

MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 2

Hughes: Education is the foundation that affects a child's future success



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CLAY COUNTY — Jim Hughes considers what is taught in school to be just the beginning of a child's education, an important bedrock that will affect their future path to success.

He wants to win Seat 2 on the Clay County School Board. He said it's important to "prepare students holistically for life beyond school – whether it be the workforce, higher education, military service or any other path – through collaborative efforts involving parents, teachers, administrators, and most importantly, the students themselves. This preparation must address Maslow's hierarchy of needs, ensuring that students' basic needs are met to facilitate their academic and personal growth."

Like a pyramid, from the bottom to the top, Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization.

Hughes is one of four candidates who is running with no political affiliation. All four will be in a runoff on Aug. 20, with the winner taking over for Mary Bolla, who decided not to run for re-election.

Hughes earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in education at the University of North Florida. He has been in the classroom for 36 years and was a finalist for Teacher of the Year in Clay County in 1998-99. He also has a daughter who teaches in the district.

Hughes said he's taught several subjects and at several grade levels, so he has a broad understanding of all educational challenges.

"I feel like I am still able to give back some of the knowledge I've accumulated over the years as a teacher and my other activities between coaching and working with curriculum accreditation," Hughes said.

"Education has always been a part of my life, from the student to the teacher. One of my daughters is still a teacher here in Clay County, so I've still got a vested interest in the schools."

Hughes would like to see an expansion of differing educational options, such as Garber (AutoMall) and VyStar, and hospitals offering apprenticeship programs alongside traditional academic coursework. "By fostering open communication and dialogue among stakeholders, I aim to empower our students to pursue fulfilling careers and contribute positively to society."

Hughes created a classroom technology lab at Lake Asbury Elementary in 2000 and another technology lab at Shadowlawn Elementary in 2008 before he retired in 2016. He was also the Director of Music Ministries at St. Catherine Catholic Church in Orange Park for 48 years before retiring last year.