

EL PASO COUNTY REPUBLICAN
2017 School Board Candidate Survey

Contact Information:

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Background Information:

Please provide a brief summary of you personally (family, education, occupation). (100 words or less)

As a lifelong educator, I served Colorado Springs School District 11 as a teacher, athletic coach, assistant principal, and principal for 21 years prior to serving Academy District 20 as the Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services and Deputy Superintendent for 11 years. I also served as a teacher in two rural districts, Springfield and Buena Vista, Colorado. Currently I am an independent educational consultant, a coach for the Colorado Department of Education, and an Associate with the Cambrian Group. I have been married for 41 years to Randy, also an educator; we have two sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchildren.

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

Circle one: Yes No

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

My husband served as a music instructor prior to retirement. I served as the Deputy Superintendent and in other roles prior to retirement.

Have you ever served on a volunteer board? Circle one: Yes No

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

I am the Vice president of my church council, a director on the Educating Children of Color Board, and an emeritus board member of the Colorado Association of Superintendents and Senior Administrators.

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 am running for the school board because I believe that my 36+ years of service to education has provided me with myriad experiences and roles in public education that will serve this community well. In addition, I

have lived in the District 20 community for 15 years, and I love this community. This is a special place that is focused on providing all children with an excellent education that results in academic achievement and growth, and a future that will serve our country and the larger global community well. Partnerships among and between parents of District 20 children and the educators who serve them have resulted in opportunities for students that prepare them for successful transitions in their lives. It is imperative that this continue as board members, community members, and educators focus on what is most important – serving our children, supporting the educators who serve them, partnering with parents and patrons, and growing together so that our community remains one of which we are all proud. I believe in this community and in the power of public education, and I believe that my service to the District 20 Board of Education will continue to keep our priority, our children’s education, at the forefront of all discussions and decision-making. The role of a board member is to understand and support early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education, post-secondary choices and expectations for students, curriculum, instruction, assessment, school funding, community engagement, educator evaluation, committee facilitation, and the state and national educational landscapes. Board members need to support teachers and understand that excellent teachers in classrooms, coupled with sound district and building level leadership, ensures accountability and care for students. Finally, board members need to stand ready to have courageous conversations so that they remain accountable to those we serve.

2. What role, if any should other government entities (city/county/state/federal) have in the local school board? (120 words or less)

Certainly, the local school board must meet mandates of the laws enacted by elected officials, but, if schools and districts meet mandates, provide education that engages students and ensures academic achievement and growth, support the needs and expectations of its community, and keep children safe, then “other government entities” would best spend their time on the districts that are not providing the education that will ensure learning for all. In short, the responsibility for accountability resides with the school district, and, if accountability for student learning is in place, there is little reason to involve other entities in local control.

3. What is the most critical issue in the district and how would you address them? (120 words or less)

Providing students with an excellent education is the most critical issue. Over time, educational systems and the communities that they serve have experienced changing social, economic, and political landscapes; educators have increasingly been called upon to serve children and communities in myriad ways. We must continue to rise to this challenge while we advocate for and ensure student achievement, public school funding, and student safety. As we meet legal mandates, we must continue to focus on our community's values and aspirations for the children that we serve. We do this with sound policy governance, transparent dialogue, collaboration with all stakeholders, and proactive, long-term planning, all resulting in student engagement and growth.

4. What will your relationship be with associations/unions related to school employee? (50 words or less)

The Academy Education Association is a professional organization in District 20 that promotes educator excellence, partnerships with educational leaders and community members, and collegial dialogue – all to

ensure student learning and growth. To that end, I support their efforts, and will readily partner with them to serve our students.

5. Have you received any campaign contributions from a school employee association/union? Circle one: Yes No

6. What is your position on school finance/funding? (250 words or less)

After years of cuts, due to the negative factor and other State school finance issues and shortfalls, it is difficult to identify additional cuts or reallocations that would not impact student support, capital assets, transportation, and programming all while managing teacher shortages and compliance with mandates. We must continue to seek ways to align scarce resources with our aspirations for students. I believe that the most important thing that a board member can do to ensure adequate funding is to assertively advocate for appropriate funding of public education. It is crucial that there be a collaborative effort among district leadership, the school board, and professional organizations to advocate with law and policy makers at the State and Federal levels. Ultimately, leaders across the State need to engage with communities to learn what they are willing to give up or to pay more to keep. Fortunately, we have a sound relationship with our community that trusts us and values education; they see the value in funding education with local dollars as demonstrated by the 2016 passage of our bond. It is our responsibility to keep this partnership strong, and that happens when we are financially transparent while maintaining our excellent accreditation ratings no matter the scarcity of resources.

7. What is your position on public charter schools and their contribution to the district community? (200 words or less)

We need to provide opportunities and programs that provide the educational opportunities for which parents are looking. To that end, I believe in charter schools and what they can and do add to a school district and community as we continue to address the diverse needs of parents and students. I also believe that charter schools must be accountable to serving all students and to holding high standards that ensure student achievement and growth – as is required of each public school in the district. There is currently an excellent charter school in District 20, The Classical Academy (TCA), that serves many of students well. The educators at TCA and those at other District 20 schools work closely together. Leadership of both TCA and the district support one another. The partnership between this charter school and the district is critical, and it is exemplary of what all charter schools and districts should strive for to serve children well.

8. What is your position on parental choice for schools? (200 words or less)

Because it is our responsibility to educate all students and to offer opportunities and programs that provide educational opportunities for which parents are looking, I support parental choice for schools. I also support efforts to find innovative, effective, and efficient ways to serve the needs and hopes of our community. Currently, District 20 has a robust choice process in place that invites students to attend the District 20 school that best meets their needs, and, as discussed above, it is home to The Classical Academy, an excellent charter school. To address the needs of some families, the District 20 Home School Academy offers enrichment support for parents homeschooling their children. The district also offers an online and hybrid choice for K-12 students, and an alternative secondary campus serves many. In addition, the district

has been impacted by students from other districts wishing to come to District 20 schools; we embrace those students and want to serve their choice as well. As a growing district, the passage of a bond in 2016 will allow the addition of more schools and programming to accommodate increasing enrollment and provide more choices to families.

9. What is your position on Common Core? (75 words or less)

Common Core Standards are educational standards intended to provide a common understanding of student learning across district and state lines. They seek to define the skills students need to be successful in grade level transitions and in the post-secondary and workforce world. Because they do not define the curriculum used to ensure that students achieve or exceed these skills, and, because that curriculum is determined at local levels, I support the spirit of the standards.

10. What endorsements have you received? (100 words or less)

I have been endorsed by the Pikes Peak Association of Realtors and by the Academy Education Association. In addition, I have many individuals who have endorsed me, including parents, educational leaders, and past and present school board members; that information can be seen on my website at <http://electkarinreynolds.org>.