

*From: The Oconee Enterprise*  
*highlighting and emphasis added*

## Pippin to run for a BOE seat

By [Michael Prochaska](#) | February 21, 2024 | [0](#)



Andy Pippin, director **of business development** at engineering firm Goodwyn, Mills & Cawood, announced last week that he will run for Post 4 on the Oconee County Board of Education.

BOE Post 4 incumbent Tim Burgess said he will not run for re-election.

Pippin, a former city manager for the city of Hampton, Georgia, noted that working for an engineering firm has given him a wealth of experience in the **design and construction of government buildings, such as city halls and schools, as well as wastewater systems and parks.**

As someone who has a servant's heart, he said he is constantly looking for ways to give back and serve the community.

Although this is his first time running for public office, Pippin participated in a citizen advisory committee that helped draft the county's Comprehensive Plan.

Through that process, Pippin learned "what **parts of the county would grow [residentially and commercially]** and what parts would remain green."

"Not all of the county loves the growth," he said. "You have to be respectful of that."

As far as **capital projects, Pippin said a school board can't wait until it needs a new school to start the process of planning for a school. He said that eventually, high-interest rates will come down and undeveloped lots will come online**, leading to continued growth.

Pippin told WGAU's Tim Bryant in a recent interview that he does not think the Oconee BOE will decide whether to **build a third high school** within the next four years but that the board will begin the conversation.

Speaking to The Oconee Enterprise, Pippin said that one thing to consider for **a high school expansion** is that it's more than just the four walls being built. An expansion of a school involves **extending water and sewer lines** and building athletic fields or gyms, he explained.

"That doesn't mean it's not the more appropriate route to take," he noted.

Pippin said he believes Oconee County Schools is a highly performing school system, but that there's always room for improvement. He wants to make sure the school board "continues to give the administration and the teachers what they need to educate our kids."

"I will approach being a board member in **a non-partisan** way," he said, noting that he considers himself a fiscal conservative and will be running on the Republican ballot. "I don't think there's room for extremism on either the left or right...I don't think there's any room for party fighting. There's no room for misinformation. And there's no room for non-transparency."

As a big believer in communication and relationships, Pippin pledged to "bridge any gaps there are between the school board and community."

He suggested that the BOE hold **intergovernmental retreats** or stay in constant communication with other agencies, such as municipalities, the county government, the Sheriff's Office, the Watkinsville Police Department, the **Oconee Chamber of Commerce** and the hospitals.

"What I can improve upon is communication with the citizens," he added. "What I do want is for a citizen to come before a school board with a concern, question or complaint and come away feeling heard...I want to foster an atmosphere of open communication."

Pippin said his platform includes "being a good steward of taxpayers' money, equipping teachers and staff with what they need to better educate our kids and doing what we need to keep our kids safe."

He and his wife have two girls who are in the second and fourth grade at Malcom Bridge Elementary School.

“I will always have them in mind with any item that the school board has to deal with,” he said.

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