



VOTERS GUIDE

Nonpartisan

MAY 1, 2021, LOCAL ELECTION

MELISSA ISD

Early voting: April 19-27

Election Day Polls: May 1 – 7 am to 7 pm

ABOUT THIS VOTERS GUIDE

This Voters Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide is available online at www.LWVCollin.org, along with guides for other offices that include all or part of Collin County. Candidate responses for all races are also available at www.VOTE411.org, where you can enter an address and view a personalized ballot with races specific to that address.

Questionnaires were sent to all candidates for each office, whether or not the race is contested. Candidate replies were subject to a character limit and are printed without editing or verification. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response received" is printed. Candidates were asked to avoid references to their opponents. Photos are included for candidates who provided them.

This Voters Guide is organized by office sought, with candidates listed in alphabetical order.

Table of Contents

Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 3	2
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 4	4
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 5	5
Melissa ISD Proposition A	7

League of Women Voters is a Nonpartisan Organization

The LWV never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Melissa ISD Board of Trustees

3-year term, elected district wide. Must be at least 18 years old, a United States citizen, a qualified voter, and a resident of the District. The Board of Trustees makes all final decisions regarding school district priorities, policies, personnel, textbooks, expenditures, and growth management. Trustees adopt a budget, levy taxes, and submit bond issues to finance construction projects.

Questions

Motivation: Why do you want to serve on the school board, and what qualities would you bring to this position?

Finance: What concerns do you have about the district's finances, and how would you address them?

Goals: What would you like to accomplish as a school district trustee?

Teachers: What should your district do to attract and retain good teachers?

Diversity: How would you help diverse populations in the school district reach their full potential? What initiatives should be implemented, if any, to address the needs of specific populations?

Pandemic: What will be your approach to ensure safe and effective learning in the district during the pandemic?

Other issues: What other important issues are facing the school district, and how would you address them?

Jason Granger
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 3

No response received

Kent Norwood
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 3



Education: B.S. Dairy Science Texas A&M University D.D.S Baylor College of Dentistry Cert. in Gen. Practice Univ. of Louisville

Experience: I have had a dental office in McKinney since 1998, and have lived in Melissa since 2007

Email: knorwoodplace3@gmail.com

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/jkentnorwoodplace3>

Motivation: I want to serve on the Melissa Board of Trustees because education has always been important to me. My dad, uncle, and grandfather were all educators. I even taught part-time for two years at Baylor College of Dentistry. In Melissa I participated in the 2016 and 2021 community task forces. I served on the Finance Committee in 2016 and Fine Arts in 2021. These committees presented a package to the board on what they felt the district needed as it continues to grow. I feel that I am even natured with the ability to look at an issue from different perspectives before coming to a conclusion.

Finance: The Melissa school district enrollment is increasing dramatically. This is causing the district to continue to build new schools and hire staff. This is being sustained by the increase in taxable values. In Melissa, this has traditionally been the burden of home owners, but we are starting to see businesses come to Melissa. It is important that the board continue to work closely with the city to encourage the growth of the commercial tax base to help alleviate the strain on homeowners.

Goals: I want to help the district strive to provide the best education and experience as possible, because if we do not try, it can never be achieved. Our current UIL classification is 4A, but with our current growth rate we will be 6A by 2027. With input from the community, I would like to continue to add programs to enrich our students' education. Examples would be to expand our current roster of technical career offerings, to possibly add an agriculture program, and many more electives are needed.

Teachers: First, the teachers need a salary that is competitive with the surrounding area. However, money is not everything, and there needs to be an atmosphere where everyone feels included, that the things they do are appreciated, and their ideas considered. This will foster a feeling that everyone is working toward a common goal of educating our children.

Diversity: When you hear the word diversity, most people think of race, but it also includes things like ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status. The staff and administration should mirror the student population. Students will feel more at ease learning from people that are like themselves. Community involvement, teacher professional development, and board training could start the changes to a more inclusive district. When our students graduate and enter the workforce, they will be faced with diversity and need to be prepared.

Pandemic: By the time we have the election, school will almost be over. Therefore, the focus will turn to school sponsored summer activities and the return to school in the fall. I think we all hope, with continued vaccination of the population, that the threat of Covid will be greatly diminished by the start of the next school year. We must continue to be diligent, though, and listen to the physicians and scientists who study these diseases, and take appropriate action as necessary. It is most important to keep not only the students safe, but also the teachers, staff, and administration.

Other issues: The current board is proposing a bond election for 400 million dollars. I am in favor of this passing, because our enrollment is growing rapidly. Estimates have our high school enrollment doubling by 2027, which will make us a 6A school. We will have to continue to build new schools and renovate old schools to keep up with this growth. This will not cause a raise in the tax rate, as it is currently at its maximum level. The funds to pay off the bonds will come from the increase in taxable value of the existing and new homes, as well as the new businesses that are opening in town.

Rachel Taylor
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 3

No response received

Russell Cox
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 4

No response received

Jenifer Grace
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 4



Education: University of Nevada, Reno - B.A. in Psychology (1994) Southern Methodist University School of Law - Juris Doctor (2000)

Experience: Clerk, Dallas Court of Appeals (2000-2002) Attorney, Gwinn & Roby (2002-2007) Attorney, Curran, Tomko, and Tarski (2007-2010) General Counsel, B:HIP Global, Inc. (2010-2014) Chief Legal Officer and President LaCore Enterprises, LLC (2014-Present)

Email: jengrace@usgraces.com

Website: <http://jenifergrace.com>

Facebook: <http://thejenifergrace>

Motivation: I believe the growing Melissa Independent School District will be the most successful by taking into consideration diverse viewpoints. The best decisions are made when discussed among those coming from different experiences and educational backgrounds. Qualities include: - Strong Communications Skills; - Ability to interpret rules and regulations that apply to the Board, open meetings, applications for funding; - Ability to review and understand financial statements, budgets, and proposals; - Experience with collaboration.

Finance: My current concern about the district's finances involves future growth and preparation to meet the growing needs of the community. Addressing the needs of the district and the financial requirements to support them comes from a full understanding of all existing sources of funding, and potential sources of funding as well as where the district is currently allocating those funds.

Goals: -Creation of additional opportunities to participate in vocational training including pre-graduation certifications. - Increased dual credit opportunities. - Support of programs needed by the special education community.

Teachers: -Creation of a culture of respect and appreciation. -Empowerment to control those programs for which the teachers are uniquely trained. -Additional opportunities for continued training.

Diversity: - It is my opinion that the diversity of a district begins with the leaders in the district. - Education about the issues that students and families from different backgrounds will be key to finding solutions for success. Mentorship programs are important to success.

Pandemic: I support continued options for remote learning. Students should continue to have their health symptoms monitored by their families and school staff. Sanitation procedures that have been put in place should continue. Monitoring of new knowledge surrounding the COVID - 19 virus should continue to guide steps taken for the continued safety of the students.

Other issues: As a district grows open communication with the entire community and taxpayer base becomes even more important. Taxpayers in the district (those with children attending and those without) should have insight into the manner in which the funds raised by bond initiatives is allocated that are easily accessible. Increased involvement from as many community members as possible should be encouraged. Opportunities to participate should be posted community wide.

Omar Landrum
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 5

No response received

Quentin Thomason
Melissa ISD Trustee, Place 5



Education: 1) Bachelor's of Science - Business Admin 2) Master's of Business Admin (MBA) 3) Project Management Professional (PMP) certification *Note: Regarding TXschool.gov financial references I make in this questionnaire, visit my website for details.

Experience: My personal and professional interests have allowed me opportunities to gain experience as an instructor myself, and have taught several courses over the last 14 years with my current employer and enjoy adding value.

Email: quentin.thomason@yahoo.com

Website: <http://quentinthomason8.wixsite.com/place5>

Instagram: LinkedIn? <https://www.linkedin.com/in/quentin-thomason/>

Campaign Phone: (469) 815-9969

Motivation: I believe I would bring value to the school board as I have three young children, the oldest of which is currently in kindergarten, and my family will have an interest in, and commitment to, this district for years to come. Education has been important throughout my career, and a desire for continuous learning has led me to career opportunities throughout the country. Sharing relatable knowledge and remaining directly engaged in the growth of my own children will hold a heavy influence in their individual development. I am excited to extend that passion to support the community.

Finance: Using TXschools.gov, a source open to the public, I have analyzed financial data for a subset of local districts and focused on how they allocate to Programs as a Percent of Operating Expenditures. With research in mind, I posted some of this district comparative analysis on the website address I've provided. The data should not stand alone, but can be used as a frame of reference to support constructive discussions. Finally, Melissa ISD will need to continue to focus on student performance while navigating the rapid growth of enrollment and corresponding, albeit justified, capital expansion.

Goals: I would focus on decisions that would prepare the district to retain high performance but also growth in critical programs where each student can find their career path through an educational partnership consisting of schools, family members, group involvement, coaches, and various guardians who hold a true interest in helping them navigate vast career possibilities. My goals support building a foundation that will stay with students as they advance to future phases of their career growth in academic, technical, professional, or vocational fields.

Teachers: The scores in the various performance categories for Melissa ISD have been noteworthy. My wife and I moved our family to this community with school quality as one of the critical measures guiding our home search. Teachers are clearly a critical asset in the community ecosystem. Teachers should be recognized for the value they bring and celebrated in the community for their performance. With student enrollment projected to grow by over 100% from 2021 to 2030, clearly a continued emphasis has to be placed on active programs to attract and retain good teachers with best-in-region incentives.

Diversity: Fundamentals and a range of programs ensure equal opportunity to a host of student needs, interests, and learning styles. As I review TXschools.gov, program % of operating expenditures data, the "Bilingual" and "Gifted and Talented" programs are lower than some regional peers and the state average. By the same measure, the district shows favorable % for both the "Students with Disabilities" and "Career and Technical" programs. These, as well as extending internal academic competitions, such as those in University Interscholastic League, can build confidence, innovation, and creativity.

Pandemic: I believe in safety first. Generally, everyone has to be comfortable balancing what they believe will be best for their family and also ensuring they do their part to follow the guidance provided by the state and district. My wife and I have appreciated the availability of the virtual kindergarten option for our daughter this year.

Other issues: I am optimistic about the future here in Melissa, the population growth driving student enrollment and the overall construction happening to prepare for continued expansion is telling. The identity of the community will be integrated with the school district and, consequently, maintaining high quality and performance alongside this growth will be key. As a member of the Board of Trustees, I will focus on the fundamentals and remain vigilant to promote growth and opportunities that prepare students for their next phase of learning, skill-building, and career research.

Melissa ISD Proposition A:

The issuance of \$400,000,000 of bonds by the Melissa Independent School District for the construction, acquisition and equipment of school buildings in the district including the purchase of new school buses and the purchase of necessary sites for school buildings. Taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds will be imposed. This is a property tax increase.

Vote For or Against

You may bring this *Voters Guide* into the voting booth! In 1995, the Texas law prohibiting use of printed materials, such as this *Voters Guide*, in the polling place was ruled unconstitutional (*Texas Election Code, Section 61.011*)

Your vote is your voice. Be heard.