

MERIDIAN TEA PARTY  
2011 CANDIDATE/INCUMBENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Candidate/Incumbent Name: Billy Burnham  
Office aspired to/Currently holding: Supt. of Ed. in Lauderdale County  
Campaign Point of Contact/Title: Billy Burnham  
Campaign Address: 8850 Timberlake Cr. Meridian, MS 39305  
Campaign Phone – and – Fax: 601-681-6270  
Campaign email address: bdburnham@bellsouth.net Website Address: billyburnham.com  
Education/Degrees/Certificates held: Bachelor of Science - Miss. State University  
Ed. Leadership - Masters - University of West Alabama  
Military Experience/Highest Rate or Rank Held/ Occupational Specialty: - 0 -

Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_  
Business/Industry Experience/Highest Position held: - 0 -

Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ # Of Employees Managed: \_\_\_\_\_

Own Business Experience: - 0 -  
Years of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ # Of Employees Managed: \_\_\_\_\_

If elected to office, what will be your three top priorities? Destress state test, develop district wide strategic plan for future, and offer a more robust school experience.

Simply put, what qualifies you for this office? 31 year educator as successful teacher, coach, and administrator with a proven record of facilitating positive change in schools I served. I am known as change agent, doing whatever it takes.  
How would you describe your political views?

Very Conservative Conservative Moderate - Liberal - Very Liberal - Socialist - Other

Please comment: The values I hold closest to my heart were instilled in me by my parents who believed in hard work, accountability, and being thrifty.

What are the most important values and ethics you believe in and demonstrate as a leader? \_\_\_\_\_

Trust - Build trust through transparency  
Modeling - Model what you expect or prioritize - Hard work!  
Accountability - "The buck stops with the leader".

Identify three of your most important leadership accomplishments: Leading Southeast HHS to level "5" status in 2004, leading Northeast middle school from state plan of improvement to "Successful" in 2009.  
Leading numerous athletic teams to championships.

What is the proper role of government? To facilitate and provide oversight for basic rights, rights guaranteed by Constitution, and promote democracy.

Are ethics as important as economics in elections? yes. Leaders must be trusted if they are to be successful leaders.

Leaders often deal with conflict. Describe a recent significant conflict you have had to handle, what was the outcome? Are you satisfied with the outcome? Could you have handled it better? How?

Our school had an overage girl that was apathetic toward education. She wanted to work toward a GED diploma. Her father was not willing to work with us.

We got Dept. of Human Services involved and were successful. It caused difficulty between me + father but I was working for

What is your position with regard to the statement "... to the people's right to keep and bear arms?" Student.

Our fore fathers understood this right to be one of our most dearest. With this right comes a responsibility as well; a license, ability to operate, and store properly.

America's federal deficit has reached an all-time high, being measured in numbers never before expressed to the people. If elected/re-elected, what can you do to reverse this trend locally?

The school district should become proactive in budgeting. A priority list should be made by stakeholders and avoid the fluff.

How do you feel about the economic outlook of Meridian, Lauderdale County and/or Mississippi?

Our area needs to attract more technical and manufacturing jobs to enhance economic growth; schools can assist in this endeavor by improving quality of life and enhancing economic growth by implementing programs & policies to this end.

The Mississippi Legislature recently tried to pass legislation dealing with illegal immigration (SB2197). What is your opinion about this law and similar laws and/or how should Mississippi be approaching this issue? How do you believe illegal immigration does/will affect this area and specifically your office should you win?

This could affect schools in the near future. The use of funds to educate illegals could cause a hardship on district like California currently. All immigrants should follow the law as it pertains to them entering U.S.

Are there any tax measures you would advocate to assist in job creation?

As Supt. of Ed. in Lauderdale County I will work hard to manage school finances and keep taxes down so local government cannot deter job growth.

Do you believe children would get a better education if parents had the right to choose their children's school?

Parents can choose school now through where they live. Stakeholders should work together to improve their school. School choice can turn into abandonment where children left behind suffer. In theory it sounds good, but in actuality is hard for districts.

Do you support the "Charter School" concept of education?

Local school districts should monitor all schools to ensure high quality.

Schools should offer wider variety of services to ensure all students are challenged and served.

Should teachers be required to pass standards examinations pertaining to the discipline they teach?

Yes, but the procedure should not be complex, then additional costs are not incurred.

What are your views of the current school curriculum, textbooks and educational results in our area and what changes, if any, would you advocate?

\* School Curriculum - Schools are required to teach state + district adopted curr. but teachers need the academic freedom to add to curriculum.

\* Textbooks - Parents should be involved in textbook adoption to keep text from becoming too liberal as in other states.

\* Ed. Results - In Lauderdale County they show high test scores, but graduation rate below state mandate which means our district will be penalized by the state. Test scores in our district require too much of our energy, efforts, and funds, nothing left for anything else.

Use this space to explain or describe any issues or beliefs that pertain to the office for which you are running or personal information that you feel is important for voters to know about you or your campaign:

I believe there are numerous things schools can do to improve the quality of life in our district and promote economic growth. Much of my platform hinges on these items such as improving the graduation rate and ACT scores, expanding the vocational program, meet all state and federal mandates, decrease state test where more effort & funds can be used, form long range plan, and offer a school experience that relates to a 21<sup>st</sup> century student.

Thank you for completing this survey! Meridian Tea Party members are grateful for your responses to our questions and in exchange for returning the completed survey to us, we will extend an invitation for you to participate in our Local Candidates Forum we plan to hold at The Temple Ballroom on a date to be announced.

Please return your completed questionnaire to the address below.

Respectfully,

Meridian, Mississippi Tea Party  
P.O. Box 3399  
Meridian, MS 39303

[www.MeridianTeaParty.com](http://www.MeridianTeaParty.com)

Email: [candidates@MeridianTeaParty.com](mailto:candidates@MeridianTeaParty.com)

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