

# Everything you need to know about School Board Election Coverage 2012

(...so far)

Hi folks. We are getting ready to embark on the most exciting project of the semester! School Board elections! And I'm only kind of kidding. We've already gotten a bit of a start with a couple articles introducing the incumbent and new candidates. My goal is to expand this coverage as election season approaches and really give our community everything they need to know to make an informed decision. Let's start with the basics.

**Cast of characters:** Allie Hinga, Kate Moritz, Abigail Geiger, Nicole Jones, Margaux Henquinet, Shaina Cavazos, and anyone else I've forgotten on lower ed.

**What we are trying to do:** Provide our readers with comprehensive coverage of each school board candidate, his or her views, the issues most important to our readers, local forums and gatherings, and election night itself.

## Background information/preliminary contact for candidates

- <http://www.columbiamissourian.com/stories/2012/01/17/paul-cushing-russ-tandy-join-columbia-school-board-candidates/>
- <http://www.columbia.k12.mo.us/boardcan.php>

## Last year's coverage

- [What we've kind of already done...](#)
- [Profiles we need to get started on](#)
- [Q&A we should try to emulate](#)
- [A layout for the profiles I tried \(and failed\) to implement.](#)
- [My profile, which includes some links to candidate forums and election night results.](#) (easier than linking to a million articles).

Take a look at these examples to get a better idea of what I want our coverage to look like. Except I want ours to be better. And I want to get more of it out earlier.

## Some of my own brainstorming from Joy's class last semester

- [https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B2brFkL8Buv1NzhjZTMzNGYtZDIyNy00NTJlWJjNzYtOTM0MGYzNTkyNjM2&hl=en\\_US](https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=explorer&chrome=true&srcid=0B2brFkL8Buv1NzhjZTMzNGYtZDIyNy00NTJlWJjNzYtOTM0MGYzNTkyNjM2&hl=en_US)

This is largely directed toward the community outreach team, but I wanted you guys to just be aware of what I was considering. I am not sure yet what Joy is planning, but I am sending her this doc as well, and hopefully we can chat about it soon.

Please let me know if any of those ideas seem especially interesting to you, or something you'd want to be a part of if we moved forward with them.

### First Steps:

- Get each candidate's...
  - Email address
  - Phone number (work and cell, if you can)
  - Social media contact (Twitter, Facebook, Google Plus, whatever)
  - Blog address/link to a page with their platforms
    - Or, if they're more old school, a pdf of their platform
  - Whoever gets info first, **please create a "Candidates Contact Info" doc and link to it here:** [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WSuslOlwhqbxvxEoMHh9\\_ITITKiyozmTD4Lr2ZNnMtTc/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WSuslOlwhqbxvxEoMHh9_ITITKiyozmTD4Lr2ZNnMtTc/edit)
  - Allie's people: Melvin Blase, Christine King
  - Nicole Jones: Rex Cone
  - Abigail Geiger: Paul Cushing
- Divvy up candidate forums to attend and report back on. These events can get kind of repetitive, but it gives us a chance to hear more about each person's platform and also report back to the community about what issues they are focusing on.

### Schedule of Forums (PUT YOUR NAMES BY WHAT YOU CAN COVER):

- February 15: Pachyderm Club
  - 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Hyvee on Rock Bridge, 405 E. Nifong Boulevard
  - **Allie can potentially cover**
- February 16: NEA School Board Forum
  - 5:30 p.m. Hyvee, 25 Conley Rd
  - **Abigail can cover this**
- March 1: Board of Education Candidate Forum
  - 3:30 at Chamber of Commerce, Walton Building
  - King said this would be a good initial one to look into. She wasn't sure if it started at 3 or 3:30 (she is getting there at 3).
  - It's going to include a discussion of the bond and tax issue
  - **Allie can potentially cover**
  - **Nicole can potentially cover**
- March 8: CMSTA and Columbia Parents for Public Schools
  - 6:30 at the ARC (Activity and Recreation Center), 1701 W. Ash Street
  - King said this one is a bit more laid back — candidates are at different stations and people can come by and talk to them.
  - **Nicole can potentially cover**
  - **Margaux can potentially cover**
- March 13: League of Women Voters
  - 6:30 p.m., Columbia Public Library
  - Includes board of education, ballot issues, council candidates
  - **Allie can potentially cover**
  - **Abigail can cover**

- March 15: NEA School Board Forum
  - 6/6:30-7:30, Paxton Keeley Elementary Cafeteria, 201 Park De Ville Drive
  - Generally more structured
- March 23: Muleskinner's Luncheon (**Allie is checking the date on this because she is getting conflicting answers**)
  - I think noon at the Old Missouri Country Club
  - Q and A, statements
  - I want to check on this, since only one source has given so far
  - **Allie can potentially cover No beat meeting today!**
  - **Abigail: ditto**
- March 27: NAACP
  - 7 p.m., Second Baptist Church
  - I want to check on this, only one source has given so far
  - This one would be over spring break. Will anyone be in town?
  - **Abigail can potentially cover**
- March 29: MoCLA
  - Come to the Parkade Center for the first ever MoCLA/Keep Columbia Free Candidate Forum. The City Council candidates and the School Board candidates will be there to answer your questions. This forum will be a bit more fun as we will allow for rebuttals from the candidates.

### How to cover a forum: Tips and Tricks

- **What it is:** An opportunity for different groups in the community to listen to where the candidates stand on issues facing the district. Usually, it's moderated by a single person and each candidate will answer the questions posed to the group.
- **What you need to be listening for:** Broad themes. We're trying to give our readers an idea of what the conversation was about; we don't need an answer-by-answer transcript from each candidate. That being said, listen for questions/topics that get a lot of attention, and try to get at least one quote from each candidate summing up their views on that topic/question.
- **What does my story even look like?:** First, go back up to the link I posted to my profile and read some of the forum stories Bridget Kapp and I wrote to get an idea (Keywords: NAACP, muleskinner, achievement gap, League of Women Voters, CMNEA, etc). Any of Jim Ayello or Brendan Gibbons' community forum stories from last semester would also give you a good idea of the format. Next, *try* to follow this *general* structure:
  - Lead: What's the biggest thing that was discussed/happened?
  - Nut graph: Further details about the forum (host, who was there, name some of the themes you plan to detail later on).
  - Now start talking about each big theme/idea/happening and use the quotes from the candidates to draw conclusions about the discussion and flesh out what points you want to make. (Wash, rinse, repeat)
  - End with some kind of great quote or something and then give us a "what's next"
    - Next forum, place to find more information, etc.
- It's just that simple!

### Outreach Plans ([Link to brainstorming page](#))

Landing page with links to other pages/coverage (I shall create):

- Survey (Nick)

- Quiz (Nick)
- Scannable info pages on bond issue, tax levy (Beat, this is where I need you)
  - Like this: <http://www.columbiamissourian.com/stories/2011/08/31/keeping-bond-issue/>

Package (Copy desk)

- all of our past coverage (profiles, forums)

Place to comment with Google forms on those pages (Nick)

### **Longer term:**

- I want to get up bios and basic info on each candidate as soon as we can.
- I want to try to organize community-submitted questions and get those answered (we'd need outreach's help on this one).
- I think we should work on developing questions for a Q&A
- Issue stories from public on tax levy/bond issue (IN THE WORKS)
- You guys will also attend various watch parties on election night. This is fun, so be excited. Where, when are these watch parties, send these to photo. Who's going to win?
  - reporting results, reactions from candidates and supporters, reactions to bond issue and tax levy,
  - Dayside, what's driving people to the polls, quotes from voters, what issues are most important, engage in conversation and talk more about the issue, vignettes about interesting voters
  - How do we figure out turn out?
  -

This is all I have for now; check back here for updates!