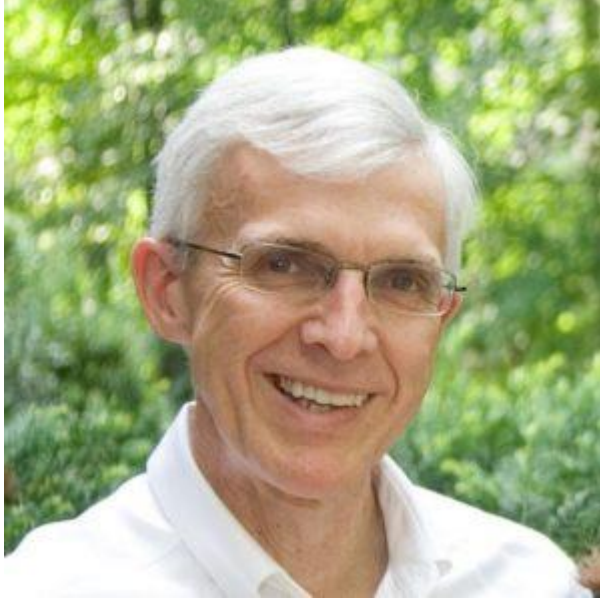


From: The Oconee Enterprise

Aleshire seeks seat on BOE

By [Michael Prochaska](#) | March 20, 2024 | [0](#)



Oconee County Board of Education Post 5 candidate Stephen Aleshire believes that the current school board, as a whole, lacks curiosity about the overall and behind-the-scenes operations of Oconee County Schools.

“A recent example was a presentation for the Ron Clark Academy from southeastern Atlanta and the apparently already instituted program of their ‘House System,’” Aleshire said in a written statement to The Oconee Enterprise. “No significant discussion ensued; there was polite dismissal, and the board moved on to their agenda.”

“While this may have been covered in the BOE’s work session, it seemed a rather surprising lack of concern about such an important program, especially considering its potential obvious psychological importance on middle school students,” Aleshire continued. “Perhaps this Ron Clark program fits the general category loosely referred to as social emotional learning. I defer to the parents to ask further about this if they are unaware of its integration into the school teaching program.”

Another example he gave is when budgets and plans are “proffered with little critical input or helpful discussion from the board members.”

Aleshire is running against Brock Toole in the May 21 Republican Primary. The winner will then face Democrat Katie Green November.

“I think I can help in the guidance of students via the BOE in view of my skills and background,” he said. “My running as a Republican is coincidental to my purposes described here.”

Aleshire is a retired physician in the specialty of pathology with dual interests in clinical chemistry and hematology. As an undergraduate, he studied chemical engineering.

Aleshire noted that while OCS has many success stories in SAT scores, he worries that it's become the expected norm for high-performing students to attend a prestigious university when that route could come at “considerable financial and other forms of personal and emotional or interpersonal cost.”

“Other choices,” he said, “might well be reasonable and viable outcomes to future well-being and even happiness.”

“Students need a broader range of choices without resorting to a hard dichotomy of college versus vocational choices, with the latter sometimes regarded as a less desirable outcome for the children of loving families,” Aleshire continued. “Careers in technical and agricultural ventures need strong school support and additional encouragement as our society evolves.”

Aleshire said that some of the brightest and most intelligent people he has encountered are in industries that society may not consistently regard highly in social stratum perception.

“We need to change the manner of encouraging our youth to have a ‘winner-take-all,’ or you are a failure attitude,” Aleshire said. “In addition, there is an undercurrent in Georgia and nationally to use schools as an intermediary in the emotional or psychological lives of children who would otherwise develop normally as they mature to adulthood.”

In conclusion, Aleshire said, schools should not be an intermediary in place of parental oversight of childhood development.

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