

# **EL PASO COUNTY REPUBLICAN**

## **2017 School Board Candidate Survey**

Thank you for running and for caring about our children and their futures.

We are asking for your thoughts and inputs to the following survey questions so that we may share your perspectives with our community on our webpage, [www.gopelpaso.com](http://www.gopelpaso.com). Your survey will be posted as a pdf file, and you are encouraged to return the survey in a pdf file format with your last name added in the file name. We plan to post it no later than Oct 16, 2017, the day the ballots are in the mail. Once uploaded, we will be sending an email notice to our community of over 5,000 emails to look at the responses. We will also list all candidates who did not respond to the survey by Oct 9, 2017 so voters will be aware we did not intentionally forget your survey response.

Many answers have a word count limit. We suggest paying attention to the word count as readers will only read for so long and then skip through your response, possibly missing something you consider important.

Reminder: **Return by Monday, Oct 9, 2017, emailing it to [homeofthefreeandthebrave@yahoo.com](mailto:homeofthefreeandthebrave@yahoo.com)**. Surveys received later will not be posted on the [www.gopelpaso.com](http://www.gopelpaso.com) website. Please send us your responses in pdf format and add you last name to the file name. Good Luck!

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### **Contact Information:**

**Name: Jim Mason**

**Address: Committee to Elect Mason  
4164 Austin Bluffs Pkwy.  
PMB 578  
Colorado Springs, CO 80918  
Telephone Number: 719.321.5820**

**E-Mail Address: [ejamesmason@msn.com](mailto:ejamesmason@msn.com)**

**Website: [jimmasonfords11board.com](http://jimmasonfords11board.com)**

### **Background Information:**

**Please provide a brief summary of you personally (family, education, occupation). (100 words or less):** \*\*\*Married with one son, who lives abroad. I serve as a defense contractor (PARSONS), since retirement from the U.S. Army in 2005. My distinguished 30-year military career culminated with retirement as a Colonel. Community volunteer work includes current Board Director (Vice President), District 11 School Board; Member, Leadership Pikes Peak

Board; and Member, Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority Board. Academic credentials include: BA, Political Science, Knox College; MS, Personnel Management, Troy University; Master of Military Art and Science Degree, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College; and Graduate (Strategic Studies), U.S. Army War College.

**Have you or any relatives been students or employees in the school district?**

**Circle one:** No

**If so, please provide specifics. (25 words or less)**

**Have you ever served on a volunteer board? Circle one:** Yes

**If so, what was/were your position(s)? (30 words)**

\*\*\*District 11 School Board, Secretary and Vice President; Trustee Member, Leadership Pikes Peak Board; and Board Member/Commissioner, Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority Board.

**Survey Questions:**

- 1. Why do you want to serve on the school board, and what do you see as your role as a school board member? (300 words or less) \*\*\*I seek re-election to continue work with Board colleagues, the Administration, Staff, and Parents/Guardians toward our goal of improving Student achievement through improved and increased educational opportunities; while sustaining a high performing learning and work environment. After 4 years of work and decision-making, I have firsthand experience with the challenges facing the District and have assisted in formulating effective courses of action to accomplish our goals and objectives. My Priorities are: 1) Increase Student academic achievement opportunities; 2) Increase Staff professional development opportunities and compensation attributes; and 3) Increase and improve parental/guardian involvement in the process of improving Student academic achievement.**
- 2. What role, if any should other government entities (city/county/state/federal) have in the local school board? (120 words or less) \*\*\*Other government entities, at every level, have a role in provisioning, nurturing, and promoting Public Education, within their scope of work. As for interference with the local school board's duties and responsibilities...I think there is not a role for other government agencies, except for those that deal with safety,**

security, health, and employee labor policies. In aforementioned case...all share a mutually supporting role.

- 3. What is the most critical issue in the district and how would you address them? (120 words or less) \*\*\*** As well-documented, the State's budget currently, and for many years now, does not provide the funding it should to secondary Public Education. A problem that will continue and worsen, before getting better. Therefore, passage of District 11's current Mill Levy Override initiative, which will be on November's ballot is crucial. This additional funding will allow the District to keep pace in hiring the best qualified Teachers and Staff, while providing the resources necessary to improve overall educational opportunities; classroom equipment; and maintenance of our aging Schools. To this end, I will assist in codifying the strengths and weaknesses associated with the State's education policies and requirements while taking a lead role in communicating this information to senior elected Representatives.
- 4. What will your relationship be with associations/unions related to school employee? (50 words or less) \*\*\*** I will continue a collegial and productive relationship, based on mutual respect and a commonality of objectives in support of Students, employees, and community. Associations/Unions can be valuable tools, when respected and held accountable. A diversity of voices at the table ensure equity in purpose, intent, and results.
- 5. Have you received any campaign contributions from a school employee association/union? Circle one: \*\*\*Yes**
- 6. What is your position on school finance/funding? (250 words or less) \*\*\***State-level School funding is woefully inadequate, as is well-documented. In many parts of the State, local communities have addressed this shortcoming by providing School Districts with the needed funding through Mill Levy Overrides and Bonds; some have not. In recent times, District 11 has suffered from the lack of sufficient funding. District 11 has not had a Mill Levy Override or Bond request approved since 2000. Therefore, passage of the current Mill Levy Override initiative, which is on November's Ballot is crucial. I am working to convince our community to support with a 'Yes' vote.

- 7. What is your position on public charter schools and their contribution to the district community? (200 words or less)** \*\*\*Charter Schools have value in the overall Public Education framework that supports improved Student Achievement and 'Choice'. Charter Schools are a vital component within District 11's portfolio of educational opportunities. They offer a value-added solution to our overarching objective to offer high-quality and rigorous academic programs for our Students.
- 8. What is your position on parental choice for schools? (200 words or less)**  
\*\*\* I support School Choice. To that end, I will continue to work towards ensuring the educational opportunities offered within District 11 are well-designed; meet the highest academic standards; and are executed in a manner that makes learning challenging and fun. If we can provide a safe and secure learning environment that offers rigorous academic opportunities...parents will 'Choice' their children into District 11 schools.
- 9. What is your position on Common Core? (75 words or less)** \*\*\*Common Core Standards have value and can assist in improving academic performance when deployed and employed with 'clear' purpose and pragmatism. I think Federal and State Laws/Statutes allow and support abundantly sufficient freedom for Local School Districts to adjust/establish academic standards as they think appropriate.
- 10. What endorsements have you received? (100 words or less)** \*\*\*Colorado Springs Education Association; Unite Colorado Springs; and Pikes Peak Association of Realtors.

Reference Links:

Parental choice. <http://parentschallenge.org/>

School choice. <https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/what-is-school-choice/>

Common Core. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/factsheetsandfaq>

School Finance. <https://www.casb.org/Page/433>