



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

2015 Bloomfield Voters Guide

BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

The following questions were submitted to Bloomfield Town Council candidates by the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford®. Responses are published in the order they were received. Candidates had 350 words combined for their biographies and responses. The Bloomfield Journal would like to thank the League for this valuable service and the opportunity to share it with our readers. For more information on the League of Women Voters of Greater Hartford, go to: <http://www.lwvgh.org/>

THE QUESTIONS

Question # 1: Do you think the curriculum developed in Bloomfield to meet the Common Core Standards is working in our schools?

Question # 2: What are the top challenges in The Bloomfield Public Schools in the next year? The next 3-5 years? Please explain one specific idea that you have to meet one of these challenges?

Renee D. Coleman-Mitchell
Democrat



Renee D. Coleman-Mitchell is Section Chief for the Community, Family and Health Equity Section at the Department of Public Health (DPH). In her role as Section Chief, she is directly responsible for the fiscal and programmatic management for various public health programs addressing many health issues such as chronic disease, women, infant and children health, adolescent health, school-based health and children with special health care needs, women's health, oral health, genomics, injuries and health equity for all. Previously, Ms. Cole-

man-Mitchell served in various capacities such as Deputy Director of Health for the City of Hartford, Director for the Meriden Community Health Center and as one of the Commissioners on the City of Hartford's Permanent Commission on the Status of Hartford Women. She currently serves as the Department of Public Health's representative on the CT Public Health Association Board, the Child Poverty Council, and the CT Medicaid Medical Assistance Program Oversight Council. Also, she is Adjunct Professor at the University of CT, Public Health Program teaching Maternal and Child Health. Coleman-Mitchell is a graduate of Connecticut College with a Bachelor's Degree and received her Master's Degree in Public Health from Yale School of Medicine. She currently resides in Bloomfield with her family, is a membermember on the Bloomfield Town Committee, and serves on the town's Library Board.

Question #1

Yes, the curriculum meets the standards and are making a difference in the schools as evidenced in the continuous improvement in the students test scores.

Question #2

The challenges are making sure our students continue to improve while providing them with the tools and skills to be on par and compete

with other students. Becoming a new Board of Education member, will give me the opportunity to work with my colleagues and the superintendent to address the student's needs and evaluate the progress being made.

Donald Harris
Democrat



Harris was a Bloomfield Educator for 39 years (1967 – 2006) as a Physical Education Teacher, Vice Principal and High School Principal. He also served as Town Council Deputy Mayor (2007-2011); Board of Education Chair (2011-present); CREC Council Chair (2015-16 term); CABA Board Executive Committee (2013-present); and CABA Federal Relations Chair (2013-present).

Question #1

As an active member of the Bloomfield Board of Education, I am comfortable in stating that 'yes', our recently upgraded curriculum is meeting the Common Core Standards. Our ongoing rise in test scores is strong evidence that the Bloomfield Schools are on the right track to continue being a great school system. Through the extensive use and continued monitoring of data, we are able to chart student improvements made especially in the last 4 years which has been a measure of our success.

Question #2

I believe our top challenge in the next year will be maintaining staff. Our staff is dedicated to the Goal of 'Raising The Bar', providing quality education for all of our children. However, the more successful your system is, the more attractive the staff becomes to other systems to entice them to leave. Additional challenges over the next 3-5 years will include the development of an elementary/middle magnet school in Bloomfield to continue to address the diversity concerns.

Robert W. Ike
Republican



Ike is a graduate of Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia and Yale University in New Haven. He is a Commissioner with the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission and has served on Bloomfield Board of Education from 1996-2003 and 2006-Present. Ike is also a committee member Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Incorporated.

Question #1

The Connecticut Council for Education Reform issued a report The Bloomfield Blueprint for Closing the Achievement Gap. The Superintendent developed four priority goals to meet the Common Core Standards and to reduce the achievement gap. The four goals are Holistic Accountability, Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Positive School Climate and Parent and Community Engagement. As a result of this program, Bloomfield has realized significant improvements in reading and math performance between 2011-2014. In fact, third grade scores in Reading, Writing and Math all exceeded the state average in 2013. The Bloomfield High School graduation rate in the 2010-2011 school years was 74.3% in the 2013-2014 school years the graduation rate has risen to 90.2%. The academic results clearly show the District's success in aligning to the Common Core Standards.

Question #2

The greatest challenge facing the District is to continue to achieve academically and seek to have all students at the goal and advanced levels. The challenge in the next 3-5 years is to continue a rigorous school and academic environments. The Town Leaders must be willing to continue to advocate funding the educational system at the present level so the community can enjoy the fruits of this academic success. To meet these challenges the Town must have a RIGOROUS school environment and expect high academic standards for and from our students.

Note: Board of Education Candidate Michael Walters did not respond to the invitation to participate in the Voters Guide.

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