



## Candidate Profile - School Board

<b>Name</b>	Lisa Miller
<b>Office Seeking</b>	School Board District, 7
<b>Do you currently reside in the district?</b>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>
<b>Years lived in Polk County?</b>	45
<b>Campaign Address</b>	5337 Socrum Loop Drive Suite 440 Lakeland, FL, 33809
<b>Campaign Phone Number</b>	(863) 698-6240
<b>Campaign Email</b>	Lisa4PolkSchools@gmail.com
<b>Campaign Website</b>	www.Miller4Polk.com
<b>Party Affiliation</b>	NPA
<b>Education</b>	B.A. in Mass Communications/ University of South Florida M.A. in Public Administration/Barry University
<b>Occupation</b>	School Board Member
<b>Employer</b>	PCSB
<b>Have you attended a Public Leadership Institute/Political Leadership Institute (hosted by a Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development Council)?</b>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>
<b>If yes, who hosted the institute?</b>	Lakeland Chamber
<b>Have you ever run for office before?</b>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>
<b>a. If yes, what office?</b>	Polk County School Board District, 7
<b>b. Did you win?</b>	<input type="button" value="Yes"/>

**Describe your civic involvement:**

Executive Committee Florida Developmental Disability Council

Member of Lakeland Alliance on Accessibility  
Member of the Polk Transportation Planning Organization  
Operating Board of Polk Vision  
Member of Lakeland Kiwanis

I enjoy staying connected with our community through volunteering on several boards and committees that all have a common goal or making our community a better place for all citizens.

### **List any Boards on which you serve, including positions of leadership**

I currently serve as vice-chair of the Polk County School Board.  
I was appointed by the governor to the Florida Developmental Disability Council and served on the board of USF/CARD.

### **Describe your political involvement:**

I have spent my adult life advocating for people living with developmental disabilities. I have built relationships with our delegation and for over a decade networked within the state to work on legislation that affected that population. I facilitated a program for the state of Florida that trained parents and self-advocates in legislative advocacy.

I have worked with our delegation during session to discuss proposed legislation and annual budgets that affect public education.

### **Why are you running for office?**

I am running for re-election to continue my work for students and staff. My previous experience in disability advocacy led me to be the voice for an entire population of students from significantly disabled to gifted. They had never had a seat at the table in Polk and represented 20k plus of our student population. I want to continue to champion policy for all students and make decisions with our budget that are responsible and will meet our long-term goals. I share the vision of Superintendent Heid that we will finish our strategic plan with goals for not only getting students to graduate but ensuring they have a plan for gainful employment or post-secondary studies after high school.

What do you consider to be the top three (3) issues facing Polk County Schools. (listing in order of importance)? If elected, when would you plan to address these issues and hope to see them accomplished?

#### **I.**

Growth - at the last state of the county it was stated that Polk is the fastest growing county in Florida and the seventh fastest in the nation. We have watched our student count grow. We had approximately 106k students the 2021-22 school year and are expected to grow by 6k students next school year. The continued growth will bring the need for 25-30 new school sites. We will have to rezone and make sure we are using all of our facilities in the most efficient manner. We will have to look at new ways to fund buildings. We have voted to contract with a company that will build a school at a fixed price and lease the building back to us over thirty years. This will free up funding to help repair some of the older schools. A majority of our current school sites are 50yrs or older. We have to work to be fiscally conservative to meet the rapid facility needs.

#### **II.**

Recruitment and Retention of Staff - Growth will bring the need for qualified teachers and support staff. This is a nationwide issue for most school districts. It is a priority for Polk. Superintendent Heid and staff worked to bring a budget that moved all support staff to \$15hr. The governor increased funding for new teachers and that has been an incentive for new hires. Our district is working on the compression that the influx to new teacher salaries brought to veteran teachers. Also, we have to work on training of our site leadership to increase supportive environments for our staff. We have included these concepts in our strategic plan. We are working to provide incentives to teachers who would have to leave the classroom in the past to make additional money as a coach or similar role. We can provide those mentoring opportunities without losing them as a classroom teacher. We will use our

academies to help create a pipeline to employment. A student could attend an academy for education or even a trade. They would connect to local post-secondary school to finish their degree or certification and then come to work for the district.

### III.

Increasing academic opportunities- To move the district forward we have created a plan to take students beyond graduation day and provide an opportunity for gainful employment or college graduation. We have invested in curriculum and technology to support industry certification programs and expanded CTE offerings. The strategic plan has acceleration strategies that will increase the number of students earning acceleration credits. There will be a report in our FOCUS system to monitor acceleration activity so students can be counseled and supported to complete. Expanding dual enrollment opportunities and increasing college success courses will help guide students who are on a track to post-secondary degrees. I think we will take our academies to the next level when we provide support for core subjects within the academies. This will help bring students into academies that previously had a barrier from test scores that required remedial courses.

**Rank the following as you see their current order of importance:**

- 1: School Safety
- 2: Improving public education
- 3: Reducing taxes and government spending
- 4: Empowering parents

**a. Other:**

Growth Management

**During an economic downturn, how should Polk County handle decreasing tax revenues caused by the normal economic cycle? You may check more than one choice. Depending on your choice/choices, please state what you would cut and what you would increase.**

- Cut Spending
- Other

**Depending on your choice/choices above, please state what you would cut and what you would increase.**

If we are budget conscious and use a zero based budgeting process we can focus on spending before an economic downturn. In the past we have seen districts cut programming like the arts and non-core subjects when they have a budget crisis. We have to be proactive. Recently, Superintendent Heid has been successful by collapsing positions that were budgeted and not filled and reviewing positions when people retire to see how their role could be filled. He has worked to review contracts and make changes to service delivery models. We have to show we are fiscally responsible with all funding sources before we ask constituents for additional tax dollars. We also need to work closely with our delegation and state government officials to advocate for funding.

**What is your top priority if elected to the Schoolboard? How do you plan on measuring your performance to report to your constituents?**

My top priority is to continue to work with the Superintendent on the strategic plan that will set benchmarks for the district. That plan and its progress is made public. A community survey was created to help create priorities. Working with community stake holders to build partnerships will help

create learning communities and involve all citizens in the outcomes of our schools. We are moving to create a plan that focuses on more than compliance. We are addressing the experience and process of education for students and staff. This strategic plan will move our district forward, both in grade and long-term outcomes.

**What is your long term vision during your time in office?**

My long-term vision is to improve inclusive settings for all students. Students should have similar opportunities no matter where they live or their level of ability. An example is our aerospace academy. Students who live on the east side of the county have not had the same access to the program. We will launch the Winter Haven program next school year. I would like us to expand our academies so that students can participate at different levels. The aerospace academy may include students looking to become pilots or engineers, but we could expand those programs to include other jobs that may be more of a support role. This would increase the number of students who would participate. The hospitality academy or medical academy could expand to include a multitude of trainings and certifications within the individual environments. The goal is to have students graduate and become independent and gainfully employed.

**What is the largest budget you have overseen and how did you prioritize spending?**

Our current school district budget at approximately 2 billion is the largest budget I have overseen. The staff is supportive in presenting the budget with details that include mandates and requirements from grants and other sources as well as discretionary funding. The strategic plan should be used in prioritizing spending. We should connect dollars to the benchmarks and provide expected outcomes.

**What leadership qualities do you possess that make you the best choice to serve on the Polk County Schoolboard?**

I am committed to the mission and vision of Polk county public schools. I am passionate about my work and collaborative in solution-based planning. I am confident in our leadership and will continue to work to support our staff and students. I value the experience of others and work to provide opportunities for growth. My knowledge as a business owner and disability advocate provides insight to problem solving and budgeting.

\*This document will be published on the BusinessVoice Inc. website for public disclosure.