

Tyson's REPORTER

Falls Church finalizes candidate list for city council and school board elections

David Taube

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The Falls Church City Council and School Board races will have crowded fields for limited openings this November.

After the filing deadline closed **earlier this week**, the city council has six candidates for four seats, and the school board has nine candidates for four seats. Terms for each are for four years.

One question hovering over the general election, which is set for Nov. 2, is whether early voting returns will be similar to the **jump in 2020** or return to pre-pandemic levels, Falls Church City General Registrar and Director of Elections David Bjerke wrote in an email when contacted by Tysons Reporter.

Turnout for the election could also be affected going forward by the introduction of a permanent absentee ballot by-mail request form, a **new option** that will be available in Virginia starting July 1, according to Bjerke.

“So if you want your ballots mailed to you for all elections, you fill out that form and we’ll mail the ballot to you,” he wrote. “As voters opt into that program, they will be informed of the election earlier and may well vote earlier. If they choose to vote in-person, that request gets canceled and they have to opt in again for future elections.”

In addition to the city council and school board candidates below, the general election ballot will include races for commissioner of the revenue, treasurer, and sheriff, according to **the City of Falls Church**.

City Council

The top four vote-getters will earn seats.

Mayor David Tarter’s term runs to the end of 2023. After the November election, the newly elected council will vote for vice mayor and mayor, whose positions are in place for two years. Other council members whose terms also run until then are Phil Duncan and Letty Hardi.

Names are ordered as they will appear on ballots.

- **David F. Snyder** is seeking another term. Snyder, a former mayor and vice mayor, was first elected to council in 1994.
- **Debora “Debbie” Schantz-Hiscott** is seeking her first full term after winning a special election last November after Councilmember Dan Sze died of cancer.
- **Marybeth D. Connelly** is seeking another term. She’s been the vice mayor since 2016 and was first elected in 2014.
- **Stuart M. Whitaker**
- **Caroline S. Lian**
- **Scott C. Diaz**

School Board

The top four vote-getters will land seats.

The openings come from the seats of board members Shannon Litton (the chair), Greg Anderson, and appointees Sonia Ruiz-Bolaños and Edwin Henderson II, who filled partial terms this year due to vacancies.

Terms for board members Laura Downs, Susan Dimock and Phil Reitingger last until 2023.

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- **Ilya Shapiro** says he is running to ensure the city maintains excellent schools while providing accountability, responsiveness, transparency, and diversity of thought. He serves on numerous legal boards, including the Mississippi Justice Institute as chairman. Among his other government service, he’s a member of the Virginia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He’s a vice president of the Cato Institute.
- **Lori K. Silverman** wants to bring more diversity into the school system, transparency in communications and how decisions are made, and collaboration amongst administrators, teachers, parents, and the community. She has volunteered in various roles, from recess duty to chaperoning field trips or being a “Mystery Reader” as well as political organizations and causes. She owns her own political consulting firm.
- **Adam D. Riedel** hopes to bring strong, thoughtful, and responsive leadership to the School Board as the community looks toward the future of its schools following the COVID-19 pandemic. He’s the coach of the Falls Church K-2 girls lacrosse team, a three-year resident of the city, and manager of the Arlington County Office of Environmental Management.
- **Jerrod F. Anderson** is running to ensure the city school system continues to foster excellence in all aspects of student life for all children, the board engages in clear communication and is responsive so people understand what decisions are made and why, and policy decisions are goal-oriented, informed by data, and regularly re-evaluated. He’s worked in education technology in public schools and is currently a health statistician.

- **Courtney C. Mooney**
- **David S. Ortiz** is looking to help all children at city schools develop skills to achieve their goals and contribute to society, help prepare the school system for its future, and engage the community in setting goals and holding the superintendent accountable. He serves as a board member of Creative Cauldron and assistant Scoutmaster of Troop 681, among other volunteering previously. He's deputy director of the Office of Electric Reliability.
- **Kathleen E. C. Tysse** has served as president of the Falls Church Elementary Parent Teacher Association and currently serves on the Mary Riley Styles Public Library board and the schools' Gifted Education Advisory Committee and a room parent for her three elementary-aged children. She has a master of teaching degree and previously worked as a public school teacher and for two non-profit education organizations before staying home with her children.
- **Tate O. Gould** is running to help provide the School Board with informed perspective, balance, and independence. He's worked in the U.S. Education Department for statistics, policy, program implementation, and support as well as a teacher trainer and math teacher and in various roles with state-level education policy. He's the founder and CEO of AnLar LLC, an education policy firm that serves schools and agencies.
- **Jennifer E. Halvaksz**