

## NEWS RELEASE

# BACK ON TRACK 2008

EDUCATION TEAM FOR SCHOOL BOARD CHANGE

## Promises to the Public

The Back on Track team has decided to make a covenant with the voters. In an effort to make sure that our intentions and direction are clear, we want the public to know that if elected, we are going to change the way business is done at the school board. Too many times politicians make promises they don't keep. These promises in public are an extra reassurance that the Back on Track 2008 Team is serious about changing the direction of the school system.

The main reason there is a need for this covenant is that recently some members of the current school board and others have announced an effort to extend Superintendent Jim Scales' contract in the face of budget cuts and the fact that he has two years left on his original contract. This was done in secrecy and is an example of a back room deal that has no place in the school system. The obvious question is "Why now?"

The Back on Track team's position is that renegotiating the contract of the superintendent is not necessary or prudent at this time. This gives the appearance of impropriety especially since there are only two months left until the August elections. This would in effect disenfranchise any new board members and the citizens who voted for them from input on the superintendent contract.

This is not a reflection on Dr. Scales' performance. His performance should be judged at the appropriate time. **Our position is that we are absolutely opposed to any salary renegotiation at this time.**

Here are our promises to the public for a new direction on the school board:

### **I Promise the Citizens of Hamilton County:**

1. To change the current policy of secrecy and backroom deals and to operate in a transparent manner. The school system check register and salary stipend schedules of all administrators should be online and available for every citizen to inspect. I will insist that there are no more "Jesse Register" deals.
2. To work toward putting over 90% of all school system funding into the classroom by operating the school budget in a fiscally responsible manner.
3. To modify school board policy to enable citizens to address concerns to the board **before** votes are taken or changes in policy are considered. The current policy and requirements are an affront to free speech, and represent an elitist attitude by the board.

4. To make sure the basics, especially reading, are reemphasized in our curriculum. We should insist that no child is allowed past the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade if he or she cannot read to that grade level.

5. To reevaluate travel, training, and consultant costs. We have several thousand highly trained educators in our employ. We should be able to handle almost any situation in house without expensive consultants.

I promise a new philosophy of openness, responsiveness, common sense, and fiscal responsibility.

District 1 - **Rhonda Thurman** - Unopposed

District 2 - **Joe Dumas** - Opponent - Chip Baker (incumbent)

District 4 - **Gregg Juster** - Opponent - Debra Matthews (incumbent)

### **THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND:**

**A signing ceremony and press conference will be held on Thursday, June 19, at 5:00 p.m. in front of the Hamilton County Department of Education off Hickory Valley Road. The covenant will be signed by all three BACK ON TRACK '08 school board candidates.**

#### **Contact Information -**

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