

# THE INFORMED DEMOCRAT OF SWFL



LeeCountyDems.org

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LEE COUNTY

## Ask The Candidates:

### **Debbie Jordan, Lee County School Board Incumbent Candidate, District 4**

**October 1, 2025**

Debbie Jordan has been a dedicated leader in Lee County for more than 40 years. She currently serves as the District 4 School Board Member for the Lee County School District and is the owner of Nina Rose Events. A longtime Fort Myers resident, Debbie is deeply rooted in the community as a mother of four, grandmother of 17, and great-grandmother of two-several of whom attend Lee County schools.



Her professional background includes 20 years as a State Board Member and Past-President of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association of Lee and Charlotte Counties, as well as serving as Legislative Liaison for the Florida Chapter of the Country Club of America Association.

We sat down with Debbie to talk with her about her ideas:

### **On Why the School Boards Matter to Everyone**

**LeeDems:** Why do school boards matter to everyone, even those in our community who do not have children in school?

**Debbie:** It is important to have a strong school board that will prioritize our children and that will be good stewards of taxpayers' money. Remember, the students of tomorrow will be the ones running the country, taking care of us. It is in the best interest of everyone to have an educated society.

### **On School Safety & Start Times**

**LeeDems:** What is your position on the proposed 'Safe Start Initiative'?

**Debbie:** I understood why the change took place. The state had already come out with a start time for the school district but changed their minds.

**LeeDems:** Do you support later start times for middle and high school students to align with sleep science research?

**Debbie:** It depends on who you speak to. High school students are not going to bed earlier. In speaking to many, they would not be able to play sports or work. A lot of our families rely on their high school children to collect the younger siblings as the parents are at work. The younger children would have to be out in the dark to catch the bus, and there is so much more than research.

## **On the Use of Technology in our Schools**

**LeeDems:** How should the district balance technology use (like smartphones) with classroom focus and student mental health?

**Debbie:** The policy does not permit cell phones from bell to bell. Kids/people in general spend too much time on their phones. Mental health is a growing concern with technology and what kids are exposed to or trust.

**LeeDems:** What additional safety measures do you think are needed in Lee County schools?

**Debbie:** Lee County is one of the safest districts in the state. We keep on improving by training employees and checks and balances on safety protocols.

## **On Teachers' Rights and the Role of the School Board**

**LeeDems:** Do you support teachers' right to organize and advocate for better conditions?

**Debbie:** Absolutely, that is why they have TALC and SPALC, which also support and advocate for non-instructional staff.

**LeeDems:** What role should the school board play in improving teacher morale and support?

**Debbie:** The school board does not run the day-to-day operations. That is the responsibility of the Superintendent, who is now an elected official. As a school board member, I believe we need to be present, have an open-door policy and make sure that all voices are heard.

**LeeDems:** How do you ensure transparency and community trust in board decisions?

**Debbie:** Sometimes this is very hard. You are one of seven, and when a decision is voted on it becomes a board decision. To me, it is really important to fact check and make sure you understand what is being voted on. Our vote is our voice and if something is not right, it needs to be said, regardless if you are the only no vote. Also making sure the conversations are held in the public where the community may have input.

## On Teacher Retention & Pay

**LeeDems:** Lee County ranks 49th out of 50 in teacher pay. What specific actions would you take to improve salaries and retain quality teachers?

**Debbie:** I would like to see a 1.0 -mill ad valorem tax referendum come into play that would be used to increase teacher and staff salaries. The district surrounding Lee County has been doing this, and now other district/counties are putting a referendum on their ballots in order to keep their staff.

**LeeDems:** How do you propose addressing the current teacher shortage and our open positions?

**Debbie:** HR is currently doing a great job of hiring and filling those positions. We have to be competitive to retain as well.

## On Addressing Equality Concerns

**LeeDems:** How would you ensure that discussions around race, gender, and sexuality are handled appropriately, if at all, in the classroom?

**Debbie:** We have policies and departments in place to make sure things are done appropriately and within the law.

**LeeDems:** How would you address concerns from families and students who feel excluded or underrepresented in the current educational system?

**Debbie:** One at a time. Listen first, acknowledge what they are sharing with you, and then collaborate to come up with a solution. Stay accountable and follow up. Being in the community and the schools allows me to hear and stay involved.

**LeeDems:** How do you reconcile federal directives on non-discrimination with local control of schools?

**Debbie:** We have policies and departments in place to ensure that discussions around race, gender, and sexuality are handled appropriately and within the law. Admin/Teachers are supported with guidance and training so these conversations can be respectful, age-appropriate, and inclusive. My role is to make sure that the policies also create a learning environment where every student feels valued, safe, and respected.