



# GUIDE TO THE 2015 DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTIONS

## ABOUT STAND FOR CHILDREN COLORADO

Stand for Children Colorado's (Stand Colorado) mission is to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, graduate from high school prepared for, and with access to, a college education. To make that happen, we:

- Educate and empower parents, teachers, and community members to demand excellent schools.
- Advocate for local, state, and national education policies and investments and ensure those policies effectively impact classrooms and students.
- Elect courageous leaders who will stand up for our priorities.

## ABOUT DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

The Denver Public Schools (DPS) Board of Education is responsible for passing policies that govern what kind of schools open in our neighborhoods, how we support schools that are struggling to help kids learn, and what kind of tools teachers have to unlock a lifelong love of learning for their students. There are seven members on the Denver Board of Education. Five members are elected by voters within five districts; two members are elected at-large by voters across the entire city. Board members' terms are four years and are staggered so no more than four board members are elected in any one election. In 2015 there are six candidates running for three seats on the Denver School Board.

## ABOUT OUR ELECTIONS GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide information about the 2015 DPS Board of Education elections. It includes information about the candidates running for the Denver Board of Education, key dates, and where you can find more information about Denver Elections.

This fall, Stand Colorado convened parents to lead an endorsement process that included reviewing candidate responses to our questionnaire, interviewing candidates and selecting our education champions. Every candidate for the DPS Board of Education was invited to complete Stand Colorado's questionnaire and participate in our endorsement process. Candidate responses to Stand Colorado's questionnaire are printed verbatim below.

## IMPORTANT DATES:

<b>October 12, 2015</b>	Mail Ballots start being sent out
<b>October 12, 2015</b>	24-Hour Ballot Drop-off Boxes Open to receive mail in ballots
<b>October 26, 2015</b>	Voter registration deadline
<b>November 3, 2015</b>	General Election Day
<b>November 3, 2015 at 7pm</b>	Deadline to drop off mail in ballot

## DENVER ELECTIONS DIVISION CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Phone Number:** 720-913-VOTE (8683)

**Email:**

**Website:** [www.DenverVotes.org](http://www.DenverVotes.org)

For mail ballot or election inquiries: [mailballots@denvergov.org](mailto:mailballots@denvergov.org)

**Facebook:** <http://facebook.com/denverelections>

For voter registration inquiries: [voterregistration@denvergov.org](mailto:voterregistration@denvergov.org)

**Twitter:** @DenverElections #DenverVotes

For General Office Information: [elections@denvergov.org](mailto:elections@denvergov.org)

# CANDIDATES FOR DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## AT-LARGE

### Happy Haynes (Incumbent)



Website:  
[www.happyhaynesfordenverskids.com](http://www.happyhaynesfordenverskids.com)

#### 1. Why are you running for office and what do you want to accomplish if elected?

I am running for re-election to the DPS Board of Education to fulfill the commitment I made four years ago to help transform Denver's schools into high quality centers of learning where every child is well-prepared academically and socially and emotionally to graduate ready for success in college or career. That transformation is well on its way with more students than ever attending high performing schools and academic growth rates that are highest in the state. We have established a clear vision and roadmap for success but now, greater focus is needed to accelerate the pace of progress and to accomplish the goals of Denver Plan 2020 to provide great schools in every neighborhood, ensure all children start school ready to learn, raise the graduation rate and close the opportunity gap while supporting the whole child in all of these efforts.

#### 2. What do you see as the number one challenge facing DPS and how do you intend to address it?

Closing the opportunity gap for our low income and students of color and great schools in every neighborhood are two sides of the same challenge because each of them directly influences the other. There are three strategies that are essential for moving the needle on these challenges. The first is investing heavily in the early grades to ensure grade level literacy skills by 3rd grade which the data shows will substantially increase the chances of kids graduating successfully. The second is a strong emphasis on development of the whole child with a commitment to equity and inclusiveness, culturally responsive practices and social-emotional learning imbedded in instruction. Finally, a stronger focus on strengthening the recruitment, development and support of school leaders and expanding the role of teacher leaders.

#### 3. How should the district address/support/improve chronically low performing schools that continue to not meet the needs of students, even after several years of interventions?

Completely redesigning a school under the direction of a highly qualified school leader or replacing a low performing school through the call for quality schools is imperative for turning around chronically low performing schools. Using well-established and clear performance expectations and robust accountability measures, the Board's policy must include triggers for timely action along with processes for informing and engaging families and community.

#### 4. What can the district do to ensure that all students have access to the best teachers and our schools are being led by the best principals?

Amazing educators are not born, but require investment and support to grow their skills and expertise. Modern human resource techniques must be employed to recruit and identify talented and committed educators along with a significant commitment to providing ongoing, robust and relevant professional development. Strong accountability for results must be accompanied by equal measures of support and flexibility to meet the specific needs of students in their care. Systems for providing this support must be adapted to ensure that customized services and efficiency are equally important.

#### Is there anything else you would like us to know? (optional)

Family and student choice is extremely important to ensuring that the diverse needs of students are met, however, more needs to be done to ensure that families are informed and empowered to make the best decisions for their students and that the system functions more equitably. Finally, I have a strong commitment to working collaboratively with the superintendent, staff, families and community to accomplish the vision and goals that we have created collectively.

### Robert Speth



Website  
[www.spethforstudents.org/about-robert](http://www.spethforstudents.org/about-robert)

**\*Robert Speth declined to complete Stand Colorado's candidate questionnaire.**

# CANDIDATES FOR DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## DISTRICT 1

### Anne Bye Rowe (Incumbent)



Website  
[www.annerowedps.org](http://www.annerowedps.org)

#### 1. Why are you running for office and what do you want to accomplish if elected?

I am motivated to help all of our kids receive the best education possible and am running for a second term on the Denver Public Schools Board of Education to help achieve this goal. Serving as a DPS Board member for the past four years and my many years of engagement with the Denver community give me the experience needed to be an effective member of the board and representative of the SE Denver community. Over the past 30 years, I have served on a number of nonprofit community boards that address the needs of Denver's kids. On the district level, I have been an integral part of committees that provide valuable input to the DPS Superintendent. My involvement at the school level began 20 years ago when I became part of the group of neighborhood parents who worked to re-open Slavens School. I believe my involvement at the community, District and school levels gives me the experience and perspective necessary to be a productive member of the school board.

#### DPS Involvement (2007 - Present)

DPS Board Vice President (2012-present), DPS Board Treasurer (2011-2012), Founding co-chair, Executive Board Member A+ Denver, Co-chair, DPS Advisory Committee on Immigration and Integration, Superintendent's Parent Forum, DPS Parent Portal Steering Committee, DPS Board Liaison to the Bond Oversight Committee, DPS Board Liaison to Athletics, DPS Board representative on the DPS Foundation Board, PEBC Board Member representing DPS

#### School Involvement (1995 - Present)

Committee to Re-Open Slavens School, Slavens PTA, MSPA President, Slavens CSC Member, Principal Selection Committee Cochair, Mathletics, DI, Brain Bowl Coach, Co-founder and Chair, George Washington High School Patriot Partners

#### Community involvement (1987 - Present)

Board Member, Summer Scholars (now Scholars Unlimited, 2009-2012), Board Member, Colorado Children's Campaign (Board Chair 2006-2008), Board Member, Girls Inc. (Board Chair 1991-1993), Board Member, Children's Museum of Denver (Board Chair 2000-2003), Board Member, Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, Executive Committee, 2% Club of Denver, Community Leadership Board, Mile High Montessori

I am fully committed to continuing to invest the time and energy I know it takes to dramatically improve public education in Denver. It's going to take a lot of hard work and our whole community coming together to be successful. I believe we can get there, which is why I'm running for School Board. Finally, I am a parent. I am a parent of three young women, Kate (22), Tory (20) and Biz (18). All three have attended Denver Public Schools from ECE through high school. I have lived through the educational achievements, celebrations, frustrations and challenges.

#### 2. What do you see as the number one challenge facing DPS and how do you intend to address it?

Every child/family having access to a high quality school. My top priority as a school board member and candidate will be to work with my colleagues, the district, principals, teachers, school communities, students, parents and other community partners to achieve the Denver Plan 2020 goals, with the overriding goal of Great schools in every Neighborhood. I had the opportunity to help lead the effort to update the Denver Plan during my first term on the school board. We worked for over a year engaging thousands of community members including teachers, principals, students, parents, education partners, community partners and citizens. This extensive community process resulted in the Denver Plan 2020, a values-based strategic vision for DPS going forward. The vision of the Denver Plan 2020 is Every Child Succeeds with five goals and five strategic priority areas.

#### 3. How should the district address/support/improve chronically low performing schools that continue to not meet the needs of students, even after several years of interventions?

The DPS BoE and District are currently working on "The Great Schools" policy, which addresses the process going forward to address chronically low performing schools. This policy will address the criteria and a process for identifying schools for restart/replacement/closure. The goal is to have "the great schools" policy in place this fall.

#### 4. What can the district do to ensure that all students have access to the best teachers and our schools are being led by the best principals?

The district needs to continue to attract, hire and retain the highest quality educators and school leaders. The district needs to also incentivize our highest quality leaders and educators to work in our highest needs schools. Several strategies/initiatives showing promise include:

- Teacher leadership and distributive leadership
- Principal residencies for APs wanting to pursue principalship
- ProComp incentives to teach in highest need schools
- Incentives to lead in highest need schools
- Increased support for our newest teachers

### Kristi Butkovich



Website  
[www.kristibutkovich4publiceducation.com](http://www.kristibutkovich4publiceducation.com)

**\*Kristi Butkovich declined to complete Stand Colorado's candidate questionnaire.**

# CANDIDATES FOR DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## DISTRICT 5

### Lisa Flores



Website  
[www.floresfordenver.com](http://www.floresfordenver.com)

#### 1. Why are you running for office and what do you want to accomplish if elected?

This district needs someone on the school board who will always, always, put the interest of our kids first above all else. Too many schools are not delivering a high quality education to our kids. I will focus immediately, without wasting a day, on fighting to give every single one of our kids the tools they deserve to thrive in our public schools.

I have lived in Denver for over thirty years. I have seven family members, each of whom will become, as I am, a Denver Public Schools graduate. My family experienced firsthand how a quality education, dedicated teachers, and strong school leaders can make a profound impact on an individual child, which can change the collective legacy of a community. I am the granddaughter of migrant laborers and the first in my family to graduate from college. I am invested in improving the quality of education DPS provides to all children. I will work tirelessly to bring educational equity to our district to better prepare our children for the promise of their future. Our collective future depends on it.

My goals are simple:  
Ensure strong schools in every neighborhood  
Expand access to early childhood education  
Make sure every school has an exceptional principal  
Meet the needs of all learners

More detail is provided at: [www.floresfordenver.com/why-im-running/priorities/](http://www.floresfordenver.com/why-im-running/priorities/)

#### 2. What do you see as the number one challenge facing DPS and how do you intend to address it?

There are zero high performing schools in District 5. Less than half of our students are at a school that is providing a quality education. This is completely unacceptable. We can and must do more. While other parts of Denver have seen gains in educational growth, District 5 has lagged behind. We should look outside the district at other schools that are high achieving and adapt some of their methods that are successful. We need to concentrate on developing high quality schools for all students in all of the neighborhoods that make up District 5, not just the one or two where new families are moving in. The kids in Swansea and Globeville deserve the exact same educational opportunities as those who live in the Highlands and Berkeley.

#### 3. How should the district address/support/improve chronically low performing schools that continue to not meet the needs of students, even after several years of interventions?

I believe the district should do a better job of addressing red flags that show a school is in trouble far in advance of low standardized test scores. Decreased student enrollment and high teacher turnover are quantifiable data and we should be paying attention to these trends. We need to make early interventions before problems spiral out of control. However, these interventions can only work with buy in from the community. The district must do a better job of engaging parents, principals, teachers, and students to find out where they see opportunities to do better. DPS should take community concerns seriously before making policy decisions.

#### 4. What can the district do to ensure that all students have access to the best teachers and our schools are being led by the best principals?

When you find a strong school in Denver, there is ALWAYS a strong school leader at the helm. The school principal balances the needs of students, parents, and teachers; leverages financial resources; works to engage the community; establishes a healthy school culture; and sets a path forward for continually improving the school. Unfortunately, there are many schools in NW Denver that have suffered because of rapid turnover of key school leaders. The lack of sustained leadership is hurting our kids.

Great teachers thrive when working with great principals. Strong school leaders inspire teachers and mentor them to be better educators; they make them feel valued, and set the tone for the entire school. Experienced teachers in the classroom keep students interested, engaged, and learning. DPS must do a better job of recruiting, training, supporting and ultimately retaining its best school principals. When elected, I will ask for a formal review of DPS school leader training programs so we can determine which programs are most effective and which can be strengthened to better serve our school leaders.

#### Is there anything else you would like us to know? (optional)

It might be helpful to share a little more about who I am as a person. I was a Peace Corps volunteer and spent nine years working for three local community-based nonprofits (Mi Casa Resource Center for Women, Girl Scouts, and Denver Inner City Parish). I also served as an appointee for (now) Governor Hickenlooper during his first term as mayor. Most recently, I worked for the Gates Family Foundation where I worked in Colorado to increase access to early childhood education and to close the achievement gap for low-income children. I have also served on the boards of the Children's Museum, Denver's Welfare Reform Board, Denver Housing Authority, and currently I serve as a Denver Public Library commissioner.

I have great friends and deep roots in Denver. My husband, Rick Tallman is a Gulf War era veteran, who gardens and works in renewable energy. Together, we are helping to raise our nephew, a future paleontologist and pro-skateboarder, who is now a second grader at Brown Elementary.

# CANDIDATES FOR DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION

## DISTRICT 5

### Michael Kiley



Website  
[www.kileyforkids.com](http://www.kileyforkids.com)

#### **1. Why are you running for office and what do you want to accomplish if elected?**

My experience partnering with other parents, gifted principals and classroom teachers to strengthen our neighborhood schools has

fueled my passion for education. I want to take that model of collaboration to make sure all children can attend a strong neighborhood school.

#### **2. What do you see as the number one challenge facing DPS and how do you intend to address it?**

Reversing the District's reputation as one that does not respect the teaching profession. Classroom teachers tell me they are bombarded with new curriculum before they have had time to master the most recent one. The District seems to be impose more and more demands on teachers without more time. This is troubling in a district serving such a large percentage of students who research suggests data require the most support of our teachers: students at risk of failure due to poverty or second language learners. Parents want experienced teachers in their children's classroom but the low average wage of Denver classroom teachers and the District's contentious relationship with the teachers' professional association suggests otherwise. I will work with my board colleagues to promote a more constructive relationship with teachers and their representatives for the benefit of students.

#### **3. How should the district address/support/improve chronically low performing schools that continue to not meet the needs of students, even after several years of interventions?**

First, by listening to what families tells us they want and need. Authentic collaboration with parents, principals and teachers, school by school, is key to improving schools. Selling top-down solutions contrary to what families want has failed again and again. The District also needs to target resources to the needs of students and schools. Quick fix turn arounds have destabilized schools and neighborhoods with uneven results and best and wasteful failures at worst.

#### **4. What can the district do to ensure that all students have access to the best teachers and our schools are being led by the best principals?**

Recruiting and retaining strong principals continues to be a challenge for the District. Last year a third of principals left the district. Good principals attract and retain good teachers but I've seen first hand how we burn out talent. I'm also concerned that the pressure to hire inexperienced teachers to save money is shortsighted and failing our children -- many at risk of failure -- who need experienced teachers the most. New teachers without experienced mentors are more likely to leave the profession sooner. Last year the average teacher salary in DPS was \$21,000 less than Cherry Creek. Is it any surprise DPS struggled with a 22 percent teacher turnover rate that was more than

twice Cherry Creek? Giving principals greater autonomy is a positive step but we must make sure the resources follow the responsibility.

#### **Is there anything else you would like us to know? (optional)**

As a parent who has collaborated closely with other stakeholders in numerous neighborhood schools, I am committed to bringing that experience of collaboration to the board. It is challenging but ultimately rewarding work that I'm confident will enhance the education of all our children.