Riley for FISD School Board

Matt Seidenberger	JD Windham
Website:	Website: jdwindham.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a member of the Fredericksburg ISD School Board?

Cornett: I have served as a FISD Trustee for 12 years and have completed over 330 hours of continuing education credits in leadership, board governance, and other special topics. I have earned a Master Trustee designation for my commitment and training for a year-long training program in 2017. I've been Board President, Secretary, and currently serving as Vice President. My wife and I have a FISD 2021 graduate and 3 other children who will be in FISD for the next 9 years. We know the district well and have tremendous respect for the educators who make it happen.

Riley: I am qualified to serve as a member of the Fredericksburg ISD School Board because I worked for the district as a teacher and coach from the Fall of 2013 through the Spring of 2021. I spent 3 years at FMS and 5 years at FHS. Having worked for the school so recently, including during the Covid-19 pandemic, I am aware of the needs and challenges our district faces and will bring a hands-on, experienced perspective to the board. Through that experience, I have a grasp for what students, teachers, and parents need.

Seidenberger: I have a near 20-year history of involvement in organizations I feel are significant in Gillespie County. I take seriously my commitment as a parishioner at St. Mary’s Church, and I learned much as a facilitator of the St. Mary’s RCIA. I have been elected a member of the St. Mary’s School Council and served in officer roles for the local Knights of Columbus over 18 years. I served as a director & chair for the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce, Treasurer of the Fredericksburg Little League board, youth sports coach, and director & chair for the Gillespie County Historical Society.

Windham: I am the executive director of the Christian Job Corps of Gillespie County providing job readiness training and job search assistance for adults who cannot gain or keep employment or work multiple jobs to make ends meet. Building on my experience as a career advisor at Baylor University and workforce development director at the Waco Chamber, I have a unique look at the pathways our students take from pre-kindergarten all the way to high school graduation to a career. As a board member, I will work to support the success of students at every grade level.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Fredericksburg Independent School District?

Cornett: The most pressing issues are related to finding innovative ways to provide high quality rigorous instruction to all students. We have a diverse student population with variations of student economic and social resources. We have two Title 1 campuses and are still a Chapter 49 (property wealthy) school district. We must continue to find strategic ways to keep our tax dollars in FISD. This year 35% of our M&O taxes are taken away by the state while 100% of our bond funds stay in FISD for qualified uses.

Riley: The most pressing issues facing FISSD are the need to return to pre-Covid campus policies, raising teachers' salaries enough to match the rapidly increasing cost of living in our community, ensuring that parents have equity and a voice in how their children are educated, and rebuilding a trusting rapport between teachers, administration, and the board. The district and board should ensure that we are fiscally able to offer competitive salaries to highly qualified candidates committed to our community. Our district should be prepared to combat Critical Race Theory and the prevailing "cancel culture".

Seidenberger: Rebounding from the pandemic to normal staffing levels with competitive personnel salaries in a county where housing costs are outpacing incomes will continue to be a huge challenge, further emphasized in this inflationary environment. Teachers, coaches, and staff must feel they are heard and being supported in this challenging environment by parents, administrators, and board members. The current bond election to replace aging facilities is another. All of this must be done under the arc of school funding in Texas, requiring the district to balance responsibilities for our kids, teachers & staff, and the taxpayers of Gillespie County.

Windham: Pressing issues facing FISSD include recruiting and retaining teachers and providing state-of-the-art facilities to ensure student success. I support efforts to strengthen the retention of existing teachers with pay increases to reflect their value and high-quality professional development. I will work with the administration and community leaders to make Fredericksburg more affordable and attract the best-qualified candidates to Fredericksburg. I support the 2022 bond election to build new facilities and make capital improvements. Using the existing bond capacity of FISSD enables further modernization of the district without increasing the tax rate paid by taxpayers.

What are citizens of Fredericksburg ISD telling you about the problems of the school system?

Cornett: We have problems with our aging facilities. A community bond committee has identified the need to construct a replacement middle school. The Career Technical Facilities at the high school are undersized and in need of replacement or renovation. These issues are being addressed with the proposed bond to construct a new middle school and shop spaces at the high school. Citizens do not like sending locally collected taxes to the state in the form of recapture payments. The cost of living in Fredericksburg makes it difficult for teachers to find adequate places to live.

Riley: Problems that have been voiced to me by citizens of Fredericksburg are combatting Critical Race Theory, concerns over comprehensive sexual education, the use of social-emotional learning, returning to pre-Covid campuses, and parents rights and open access to classroom materials. I have heard concerns over the relationship between central administration and teachers/staff over the past few years. Also, I've heard concerns about how we will attract new candidates each year as staff leaves or retires, given the fact we pay teachers below the state average and the cost of living here is so high.

Seidenberger: Parents ask why we cannot pay enough to keep good teachers, coaches, and personnel from leaving the district or the profession. District employees voice frustrations with pushing students to take pride in what they do when they go to school every day in aging and deficient facilities. Current and former district employees worry that communication and trust levels have suffered over the last several years, further stressed by the pandemic environment. Taxpayers are frustrated that ever-increasing checks are being sent to the state of Texas instead of being used wholly to better FISSD in Gillespie County.

Windham: The problem I hear most from citizens is board accountability to parents and taxpayers. My door will be opened to listening to the ideas and concerns of parents/guardians and community members. I will actively relay those ideas to the entire board and superintendent for consideration. In return, I will be an ambassador of the school district to keep the community informed, seek support and proactively address concerns. Most of the work of a school board member is fulfilled between board meetings, in dialogue with others seeking common ground and to better understand how we together can best serve our students.

**JOHNSON CITY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:
SCHOOL BOARD PLACE 4 AND SCHOOL BOARD PLACE 5**

The voting location is a shared voting location space with Blanco County ballots for the amendments to the Texas Constitution on a separate ballot.

Early Voting: Blanco County Courthouse - Hoppe Room 101 East Cypress Street Johnson City

Sunday April 24	Monday April 25	Tuesday April 26	Wednesday April 27	Thursday April 28	Friday April 29	Saturday April 30
	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	8am-5pm	
Sunday May 1	Monday May 2	Tuesday May 3	Wednesday May 4	Thursday May 5	Friday May 6	Saturday May 7
	8am-5pm	8am-5pm				Election Day

Election Day: Saturday - March 7 Locations open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Voting in one location: Blanco County Courthouse - Hoppe Room 101 East Cypress Street Johnson City

Johnson City Independent School District - Board of Trustees

The Johnson City ISD Board of Trustees consists of seven trustees elected by eligible voters to serve a three-year term. Each trustee is elected at-large to serve in a numbered position and represents the entire school district. Elections are held annually on the May uniform election date. Johnson City ISD is located in Blanco County, and includes portions of Hays County, Llano County, and Travis County.

Duties: adopt goals and priorities and monitor success; adopt policies and review for effectiveness; hire and evaluate the superintendent; adopt a budget and a calendar for the school year; set the tax rate; and communicate with the community.

Johnson City ISD School Board Place 4

Cynthia Keene	Gabi Shannon
Website:	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/gabi.shannan/

What in your background qualifies you to serve as a member of the Johnson City ISD School Board?

Keene: I currently serve on the JCISD Board of Trustees. I accrued 38.75 credit hours of school board training this year through TASB and Region 13. I exceeded the minimum 12-hour requirement each year of this term because I believe that the more education I pursue the more equipped I am to provide for the needs of the district. I am qualified to begin Day 1 of my new term with the knowledge and insight into the needs of our District that will empower our Board to provide the best education for our students – that is my passion!

Shannon: My two greatest qualifications attend school here: my daughters. As we’ve seen across the nation, education is under attack: indoctrination pushes aside fundamentals, and parents are on the frontlines, sounding the alarm when they see the signs. Everyday - whether it’s through interaction with my girls and their teachers or my involvement with the PTO – I try to have my finger on the pulse of JCISD to a degree that only an involved parent can. I have seen firsthand what can happen to a school district that caves in to “woke” ideology (Austin), and I won’t let that happen here.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Johnson City Independent School District?

Keene: A significant issue facing our JCISD School Board is preparing for the increase in families with school-aged children moving into our community. Increasing enrollment requires pre-planning to ensure that our facilities and programming meet the needs of a growing student population. We must remain diligent in our oversight through the final stages of 2018 bond – these projects have already impacted our ability to handle the growth. I am committed to helping us stay ahead of the growth and continue to provide our students with a quality education that prepares them for college, technical training or entering the workforce.

Shannon: There is an influx of new families into our district, as people flee the bigger cities. The Board will need to consider how to fund new construction to accommodate these new students in a climate of already high (and rising) property taxes. Perhaps of greater community impact is the fact that new people from bigger cities often bring along the prevalent cultural norms of their previous hometown, so Trustees must be prepared to unapologetically represent the values of the majority of residents and the welfare of all students when faced with any potential advances from a vocal minority.

What are citizens and parents telling you about the problems of the school system?

Keene: I hear more praise for our administration and staff than I hear complaints about specific problems. Completion of the Bond projects is a common concern and we are almost there. Crowding at LBJ Elementary is another concern and we are working through a solution. Our administration is doing an outstanding job of addressing the problems that fall within their scope of responsibility allowing the Board to focus on our jobs. I hear from citizens and parents that we have solid leadership, outstanding teachers and tremendous community pride in our District.

Shannon: Parents see so-called “progressive” policies taking hold in nearby population-boom districts like Austin and Dripping Springs, and they don’t want to see those destructive, divisive principles adopted in Johnson City as we grow. They don’t want their family’s values to be supplanted by nontraditional worldviews through curriculum that should instead be focused on students’ mastery of fundamental skills. Simply put, they’re saying, “Don’t Dripping Springs my Johnson City.”

Johnson City ISD School Board Place 5

Clayton Young	Candidate is unopposed, so no questions were asked.
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League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas

For over forty years this League has served Kerr County and now serves five counties in the Texas Hill Country: Bandera, Blanco, Gillespie, Kendall, and Kerr. Members of this League live in all five counties. Both men and women over the age of 16 are members of the League and there are various membership levels with annual dues as a part of the membership. Visit the website to join: lvvhillcountrytexas.org

If reading this Voter Guide has helped you to be informed and vote, please consider a donation, in any amount, to help the Hill Country Texas League continue to offer this service to voters. Donations are accepted via the website: lvvhillcountrytexas.org or mail to the post office box on the front page.