

**Riverside Local Education Association**  
**Riverside Local BOARD of EDUCATION**  
**CANDIDATES SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Candidate Information**

A CANDIDATE IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE AND SIGN A QUESTIONNAIRE. Responses to the questionnaire are useful in making an endorsement decision and may be shared with RLEA members. **Please return by August 31th**

**PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME EXACTLY AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT**

**Name:** Kati Tomco

**Home Address:** 10303 Springbrook Court

**City:** Concord

**State:** Ohio

**Zip:** 44077

**Telephone (C)** (440) 840-2043

**Occupation:** Special Education Coordinator

**Office Being Sought:** Riverside Local School Board Member

**District:** Riverside Local Schools

**Party Affiliation:** Democrat

**Do you have your party's endorsement?** Yes:        No. but I will be seeking it:        No:   X  

**List Other Current Endorsements:**

**List Other Endorsements You Will Be Seeking:**   Future Forward Lake County  

**Campaign Address:** 10303 Springbrook Court Concord, OH 44077

**Campaign Contact:** Kati Tomco

**Phone:** (440) 840-2043

**Treasurer's Name:** Vicki Morley **Address:** 8009 Dorsey Court Concord, OH 44077 **Phone:** (440) 477-6722

**Incumbent?** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No:  X  **Terms in this office:**

**Are you now or have you ever been a member of a labor union?** Yes: \_\_\_\_\_ No:  X

**Did you attend public schools?** Yes:  X  No: \_\_\_\_\_

**Do/Did your children attend public schools?** Yes, now:  X  Yes, previously:  X  No: \_\_\_\_\_ N/A: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Why are you a candidate for Riverside Local Board of Education, and what qualifications or unique considerations would make you an especially good member of the Board of Education?**

I am running for the school board because my family is deeply rooted in public education, and we are believers that strong public schools are essential to a strong community, a successful workforce, and a thriving economy. My grandmother was a teacher at Buckey Elementary; my grandfather housed a kindergarten class in his church before kindergarten was integrated into public schools; my father is a retired science teacher of 35 years; my aunt was a teacher, principal, and superintendent; my uncle was a teacher and principal; and my husband was a teacher and is currently a principal. I have worked in educational settings for the past 23 years, dedicating my career to putting students first. During my career, I have collaborated on numerous construction projects and understand that students' needs are often overlooked. I have advocated for spaces, technology, and strategic placement of classrooms, ensuring students with disabilities were not an afterthought during the construction process. I have participated in ODE workgroups advocating for our students, families, and teachers while also communicating the challenges educators face every day. I understand the importance of systems and believe that when those systems support evidence-based instructional strategies, high-leverage practices, and a student-first mentality, student achievement and wellness are impacted in a positive manner. I understand the importance of addressing the whole child because not every student walks through the door ready to learn. In addition, I pride myself on living by the Riverside motto "getting better every day," whether that is as a mom, wife, or employee. No one is perfect, including administrators, teachers, and parents, and I truly believe that with a collaborative, collective effort, we can offer an excellent education to all of our kids in the district. I understand the pressures and challenges, but also

embrace making a difference. I want our board of education to represent integrity, honesty, transparency, ownership, innovation, and excellence.

## **2. What is the role of the Riverside Local Board of Education as you understand it?**

As stated directly from OSBA, “The board is a policymaking body and members are the chief advisers to the superintendent on community attitudes. Board members do not manage the day-to-day operations of a school district; they see to it that the system is managed well by professional administrators. Board members do not evaluate staff, other than the superintendent and treasurer, nor do they typically become involved in employment interviews, other than those of the superintendent, business manager, and treasurer. Board members may be consulted during the hiring process for other positions, such as assistant superintendent.” Board members should commit to adopting goals for achievement and instruction, focus on long-term district goals, set high expectations for student learning, and ensure all parts of the system align around students’ learning needs, from resource allocation and funding to curriculum and assessment. As it relates to student achievement, “board members should review student opportunity and achievement within the context of the district as a system and consider unintended results as ideas are presented.” When reviewing policies, board members should consider: Are the policies compliant with state and federal laws?, Do they define and align administrative responsibilities?, Do they support the district’s mission and vision?, Are they reflective of your community?, Are they enabling and empowering your staff to impact students?, Are they driving students to succeed?

## **3. What do you believe to be the most important issues facing Riverside schools?**

When considering the most important issues facing Riverside schools, I took into account my own personal thoughts as well as the feedback from families in the community I interact with or have spoken to.

- 1) Fiscal Responsibility - The current board is spending money frivolously without taking into account the impact of new budget bills, long-term impact on current spending, short-term fixes for long-term problems, and potential upcoming levies, renewals, and bond issues.
- 2) Meeting The Needs of All Students - I have heard from many families over the years the need for the District to support our academically accelerated students, special education students, and students who struggle with behavior and their social-emotional needs. If the goal of the district is to increase student achievement, the District

must prioritize resource allocation and funding to curriculum, assessment, and professional development. The District must ensure administrators are equipped and knowledgeable in order to support teachers and staff to meet the needs of students across a continuum of supports and services. Currently, a quarter of the potential student population in Riverside has elected to enroll in another district through open enrollment, an online or site-based community school, EdChoice or EdChoice Expansion Program, or the Ohio Autism Scholarship or John Peterson Scholarship program. That equates to \$27.8 million in a five-year forecast and does not take into account additional federal dollars for students with disabilities. In addition, this figure does not take into account the families that elect to pay for non-public schooling. It is imperative the District and the Board identify strategies to re-engage these families for financial stability.

- 3) New Campus - Over the years, in overwhelming numbers, I have heard from families their frustration with the decision to build elementary buildings instead of a high school campus. The District and the Board will need to develop a long-term facilities plan to address the aging buildings on the campus. This facilities plan must take into consideration the cycle of levy renewals as well as the idea that the majority of districts end up needing to pass a new operating levy within 3 years of new buildings opening.

**4. What role do you feel teachers and other school employees should play in the decisions of Riverside Local Board of Education? How would you plan to work with our Association once in office?**

A Board of Education member supports the identification of systemic trends and needs occurring across the district to provide resources and supports, as well as develop policies that positively impact those areas. These trends and needs are often identified by teachers and staff in the buildings. Open communication and collaboration is key to a successful board and staff relationship. As an individual board member, I can listen, accept feedback, and converse, but a board member isn't responsible for the day-to-day operations in the District. Committees also offer an opportunity for board members and staff to work together, but typically the Association will work with its administration on issues that may arise, and if those concerns are related to systems or policies, it will then be discussed with the Board.

**5. What ideas do you have for ensuring all children in Riverside Schools have an opportunity for a high-quality public education?**

I truly believe people do what they know. People wake up in the morning and go to work, intending on doing what they think is best. Knowledge is power. I am a strong advocate of high-quality professional development that is evidence-based and aligned to the district goals. Topics that align with the current district goals could include evidence-based instructional strategies, implementation of MTSS, behavior and social-emotional supports, instructional rigor, and creating a culture of support and belonging. It should be ongoing and reinforced throughout the year. All staff should understand how the professional development they are receiving impacts their daily work and fits within the system of the District. I would support relooking at board policies to ensure they align with meeting the needs of all students. For example, the removal of social-emotional supports, specifically Responsive Classroom materials, is not indicative of meeting the needs of all students. I would also want to understand the consistency and follow-through of building administration in regards to policies and procedures, and if identified as an area of need, investigate how the school board could have a positive impact.

**6. In Riverside's schools, class sizes are currently:**

A) Too large and should be reduced B) **About right** C) Smaller than they could be

D) **Other:** I do not believe this is consistent across the entire District, and it also depends on the grade level; therefore, I just selected "about right". I don't think an answer can be generalized across the entire District.

**7. In Riverside's schools, when it comes to planning time, educators currently have:**

A) Too little time and need more B) **About the right amount of time** C) Too much time D)

**Other:** The current planning time is commensurate with surrounding districts.

**8. When it comes to educators' professional development, Riverside currently devotes:**

A) Not enough resources B) About the right amount C) Too many resources

D) **Other:** I am not aware of the specific allocations made for professional development, nor the resources related to professional development other than time during the school year. I believe the time is dedicated, but the resources and high-quality professional development provided may be lacking. I will need more information to answer this question.

**9. Do you support the rights of teachers to evaluation and due process prior to the termination or non-renewal of a teaching contract or revocation of a license?**

A) **Yes** B) No C) Unsure

Optional additional explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Do you support teacher tenure (continuing contract) rights?**

A) **Yes** B) No C) Unsure

Optional additional explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

**11. Do you support collective bargaining rights for public education employees under ORC 4117?**

A) **Yes** B) No C) Unsure

Optional additional explanation: \_\_\_\_\_

**12. Do you oppose the passage of a “right to work” law or ballot issue?**

A) Yes B) **No** C) Unsure

**Optional additional explanation:** I can only speak to my experience in public schools, but any employee in the past has had the choice to join their specified union or not. I believe this should remain their choice. Although I don’t understand that decision, it isn’t mine to make. My understanding of a “right to work” law (again, as it relates to public education only) isn’t any different than what is currently afforded to employees in any district.

**13. Do you support the current single salary schedule for RLEA educators?**

A) **Yes** B) No C) **Unsure**

**If “No” or “Unsure”, what other compensation method(s) would you propose?** I can support the single salary schedule because it was created to ensure equal pay for equal work in order to address gender disparities. I certainly wouldn’t be opposed to considering a single salary schedule as base pay and then offering supplemental compensation based upon identified metrics that directly impact student achievement.

**14. Do you support the reduction of tests that are mandated by Riverside and standardized tests mandated by state and federal law?**

A) Yes B) No C) Unsure

**Optional additional explanation:** I am fully aware of the state testing requirements (OST, PSAT, ACT/SAT, KRA) and the use of MAP in the District, but I am unaware of other tests that are mandated by the District. I am a firm believer in the use of common assessments and using data for a purpose. I would need to understand what testing mandates Riverside requires before fully answering this question.

**15. What role do you believe student standardized tests and/or value-added data should have in the evaluation, compensation and/or dismissal of educators?**

I do not believe standardized tests and/or value-added data should be used in the dismissal of educators. If an educator is ineffective, that will be clear through their instructional practices and other metrics on the OTES rubric without relying on student performance data. I do believe standardized testing and value-added data is a solid metric when looking at grade level, content level, and teacher data. It certainly isn't the deciding factor to determine the effectiveness of a teacher, but it does provide trend data, historical data, etc, in order to make systemic decisions.

**16. Would you support placing a levy on the ballot to generate local revenue to support Riverside Schools?**

A) Yes, for renewal and new funding B) Yes, but only for renewal levies C) No D) Unsure

**Optional additional explanation:** I would certainly support renewal levies, but I also need more information on timing and specifics in regards to new money. The question is vague and unspecific. As mentioned above, I believe the District needs to be strategic in order to address any new funding and/or a bond issue. The community is not going to pass any type of new funding under the current conditions. The message and the plan need to identify why new funding is needed and how this will impact a bond issue. Proposing new money on top of the need for a new campus will need to be well thought out. A District does not want to get into a situation asking a community that historically hasn't passed new money without being strategic.

**17. What do you think will be the major issue(s) in your campaign?**

1) I don't believe there will be major issues facing my campaign. I very rarely engage or have a presence on social media, and I don't have a questionable history.

**18. How do you plan to win your election? What resources will you have for your campaign? I**

plan on winning this election by staying true to myself, my beliefs, and my morals. That includes integrity, transparency, accountability, and honesty. I refuse to share misinformation, and I hope others will do the same. I do not believe in the status quo. I truly believe that all kids can learn, and a high-quality education can be provided by the Riverside Local Schools. I am currently relying on donations and personal contributions to fund my campaign. I currently have yard signs, car magnets, and rack cards. I will also participate in several speaking engagements as well as hosting Q and A sessions.

I am a straightforward, transparent person. If there are any questions regarding my answers or any other topics, please feel free to reach out at the cell phone number listed above. Thank you for your consideration.

**Signature:**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Jon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

**Date:**

8/31/2025