



2025 Denver Board of Education Election School Board Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in serving the Denver Public Schools (DPS) community by seeking to represent students, families, educators, and the Denver community on the DPS Board of Education! This questionnaire is designed to help Denver Families Action (DFA) staff and community panelists better understand your values, priorities, and vision for public education in Denver.

Directions:

- 1. Complete all sections of the questionnaire to the best of your ability.** Each response will have a character/word limit that you will need to follow.
- 2. Be concise but specific in your responses.** We encourage you to provide examples where applicable and to avoid using jargon, acronyms, or “eduspeak” as much as possible. Our goal is to clearly communicate your ideas to the families and community members who may review your responses as part of the endorsement process.
- 3. Submit your completed questionnaire before your endorsement interview.** If you have any technical difficulties while completing or submitting your questionnaire, reach out to Cody Ostenson (Director of External Affairs) at cody@denverfamiliesaction.org.

About Our Policy Priorities:

As part of our organization’s ongoing community organizing efforts and commitment to authentic community engagement, our team conducted a two-year listening campaign, engaging +8,500 DPS families, educators, alumni, and community members and culminating in the identification of the issues outlined below. After conducting an extensive listening campaign, Denver Families began work with community members to (1) define our policy agenda, (2) prioritize opportunities for collective action, (3) identify policymakers who will champion the work, and (4) work with those champions to demand the change the public seeks. This work is led by DPS families, educators, alumni, and community members and supported by our team.

Throughout this questionnaire, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions related to your stances on the community’s top policy issues – from supporting better academics, increasing safety in our schools, providing access to mental health resources, and more – and how engagement with the community shapes how you lead.

Candidate Information

Your Name:

School Board District:

Cell Phone Number:

Email:

Website:

Social Media Presence:

*List all that apply; include
platform, username, and/or
handle*

Campaign Information

Committee Name:

Campaign Manager (CM):

CM Cell Phone Number:

CM Email:

General

1. Motivation for Candidacy: Why are you running for school board? (Character Limit: 750)



2. Top Challenges:

a. Please describe the top three most significant challenges facing Denver Public Schools, in your opinion. (Character Limit: 400)

b. Elaborate on how you plan to address what you believe to be the most challenging issue. (Character Limit: 600)

3. Unique Qualifications: What specific experiences or qualifications do you have that make you uniquely suited to serve on the school board? (Character Limit: 750)

Role of the School Board

4. Roles & Responsibilities: In your opinion, what are the primary roles and responsibilities of a school board member? How do you plan to balance governance, advocacy, and partnership-building to drive progress on key issues? (Character Limit: 750)



5. Policy Governance: The DPS Board of Education shifted its governance model to a system called “policy governance” in 2021. What is your understanding of policy governance, including the decision-making rights and responsibilities of the board under this model? Do you believe this model effectively supports strong leadership and public accountability? Why or why not? (Character Limit: 750)

Community Engagement & Collaboration

6. Ongoing Engagement: What is your planned approach to continually work with community members – families, educators, and school leaders – to better understand and inform your decisions as a member of the Board of Education? How have you already done that work as a community leader? (Character Limit: 750)

7. Board Engagement with Community: What is your overall perspective on how the DPS Board of Education currently engages with the community? What do you believe is working, and what changes would you advocate for in order to improve transparency, accessibility, and trust? (Character Limit: 750)



Student Success & Academics

8. Academic Achievement: What is your current understanding of academic performance in Denver Public Schools? How do you plan to evaluate student achievement as a member of the board of education? What specific metrics and criteria will you prioritize? (Character Limit: 750)

9. Educational Equity and the Achievement Gap: How do you define educational equity, and how will that definition shape your approach to closing the achievement gap in DPS – especially for students of color, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities? What specific policies or initiatives will you champion to ensure that all students have access to high-quality, culturally responsive education and opportunities for academic success? (Character Limit: 750)

Serving Special Populations

10. Serving Students in Special Education: How well is the district currently serving students who access special education services? What specific steps would you take to improve their educational experience? (Character Limit: 600)



11. Serving Multilingual Learners (MLLs): How well is the district currently serving MLLs? How would you improve education for these students? (Character Limit: 600)

Mental Health & Student/Educator Well-Being

12. Mental Health: What is your perspective on the state of student and educator mental health in DPS? What policy solutions or initiatives would you support to improve it? (Character Limit: 600)

School Safety

13. Defining Safety: In light of ongoing concerns about school safety – including incidents of violence, increased student mental health needs, and calls for more supportive environments – how do you define a truly safe and welcoming school? (Character Limit: 400)

14. Vision for Safety: As a board member, what specific measures would you support to promote physical safety, mental wellness, and inclusive school climates? (Character Limit: 600)



Educators & Recruitment

- 15. Supporting School Staff:** What are three things you would do as a school board member to improve the experience of school staff in Denver Public Schools? (Character Limit: 600)

- 16. Educator Pay:** The cost of living in Denver continues to price out educators from being able to live and work in the city that they serve. With enrollment declining, and state and federal funding constricting, how would you prioritize pay equity for our school-based and frontline employees (like teachers, special service providers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, food service workers, etc.)? (Character Limit: 600)

Family of Schools

- 17. Supporting the Family of Schools:** Denver Public Schools is made up of a mix of district-run, innovation, and public charter schools - each with distinct governance structures and roles in serving students. What is your vision for how these school models should coexist and contribute to the future of DPS? As a board member, how would you support the superintendent in leading district-run schools while protecting the autonomy of innovation and charter schools and ensuring all schools provide a high-quality education? (Character Limit: 750)



18. Quality Authorizing: What do you believe are key characteristics of a school board acting as a quality authorizer? How does the district as a school operator and school authorizer ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for schools of all governance types? (Character Limit: 750)

Oversight & Accountability

19. Superintendent Accountability: How effective is the current process for evaluation of the superintendent? What metrics or criteria will you use to assess the superintendent’s job performance? (Character Limit: 750)

20. Budget Oversight: What experience do you have with large, complicated budgets? What will be your process for evaluating the district’s approximately \$1.3 billion budget? What are your priorities for the budget? (Character Limit: 750)



21. Transparency & Open Data: In recent years, both the district and the school board have faced criticism for a lack of transparency in decision-making and access to information. What is your stance on open data and public transparency? As a board member, what specific actions would you take to build trust by making district information more accessible, understandable, and widely available to the community? (Character Limit: 750)

Denver Families Action

22. Endorsement Interest: Why are you interested in receiving an endorsement from Denver Families Action? How do you see your vision and platform aligning with our policy priorities? (Character Limit: 500)

Values Alignment Questions

Each of the following questions reflects an issue where Denver Families Action has a clear organizational position. Your responses will help our community better understand your alignment with the priorities we've heard directly from families, educators, and students across Denver.

1. Vouchers and Education Savings Accounts

Denver Families Action believes public dollars should be used to strengthen public schools. We oppose school vouchers and education savings accounts because they divert critical funding away from Denver students, especially those most in need of strong public systems.

Do you support or oppose the use of public dollars for private school tuition, including through vouchers or education savings accounts?

Please select one: ☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure



2. Public School Choice

Denver Families Action supports a strong system of public school choice—across district-run, innovation, and public charter schools—that ensures all families can access schools that meet their child’s needs. We believe choice must be coupled with transparency and equity.

Do you support or oppose maintaining and improving public school choice within the Denver Public Schools system?

Please select one: ☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

3. Religious Charter Schools

Denver Families Action believes public schools—regardless of their model—must remain nonreligious, inclusive, and open to all students. We oppose efforts to establish religious charter schools that would use public funds for schools with religious instruction or exclusionary enrollment practices.

Do you support or oppose the creation of religious charter schools that receive public funding?

Please select one: ☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

4. Inclusive and Accurate Curriculum

Denver Families Action believes all students deserve to see themselves in the curriculum and to learn a complete, truthful account of history—including topics related to race, gender, and systemic inequality. We support culturally responsive, inclusive, and historically accurate curriculum as essential to both academic excellence and student belonging.

Do you support or oppose the use of culturally responsive, inclusive, and historically accurate curriculum?

Please select one: ☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

5. Restrictions on Books and Instruction

Across the country, political attacks on inclusive curriculum have led to book bans and restrictions on what teachers can teach. Denver Families Action stands with teachers and families who believe classrooms should be places of truth, belonging, and critical thinking—not censorship.

Do you support or oppose efforts to ban books or restrict instruction related to race, gender identity, or sexual orientation in public schools?

Please select one: ☐ Support ☐ Oppose ☐ Unsure

Thank You

