

# What's on your Ballot?



*Nonpartisan Guide to  
the Greene County  
Municipal Election*

Focus on Springfield, MO

**CAST YOUR VOTE!**  
**April 2, 2024**

# Voter Guide for April 2nd Local Election, Springfield, MO

All seven candidates for the three seats on the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education were contacted by email with a request to submit answers to our questions. The candidate responses are printed exactly as submitted. Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

## *Why Vote Local?*

Local elections make the most direct impact on the lives of voters. Local elections can impact a variety of issues, including public health, infrastructure, education and more, so participating in local elections helps shape your community. With turnout usually below 20%, it has never been more important to have your voice heard!

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## **Are You Registered to Vote?**

Last day to register for April 2nd election is **March 6, 2024!**

[Check here to see if you're registered:](#)



# Registering to Vote

## Paper Registration on Campus

Office of Public Affairs Support, Meyer Library Rm 202-J (2nd floor, NW corner)  
Phone: 417-836-8832

Email: [pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)  
or stop by the Paws to the Polls Office Strong Hall 463

## Online Registration

Missouri Secretary of State; when [registering online](#), check option for “using a tablet, phone, or other mobile device.”

Your residence hall can be used as your address; use actual street address (not hall name) & **add your room number!** [See MSU hall addresses.](#)

## Registered Elsewhere?

Consider changing your registration to vote here.

If you have a current MO Driver's/Non-Driver's license, passport or military ID, you can vote here in Greene County—the MSU Welcome Center is a polling location!

You can register with a University ID or other forms of identification, but will need a Missouri state-issued ID, passport, or military ID to actually vote.

Can use residence hall as your address – see above.

If you register here while you're at school, just re-register when/if you move back to your home community.

## Registering Outside of Missouri?



U.S. Vote Foundation: Assists citizens to register and request absentee ballots; voter information



# Voting in Missouri

## Voter ID

Current Missouri Driver's license or Non-Driver License  
Passport or Military ID

*Note: University IDs are no longer accepted as valid for voting!*

If you are registered here in Greene County but lack the above-listed ID, you can vote a “provisional ballot”—your signature on your ballot will be compared to that on your voter registration.

## Absentee voting

Absentee Voting for the April 2, 2024 election begins on February 20, 2024.

If you are registered elsewhere in MO and can go home before the election, you can vote in-person absentee at the election authority (usually the county clerk). <https://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/goVoteMissouri/howtovote#absentee>



## Getting Your Voting Questions Answered

### On Campus:

Public Affairs Support Office, Meyer Library 202-J  
417-836-8832, [publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu](mailto:publicaffairssupport@missouristate.edu)

Paws to the Polls: [pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)  
<https://www.missouristate.edu/ADP/paws-to-the-polls.htm>



### Off Campus:

Greene County Clerk, [countyclerk@greencountymo.gov](mailto:countyclerk@greencountymo.gov), 417-868-4055

Missouri Secretary of State, <https://www.sos.mo.gov>

League of Women Voters of SWMO, [lwwsouthwestmo@gmail.com](mailto:lwwsouthwestmo@gmail.com)

# Voting FAQs

## *How do I know if I'm registered to vote?*

Check MO Secretary of State's website or call your local county clerk (see previous page for QR code).

## *Where do I vote?*

At the polling location listed on your Voter ID card or on the MO Secretary of State's website—OR vote at the campus Central Polling Location if registered to vote here in Greene County.

## *Do I have to vote for everything on the ballot?*

No! Vote only for what you're sure about – your ballot will still count!

## *Can I take my notes in with me to vote?*

Sure! Take your notes or a pre-marked sample ballot into the polling place. See page 18 for instructions for locating your specific sample ballot.

## *Do I need a photo ID to vote?*

Yes: a Missouri Driver's or Non-Driver's license, passport, or military ID.

# Springfield Public School Board of Education

## *What does a School Board Do?*

The Board of Education is elected by the registered voters of the Springfield School District. The school board establishes policies and regulations by which their schools are governed, in compliance with state and federal laws. The school board also develops the annual budget to run the school system and its facilities, and hires and evaluates the superintendent.

# Current Superintendent:



## **Dr. Grenita Lathan**

PhD in Workforce Education and Development,  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale  
MS in Business Education,  
University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
BS in Business Education,  
North Carolina A&T State University, Greensboro  
Appointed in 2021, contract renewed in 2023

# Current School Board Members:



## **Danielle Kincaid, President**

Juris Doctorate,  
Creighton University School of Law  
Master's and bachelor's degrees,  
Missouri State University  
Partner with the Elder Law Group  
Elected 2021, term expires 2024



## **Scott Crise, Vice President**

BS in Petroleum and BS in Mechanical Engineering,  
University of Tulsa  
MBA, The University of Chicago  
Manager, Gas Plant Operations,  
Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Elected 2021, term expires 2024



## **Judy Brunner**

BS in Sociology and BS in Education  
Master's in Reading  
Specialist in Education Degree  
Chief Education Officer of Edu-Safe LLC and  
Instructional Solutions Group LLC  
Elected 2023, term expires 2026



**Kelly Byrne**

Graduate, Kickapoo High School  
Degree in business marketing,  
St. Cloud State University  
Principal and managing partner of the  
Say You Can companies (real estate investment  
and development)  
Elected 2022, term expires 2025



**Steve Makoski**

BS in Business Management,  
University of Phoenix  
Retired United States Navy veteran,  
Chief Petty Officer and Director of  
Aircraft Maintenance  
Director of Compliance, Rapid Robert’s Incorporated  
Elected 2022, term expires in 2025



**Maryam Mohammadkhani, M.D.**

BS, University of California, Irvine  
MD, University of Southern California  
School of Medicine  
Retired pathologist  
Trained and practiced in Harvard medical system  
Former Cox Health employee  
Elected 2021, term expires in 2024



**Shurita Thomas-Tate**

Bachelor's in speech language pathology,  
Southern University Master's  
Ph.D. in speech language pathology,  
Ohio State University  
Associate professor, Communication Sciences and  
Disorders Department, Missouri State University  
Elected 2023, term expires in 2026

## 2024 Municipal (local) Election, April 2

The ballot for the April 2nd election will have seven candidates for school board and two ballot issues proposed by the City of Springfield.

### *Hear from your school board candidates:*

Our Springfield Public School Board candidates were asked these questions and given a maximum word count for each. Their answers follow the questions.

- 1** *What qualifications do you possess that would make you an effective member of the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education?*
- 2** *What do you believe is the role of the educational system in encouraging youth civic engagement?*
- 3** *If elected, how would you expand educational opportunities and partnerships in the region for our students? These could include trade schools, colleges, non-profits, banks, etc.*
- 4** *Springfield Public Schools purchases curriculum that follows the DESE Missouri Learning Standards. Should the state be able to mandate which curricula a school district purchases or uses? Please explain why or why not.*

*Printed are the candidates’ unedited responses as submitted.*



## Scott Crise

1

Nearly three years of experience on the Springfield Public Schools (SPS) Board of Education better qualifies me to represent the diverse needs of

SPS stakeholders. As an operations manager with experience in construction management, budgeting and long-term, strategic planning, I am uniquely qualified to continue tackling the challenges faced by Springfield Public Schools such as discipline, academic achievement and school safety as outlined in our strategic plan. Our parents, teachers and children need an advocate who has been invested in our district and has the know-how to make firm decisions to plan the next steps to move SPS forward.

2

The Springfield Public Schools (SPS) should encourage youth civic engagement by integrating civic education into curriculums to teach students about democratic principles, the political process, the importance of voting, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. SPS offers extracurricular activities such as student government, Model United Nations, debate clubs, and community service programs that provide students with opportunities to practice leadership, advocacy, and community involvement. For example, Central High School has Civics and Constitution, an academic organization for students who are interested in government and politics. In March 2023, the Academy of Exploration presented a Community Improvement District project to City Council as part of a year-long unit for students to learn about the community and find ways to positively impact it. Overall, SPS plays a vital role in shaping young people's understanding of citizenship and democracy, fostering the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for active and informed civic participation. As a Board member, I will continue to encourage youth civic engagement.

3

By nurturing partnerships with local businesses and colleges and ensuring the success of programs like the Alliance for Healthcare Education, OTC Middle College, GO CAPS, Fly SPS, and Ag Academy, just to name a few, we equip students for the workforce or further education. I will encourage the superintendent and her staff to collaborate with community partners by getting involved with organizations such as the Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and colleges. The Chamber's goals are for businesses to succeed and to grow our workforce, but that cannot be achieved without having SPS students prepared to be college and/or career ready. Due to the relationships that Dr. Lathan and her staff have with the leaders at MSU, OTC, and Cox Health, an alliance was formed that will give students a jump start on entering the workforce when they complete high school. Starting in the fall 2024, SPS juniors and seniors can attend school at OTC to

earn their Associate of Arts in Bioclinical Sciences while finishing their high school diploma. I will continue to encourage the superintendent to further develop partnerships with OTC, MSU, and businesses in the community to expand these types of alliances and choice programs.

4

I believe the state should provide learning standards but should not mandate which curricula a school district purchases or uses. One of the top priorities of the Springfield Public Schools must be to focus on student learning and achievement, so when students graduate, they have reached their full potential and are college and/or career ready. For this to happen, strong initiatives and appropriate curriculum must be developed by a team of stakeholders including teachers, school staff (e.g., principals), and administration. For teachers to buy in to initiatives they will be teaching, they must have a say in the type of curriculum they will use to teach in their classroom. That crucial buy in will most likely not happen if the state mandates the curriculum a school district has to purchase or use, and it will ultimately hurt the students of the Springfield Public Schools.



## Danielle Kincaid

1

As a business owner with a Juris Doctor degree and experience in law, combined with leadership roles in educational and community organizations, I bring a comprehensive understanding of policy-making, advocacy, and community engagement. My commitment to safety, equity, transparency, student success, and teacher support makes me well-equipped to serve on the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education. I currently serve as the President of the Springfield Public Schools Board of Education and will complete my first term in April 2024. Throughout my first term, I have engaged in continuing education opportunities to strengthen my ability to serve in this capacity.

2

The educational system plays a pivotal role in fostering youth civic engagement by providing opportunities for students to learn about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of active citizenship. By integrating civics education into the curriculum, promoting student-led initiatives, and facilitating meaningful community partnerships, schools can empower students to become informed, engaged, and responsible members of society. It is important for our public education system to foster youth civic engagement to promote active citizenship, which results in benefits for our community including increased inclusiveness, greater civic responsibility, and increased community engagement.

**3** As a board member, I would prioritize expanding educational opportunities and partnerships to provide students with diverse pathways to success. This includes fostering partnerships with trade schools, colleges, non-profits, businesses, and other community organizations to offer internships, mentorship programs, and vocational training opportunities. As a current board member, I supported the new Alliance for Healthcare Education: a collaborative effort between CoxHealth, Missouri State University, Ozarks Technical Community College, and Springfield Public Schools which allows our high schoolers to earn their Associate of Arts in Bioclinical Sciences while finishing their high school diploma. I also supported the expansion of choice programs in Springfield Public Schools including the new AgAcademy and Fly SPS. By leveraging these partnerships, we can ensure that all students have access to high-quality education and resources that prepare them for future success in the workforce and beyond.

**4** While the state provides guidelines through the DESE Missouri Learning Standards, I believe that school districts should have autonomy in selecting curricula that best meet the needs of their students and community. Mandating specific curricula limits flexibility and innovation, potentially stifling creativity and hindering personalized learning experiences. School districts should have the freedom to choose curricula that align with their educational goals, values, and local context, while still meeting state standards.



## Landon McCarter

**1** My upbringing in a family of educators, coupled with my extensive professional journey as an entrepreneur, equips me with a unique understanding of the multifaceted needs within the SPS community. Having parents who dedicated their careers to education provided me with a deep insight into the challenges and triumphs within our school system. My own experience as a parent with three children in the SPS system further sensitizes me to the diverse needs of students, parents, and educators.

Moreover, my active involvement in the Missouri State University Marketing Advisory Board, coaching youth basketball for nearly a decade, and serving on the board of 'Man Up and Go' underscore my commitment to diverse civic engagements. These engagements have granted me exposure to a wide spectrum of perspectives and needs within our community.

My professional journey as an entrepreneur, starting, building, and selling marketing companies over 15 years, has honed my ability to navigate challenges, foster collaboration, and drive success in diverse settings. This diverse blend of

personal, professional, and civic experiences uniquely positions me to comprehend and advocate for the varied needs of SPS stakeholders, ensuring a voice that represents the entire spectrum of our community.

**2** The educational system plays a pivotal role in fostering youth civic engagement by equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary for active participation in democratic processes.

Through a curriculum that integrates civics education, history, and social studies, schools can provide students with a deep understanding of their government's structure, the significance of their rights and responsibilities, and the impact of civic involvement.

Encouraging critical thinking, debate, and discussion about current events and societal issues within a supportive classroom environment helps students develop the ability to form informed opinions and engage in constructive dialogue.

Extracurricular activities such as student government, community service projects, and civic education programs further empower students to apply their learning in real-world contexts, fostering a sense of agency and responsibility towards societal improvement.

By creating opportunities for students to actively participate in their communities and understand the importance of their contributions to democracy, the educational system cultivates a generation of informed, engaged, and responsible citizens.

**3** If elected, my strategy to expand educational opportunities and partnerships in our region would center on a multi-faceted approach, engaging a broad spectrum of community resources to enrich our students' educational experiences. Recognizing the diverse interests and talents of our student body, I would prioritize building strong collaborations with trade schools, colleges, non-profit organizations, and local businesses, to offer a wide range of learning opportunities.

Firstly, I would seek to establish partnerships with trade schools and community colleges to provide students with early exposure to vocational training and apprenticeships, catering to those interested in pursuing careers in skilled trades. Collaborating with local universities can facilitate dual-enrollment programs, allowing high school students to earn college credits and experience higher education environments.

Engaging non-profits focused on education and youth development would enable us to offer supplemental programs in arts, sciences, and leadership, enriching the standard curriculum. Partnerships with local businesses and banks can introduce students to real-world financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and internships, providing practical experience and career exploration opportunities.

Through these partnerships, we can create a comprehensive educational 10

ecosystem that supports every student’s aspirations, preparing them for successful futures, whether in higher education, skilled trades, or the workforce.

**4** State mandates on specific curricula, while aiming for standardization and quality across schools, may not always accommodate the unique needs and values of each district. Decisions regarding curriculum should predominantly be made at the local level by school districts themselves. This approach allows districts to tailor educational content to reflect the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations of their student populations, fostering a more engaging and relevant learning environment. Local control enables educators and administrators who have direct insight into their community’s specific challenges and strengths--to make informed decisions that best support their students’ academic and social development. Moreover, it encourages parental and community involvement in shaping educational priorities, ensuring that the curriculum resonates with local values and needs. While state standards can provide a useful framework, empowering districts to adapt or select their curricula ensures education remains dynamic, responsive, and deeply connected to the community it serves.



## Maryam Mohammadkhani

**1** My educational background equips me with a better understanding of the physical, cognitive, and emotional development of children, and my personal background equips me with the mindset to be a community liaison. I’m always available to listen and learn and have the time and skills necessary to research, analyze, and then go back to listen more. I’m willing to acknowledge the issues and work tirelessly to move the district in a positive direction, always keeping student achievement at the forefront. I speak the truth, no matter how difficult, and can remain focused on what children need to grow and learn.

**2** The fundamental role of the educational system is to deliver a quality education so that students can become independent thinkers and informed citizens who effectively engage in the civic arena.

As required by Missouri law, students receive instruction on the U.S. and Missouri constitutions and in American history and institutions, beginning no later than 7th grade and continuing through high school, and must satisfactorily pass tests on said provisions and principles to graduate. Students must also pass at least one semester of instruction in the institutions, branches, and functions of federal, state, and local government and the electoral processes. Another

condition of graduation was added in 2017, requiring students to pass an examination on the provisions and principles of American civics, similar to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services examination.

Currently, about a third of Springfield high school students score proficiently in the Government End of Course Exam, and less than half are proficient in English End of Course Exam. I believe we should do all we can to ensure that our students are academically proficient, so that they are determined and resourceful in the pursuit of their goals and best able to contribute as engaged civic citizens.

**3** SPS has done an excellent job of collaborating and partnering with colleges, trade programs, businesses, and community organizations. In many of these endeavors, SPS is not only a recipient of benefits, but also provides opportunities for this wide range of community entities to benefit from their engagement with students and staff. I will encourage and expand these collaborative relationships by recognizing their value and by engaging with families to effectively communicate the existence of the array of programs available to students, and then work to improve access by removing transportation and academic proficiency barriers.

I believe it is vital to bolster the knowledge and confidence of students in order to encourage them to first capitalize on these opportunities, and then help them to succeed. Students need both sophisticated technologies to develop and practice those necessary skills to compete in the emerging markets, as well as continued emphasis on basic educational subjects. Mastery of verbal and written communication and personal skills should remain essential, as they contribute to social engagement, work ethic, and personal responsibility, which are critical to ensure student success in careers and opportunities for leadership.

**4** I don’t believe the state should be able to mandate which curricula a school districts purchases or uses. Missouri is distinguished as a local-control state, a concept grounded in the philosophy of government premised on the belief that individuals and institutions closest to and most knowledgeable about a school and most invested in the welfare and success of its students, teachers, and communities, are best suited to making decisions related to its operation and academics.

In my opinion, teacher input is most critical in the development of SPS curriculum; and stakeholder input is represented through its elected representatives on the Board. For instance, because of my research and interest pertaining to modes of instruction/learning, I promised teachers and parents to steer toward responsible technology use. Today, the district has instituted a digital citizenship curriculum and is committed to an overhaul of curricula to improve the quality and utility of resources.





## Susan Provance

1

I am a **Champion for Kids**. After 30 years in public education, I know the importance of supporting policies focusing on enhancing resources while promoting a positive, safe learning environment. I will do what is best for kids - from budgeting to setting policy. I always have, and I always will.

I am a **trusted advocate for educators and families**. My entire life's work reveals I've been an advocate for students, educators, and families. I know the importance of listening, collaborating, and focusing on policies and practices that support community involvement. I understand how to identify and work together to provide creative solutions to complex problems.

2

It is essential. From encouraging clubs and organizations on campus that support community service to scheduling guest speakers that broaden a student's understanding of what opportunities are available, these initiatives provide students with background knowledge and timely information necessary to broaden their perspectives related to community needs.

I believe there should be opportunities for students to learn concepts related to civic education. While students are no longer required to enroll in a civics class per se, there are other ways to provide this important information. The promotion of community service and volunteering opportunities, student leadership, as well as information about current events should be a part of the learning opportunities for every student.

All 18-year-old students should be encouraged to register to vote, and the administrative assistant in every Springfield high school is authorized to do this. I recommend students be encouraged to participate with internships with government agencies and nonprofits. Hopefully, these activities will encourage a life-long commitment to community involvement.

3

Preparing students for life beyond the K12 experience is at the heart of what schools should be doing. From trade schools, colleges, etc., as a school board, we have an obligation to support students as they prepare to be productive citizens. In the past few years, SPS has provided career pathway exploration and education to all middle and high school students. I support efforts to develop talent by exposing students to career options while facilitating a continual dialogue between students, families, and counselors including awareness of the skills and education needed to obtain a desired position.

Recently, Missouri State University, Ozark Technical Community College, Cox Health, and Springfield Public Schools launched the Alliance for Health Care Education. This is one example of a partnership I would support as a

board member. It offers students specific opportunities to enhance employability options upon graduation. These initiatives help to bridge the gap between education and employment.

Good things may be accomplished by an individual, but great things can be accomplished by a team. As a board member, I will support partnerships that truly benefit and engage our students with learning to improve their self-confidence while gaining skills to succeed in life.

4

The Missouri Learning Standards drive all content in Missouri public schools, and school board members should familiarize themselves with these Standards. Ultimately, it is the superintendent's responsibility to ensure they are taught with fidelity. I believe there needs to be local control regarding specific purchases related to curriculum. As long as the curriculum teaches toward the state adopted learning standards, the school district should be allowed to purchase resources that are cost effective, relevant, and targeted toward the learning objectives.

The recently adopted legislative platform for Springfield Public Schools states, "We support the elimination of unnecessary laws, regulations and rules that inhibit local boards of education from establishing innovative educational programs or restrict local school district budget development." Had I been on the board at the time of the vote, I would have supported the platform.



## Chad Rollins

1

I have professional and community leadership experience in numerous areas:

- I actively served on the academic admissions committee for UMKC Pharmacy School
- I served on the executive council for Sigma Pi Fraternity,
- I was the Sigma Pi Chapter Director for Sigma Pi Fraternity, guiding them through re-chartering at MSU,
- With my doctorate in Pharmacy, I served as a UMKC preceptor, training last year students during their pharmacy school rotations.
- I'm highly effective at working within groups, committees, and teams as I've demonstrated all my adult life.
- I am a parent of 7 children, thus I've always been highly motivated to provide leadership within our Community of youths.

- Further evidence of community interaction and leadership are the fundraisers in which I've been involved just over the last 6 years, numerous Fitness Events with proceeds going to organizations such as:
  - The Muscular Dystrophy Association to be used for sending kids to camp
  - The Hive in Willard to assist with providing jobs to persons with disabilities
  - Brace 4 Impact a company that supports a community of kids in Haiti and St. Louis
  - BackStoppers and organization that provides financial assistance to families of fallen police, firefighters, and paramedics
- Along with other fundraisers (local and National), I have a Saturday morning stadium workout at 5:30 AM that has made a major impact on a youth-filled audience and changed many people's lives.

**2** I think the role for SPS is to encourage students to be active in civic engagement through volunteering, community work, extracurricular activities, class discussions and simulations. Producing service-minded students helps promote excellence and a strong positive community. One example of this in the last year includes a Field fourth-grader who was named outstanding youth philanthropist for 2023 by his actions as a successful volunteer and his involvement in community work. True leadership can be measured by the actions individuals take to help others. By showing students how to get involved with their community around them SPS will be doing a service not only to the student learning process but to Springfield as a whole. As students become adults, they often take these experiences and apply them in the real world after graduation to become successful contributors to society.

**3** Currently SPS has a few programs that stand out to me including:

1. SPS Choice programs, partnering with business, industry, postsecondary institutions, and other entities. Examples include: Academy of Exploration, Academy of Fine & Performing Arts, AgAcademy, Fly SPS, Health Sciences Academy at Mercy, International Baccalaureate, Kickapoo U, Middle College, Parkview Leadership School, WOLF. These are all programs I would help support, strengthen, and encourage other programs to follow suit. As a pharmacist I would urge a pharmacy program be put into place to offer job shadowing, etc.
2. Go Caps (Centers for Advanced Professional Studies) to intertwine the business community and public education. I would support and help to expand this program as well. It offers great opportunities for students to get real world experiences.

**4**

While there is some value in uniformed testing across the State, I believe that the district, not DESE, should do what they think is best for students. Districts that are top performers in testing will be the first to tell you that they would prefer to pick their own curriculum over DESE. Those underperforming may need that assistance. Springfield is underperforming compared to the other larger districts in our region. We have experts every day in the classrooms we can talk to that will tell you what is successful and what isn't. For instance, early childhood educators seeing real success in the classrooms use or want to use phonics-based reading instruction. The district has been slow to transition in that direction but has been doing so. At the end of the day, we need to pick curriculum that brings results, not what's just a teaching fad.



## Kyler Sherman-Wilkins

**1**

I possess several qualities that make me uniquely qualified to serve on the SPS board of education. First, I am an educator and I deeply empathize with

SPS teachers and staff regarding their challenges with an underfunded and under resourced education system. Second, I am a researcher with the expertise to arrive at data-driven solutions to the most pressing issues facing our district. Third, I have experience serving on governing boards and understand the role of the board members in setting district policy and overseeing our only employee: the Superintendent. And most importantly, I am a passionate champion for public schools and believe strongly that a strong, vibrant public school system is required for a strong, vibrant Springfield.

**2**

Undoubtedly, the educational system plays an important role in encouraging youth civic engagement by providing students with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to become active and responsible members in our increasingly diverse society. More specifically, educational institutions can promote civic engagement by first, strengthening civic education programs. Through the focus on civic education in the curriculum, schools help students understand the importance of civic participation, democracy, and their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Second, in providing opportunities for students to engage in community service, internships, or volunteer work, schools help youth understand real-world issues and how they can make a difference. Third, by encouraging open discussions and debates on social and political issues, educational institutions can help students develop critical thinking skills and form their own opinions on important matters. And lastly, school activities such as mock elections and voting drives can deepen student's understanding of the electoral process and can foster in them a sense of civic duty and engagement.

**3** If elected, I would prioritize expanding educational opportunities and fostering partnerships in the region to ensure that our students have access to a diverse range of resources and support systems. First, I would advocate for strengthening existing and creating new partnerships with trade schools and vocational training programs to provide students with alternative pathways to gain valuable skills and enter the workforce. SPS currently does a great job at this through choice programs such as Fly SPS and in collaborations like the newly formed Springfield Alliance for Healthcare Education and I will work diligently to expand such programs. And second, I would enhance partnerships with colleges and universities to create more seamless pathways for students to transition from high school to higher education. This could involve dual enrollment programs, articulation agreements, and scholarship opportunities to make college more accessible and affordable. As a professor, I know firsthand the difficulties some students face in transitioning to the university context. One of my top priorities would be to help ease this transition to ensure long term success.

**4** While I believe that the state has an important role in setting learning standards, I do not think that the state should mandate which curricula a school district purchases or uses. Such a one-size-fits-all approach to curriculum decisions serves to do nothing more than limit the autonomy of local school districts and undermines their ability to address the unique needs of their students. Different districts may have varying needs, preferences, and priorities when it comes to curriculum selection, and mandating a specific curriculum could stifle creativity and hinder the development of tailored educational experiences. Perhaps most importantly, local control over curriculum decisions empowers SPS teachers, in collaboration with administrators, to select materials that best meet the academic needs of Springfield students. Our teachers are experts and are in the best position to determine the most effective teaching resources and methods because of their expertise and on-the-ground knowledge of the students they serve.

## Ballot Measures

Ballot measures vary depending upon one's voting jurisdiction, but on April 2, 2024, qualified voters will vote on two City of Springfield Charter amendments:

### *Find your Ballot*

1. Go to [sos.mo.gov](https://sos.mo.gov).
2. Click on Elections and Voting pull-down menu.
3. Click on Check Your Voter Registration.
4. Fill in the requested five blanks, and the captcha box and hit Submit.
5. On the Current Voter Registration Information page, scroll to Election Resources.
6. Click on the round View Candidates & Issues button to see your own ballot information; it is printable.

### *Amendment 1: Changing Mayor's Term from Two Years to Four Years*

If approved, the change will not take effect until the April 2025 election.

#### *Ballot Language:*

Shall Sections 2.1(1) and 2.6 of the Springfield City Charter be amended to provide for a four-year term for the mayor instead of a two-year term, with the four-year term to first apply at the general municipal election to be held in 2025, and with the maximum consecutive years a mayor may serve to remain limited to eight years?

## *Amendment 2: Code of Ethics for Elected Officials, Appointed Officers, Board Members and Employees of the City*

Recommended revisions include enacting a code of ethics policy applicable to all elected officials, appointed officers, board members, and employees of the City, adding an obligation for City Council to maintain and review the code of ethics policy at least every other year.

### *Ballot Language:*

Shall Section 19.16 of the Springfield City Charter be amended to require enactment of a code of ethics, to be reviewed by Council not less than every other year, revise provisions to address employee violations with disciplinary action up to and including termination, and add a legal defense to forfeiture of office or termination of employment if a prior, written advisory opinion from the City Attorney was obtained and relied upon in good faith?

*You do not have to vote for everything on the ballot—if unsure, you can leave some items blank—your ballot will still count!*

## **My Voting Plan – April 2, 2024**

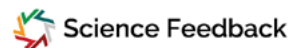
*Polling location:* \_\_\_\_\_

*What time will I go?* \_\_\_\_\_

*Who's my voting buddy?* \_\_\_\_\_

## **Be Informed by Nonpartisan Sources:**

### *Fact-Checking websites:*



### *Unbiased sources of political information:*



Vote Smart [www.votesmart.org](http://www.votesmart.org): Provides unbiased information on candidates via various categories of information.



ActiVote [www.activote.net](http://www.activote.net): App that's the one-stop shop for all things political: elected officials, candidates, current legislation, plus daily surveys and results.

Watch for our local election candidate panel to learn more about the seven Springfield Public Schools School Board candidates.

**March 27, 3:30–5:00 p.m., Plaster Student Union Room 313.**

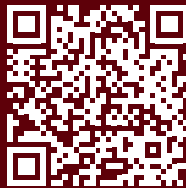
Designed by:





*Questions? Contact us:  
[pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu)*

Paws to the Polls is a nonpartisan grassroots campus initiative formed to increase voter engagement and voting knowledge at Missouri State University. Want to get involved? Email us at: [pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu](mailto:pawstothepolls@missouristate.edu).



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