



Brock Toole runs for BOE

By [Michael Prochaska](#) | April 10, 2024 | 0

Entrepreneur Brock Toole, the **former chief operations officer for Oconee County Schools**, announced last week that he will run for Post 5 on the Board of Education as a Republican.

Post 5 is the seat of incumbent Michael Ransom, who decided not to seek reelection for his own seat but instead run for Post 1, the chair, which is being vacated by Kim Argo.

Toole, who co-owns South Main Brewery and founded Satisfied Food Co. (product is pimento cheese), stated in an election announcement, "Education is the foundation of our community and our future."

Toole is the current chair of the Oconee Cultural Arts Foundation and **chair of the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority**. He also serves on the board **of Lydia's Place**, the **Watkinsville Downtown Development Authority** and Oconee County **Rotary Club**. He previously was the chairman of the board of the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia.

"I've always wanted to serve. **My mama** taught me that," said Toole. "I think if you are going to live, work and play in a town, and you are going to call it your home, you better learn to serve."

Toole and his wife have three children—one in elementary, one in middle and one in high school.

When asked about his platform, **Toole spoke more in generalities than specific policy actions**.

"My goal is to make it better," he said. "There's always areas of improvement."

Transparency is an important tenet to Toole, who said he has worked to make OCAF more transparent by opening up the nonprofit's board meetings to artist members and responding to a request for internal documents by offering a flash drive of documents. However, **the requesters have since sued OCAF in part because the nonprofit has demanded money for printed copies and denied access to some documents**. A hearing was scheduled earlier this month, but that was delayed because **all Western Judicial Circuit Superior Court judges have recused themselves**.

"I believe in making sure your stakeholders know what's going on," Toole said of the school board. "That's what we are trying to do in OCAF."

"I'll listen to parents and listen to other school board members," he continued. "When I worked for [Superintendent] Jason [Branch], I listened to him."

In an interview with WGAU's Tim Bryant on Tuesday, Toole said that sometimes the problem is not a lack of transparency but a dearth of honesty and candidness.

"Sometimes, you lose the genuineness of it, and it almost becomes robotic," Toole said.

"I'm genuine," he said, noting that he will vote on matters based on his conscience and his convictions.

Toole said counties, cities and schools "need to share information collaboratively."

Per infrastructure needs, Toole acknowledged that growth has been fairly stagnant in the 2020s but that OCS must also prepare for the future, given that there are approved permits in subdivisions that are dormant or about to be developed.

"You have to prepare for growth based on what has happened in the past and what numbers tell you to predict," he said.

"You don't want too much growth and not enough facilities," he said. "And you don't want to have too much facilities with not enough growth."

Speaking to Bryant, **Toole did not give a preference on whether OCS should build a third high school or expand North Oconee High School. He said that even at 2-3% growth, there will be a need for either of those options within the next six to eight years.**

Toole said he's fiscally responsible and possesses strong morals and values.

"Integrity and character mean the world to me," he said.

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