

Candidates for District School Board – District 5

Responses to League of Women Voters of Collier County Education Fund / eBella Magazine Survey
June 2010

<p>Question 1: Communication is an area of importance to parents, staff, students and the community at large. What specifically would you like to see done to foster more and better communication between the school district and Collier County residents?</p>		
<p>Mary Ellen Cash</p>	<p>Roy Terry</p>	<p>Joe Whitehead</p>
<p>I will work to establish an Office of Advocacy & Access for Students, Parents and Teachers. The School Board needs to provide checks and balances on administrative policies and procedures in order to protect the rights of those they serve.</p>	<p>All groups should be included in the debate; public discussion should take place prior to implementing new policy. If all parties are included there will be a better understanding of what we want to accomplish as a community. Decisions made after community input produce better results and promote effective communication.</p>	<p>There have been various examples of incomplete communication that only foster continued discourse in our community, including policies concerning homework, grading and attendance. We need more parent/community forums and an open communication with teachers and staff who often have great ideas that are not considered. Better communication leads to better decisions.</p>
<p>Question 2: The Superintendent has stated that the time for public input into District business is during the meetings of the strategic planning committees and the School Board meetings should be business meetings and should not be used as a public forum. What is your position on eliminating public participation/comments at Board meetings?</p>		
<p>Mary Ellen Cash</p>	<p>Roy Terry</p>	<p>Joe Whitehead</p>
<p>School Board meetings serve as a venue for the community to discuss issues with their elected representatives. To eliminate public participation in School Board meetings undermines the Board's ability to hear, in person, the community's concerns. The Board needs to hear and respond directly to the people of Collier County, they are public servants.</p>	<p>Input from our citizens is essential to success and should be heard during School Board meetings. Open discussion leads to better decisions, builds public trust, and improves the effectiveness of our School Board. Openness is our goal; we should always be receptive to the ideas our community has to offer.</p>	<p>The time for the public to be heard is during School Board meetings. It is fundamental to the proper functioning of a representative form of government. It also holds the elected officials more accountable when they have to face the public who will be affected by the decisions they make.</p>
<p>Question 3: What changes in Florida's public education system would you like to see?</p>		
<p>Mary Ellen Cash</p>	<p>Roy Terry</p>	<p>Joe Whitehead</p>
<p>The ideal curriculum would prepare students for life after high school. Extensive career planning with opportunities for experiential learning & career exploration through volunteerism should be included. Parent involvement activities should facilitate families planning together.</p>	<p>We should support proposed legislation that eliminates FCAT and implements subject area tests.</p> <p>Our community and local educators know what is best for students; we should work to reduce burdensome state and federal mandates to allow teachers more teaching time and students more opportunities for success.</p>	<p>I would like to see the Department of Education give greater flexibility to local districts regarding class size, some areas of curriculum, and disciplinary standards. Regulation at the state level is often handed down without full consideration of how those regulations and standards will impact local communities.</p>