

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 2017 CANDIDATES FOR THE DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD

Candidate: Angela Cobián

Position: DPS District 2

Please answer in the space provided, explaining your answer as required. If you feel you need more space, you may attach a supplementary sheet.

QUESTION	CANDIDATE'S RESPONSE
Do you support the right of every child to attend the school nearest their home (or most accessible by available transportation)? If not, under what circumstances do you not?	I support a parent's right to select a school that best fits their child's needs. For example, my neighbor has sent his daughters to Munroe, GALS, and CEC Early College. All of those schools are in southwest Denver. When I asked him why he selected those schools for his daughters, he told me that Munroe had a great special education program for his youngest daughter, and his older daughter loves athletics and wanted the early-college program. If a parent deems that the public school nearest home for them rightfully fits their child's needs If that is the school nearest home or most accessible by available transportation, then of course I support that option.
Under what circumstances, if any, would you support the use of public funds (vouchers) for private schools?	Under no circumstance do I support the use of public funds for private or religious schools.
Do you believe that financial decisions by DPS are sufficiently transparent? If not, how could/should they be made more transparent?	I served as the a Trustee on the Colorado College Board of Trustees for a two-year term. My primary role as a trustee was a fiduciary responsibility to the institution. I would view a position on the Board of Education in a similar manner. That is, it is my responsibility to ensure the stewardship of public dollars with integrity and transparency. Denver Public Schools could increase transparency about financial decisions by investing in an external review. In this manner, an independent reviewer could create a website and app available in a variety of languages that discloses how the district spends tax dollars and grants. If as a community we did not want to invest in an external review, then the Board of Education could commission the development of such an app or website. However, it would be important to engage civic groups on what kind of categories of information they would want included in the app or website so that it could accurately reflect the level of desired transparency.
What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of public charter schools; and do you think the proportion of charter schools within the DPS is too high, too low, or about right?	The most recent "Start with the Facts" report by A+ Colorado demonstrates examples of strong schools across school governance types; whether they be district-run, innovation, or charter. This has also been my personal experience as well--as previously mentioned, my neighbors across the street send their children to Munroe (district run), GALS (charter), and CEC Early College (innovation). All have shared positive experiences with their schools. Considering both the aforementioned study and the scenarios above, my position on charter schools is nuanced; some charter schools serve teachers and students well and others have significant room for improvement. This is also true of district-run and innovation schools as well. The

	<p>proportion of charter to district run depends on the neighborhood--both in their ratio of charter-to-district run, and in that neighborhood's needs.</p>
<p>How would you rank order (1 = highest) the importance of the following factors in student success: (a) teacher quality, (b) quality of principal, (c) class size, (d) racial/ethnic integration, (e) economic means of family, (f) parental involvement? (Add any other factors that you consider important.)</p>	<p>Teacher quality, quality of principal, class size, racial/ethnic integration, economic means of family, and parental involvement all form an ecosystem that nurture student success. All of these factors are interconnected and have influenced my platform for Denver Public Schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● College and Career Readiness: Reducing the impact of a family's economic means in the post-secondary success of their child. Students should be able to follow their dreams, not be bound by circumstance. ● Quality Learning Environments: Giving effective/quality teachers and school leaders the flexibility to create responsive classrooms that meet the evolving needs of students, with limited class sizes. ● Schools as Community Hubs: Addressing the needs of students from low-income backgrounds with wrap around services and treating parents as partners in a culturally competent setting
<p>Recognizing that some schools may offer a specialized curriculum, in general do you favor broad-based curricula with extracurricular options, or curricula focused on basic English and STEM subjects?</p>	<p>I earned my Masters in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Colorado-Denver. I then designed a project based learning curriculum for K-5 students with an emphasis on college and career readiness with a culturally competent framework with Education Pioneers. Both my experience designing curriculum and teaching led me to favor curriculums that are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accessible to all student profiles (English Language Learners, Students with learning differences, etc) ● Culturally competent and relevant ● Experiential and rigorous <p>Teachers should be able to work with curriculum that enables them to be creative in their craft and catalyze critical thinking in students. This is not mutually exclusive from broad based curriculum, or curricula focused on basic English and STEM subjects.</p>
<p>Do you favor foreign language courses for all students; and if so, at what grades should they begin?</p>	<p>I am a fully bilingual Spanish and English speaker. My mother maintained my native Spanish at home while i learned English at school. Being bilingual enabled me to teach students similar to me, and like those in District 2 (46% are emerging multilingual students). All students should have the opportunity to take foreign language courses as early as their parents deem appropriate so that we foster globally-minded citizens in our community. I would love to see the expansion of dual-language programs in Denver Public Schools and expanded language-offerings district-wide.</p>
<p>Do you support the funding of nutritious school meal programs for children in need of them, or do you not see this as a responsibility of the public</p>	<p>I support the funding of nutritious meal programs for children in need of them. When I was a student in District 2, I received free and reduced lunch (FRL). School was a safe and healthy place for me to be during the day while my</p>

school system?	parents were at work. Similarly, 88% of students in District 2 are FRL students. It is the responsibility of Denver Public Schools to meet their students' physical, socioemotional, and academic needs.
Under what circumstances, if any, would you make exception to the mandate for equal access to appropriate quality education for all challenged and special needs students?	Under no circumstances would I make exceptions for students with learning differences. Students with learning differences should be able to access and quality education. Students with learning differences are protected by federal law. Look no further than the recent supreme court ruling in <i>Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District</i> .

Most politicians (and parents) say they are opposed to excessive testing; but what is excessive, and can standards be raised to make our students nationally competitive without the use of standardized national tests?	Excessive testing is testing that does not directly inform teachers about the academic progress and achievement of a given student. As a teacher, I utilized both summative and formative assessments to monitor and excel student progress. Standards can absolutely be raised nationally so that from state to state, our students are consistently engaging with a rigorous and quality educational experience. Aligned tests can also help the education community focus efforts in struggling states, and recognize and share best practices from stand-out states.
Do you agree with zero-tolerance disciplinary policies in public schools?	I do not agree with zero-tolerance disciplinary policies in public school.
Do you support "military style" management of student behavior?	No, unless you are at a military institution. All behavior management systems should be restorative and respect student's cultural identities.
Under what circumstances, if any, do you support waiver of Colorado's licensure requirements for teachers?	I have always lived and taught in an urban context. Yet most school districts in Colorado are actually rural! Walsh, in southeastern Colorado, struggles to find science and math teachers – and yet a science and math teacher with a license in Johnson City, Kansas, a 30 minute drive, can't teach in Walsh. As such, I support waiver of Colorado's licensure requirements for teachers when communities like Walsh are not able to source and retain teachers for their schools.
Do you support initiatives to increase the proportion of people of color as administrators, teachers, and staff? If so, give examples of such initiatives.	Yes I support initiative to increase the proportion of people of color being educators. I only had one teacher who shared my cultural background in my K-12 education! I admire current programs that seek to establish a pipeline to teaching from paraprofessionals and the city collaboration to attract and retain teachers of color like the Make Your Mark program.
What would be your approach for dealing with schools deemed to be failing, starting with a statement of what your criteria for failure would be?	I worked at Cole, which at the time was the only school to be closed by the state twice. First as Cole Middle School and Mitchell Elementary School and second as KIPP at Cole. In both cases, the level of students reading and conducting math at-grade level proficiency over a long period of time was very low,; consequently affecting graduation rates in the area. Criteria for intervention could include low proficiency and growth over an extended period of time. Supporting schools is a delicate matter that

	has to balance: early intervention after chronic low performance, coaching/supports for teachers, and meaningful community empowerment. The School Performance Compact is a policy that attempts to provide a structure and process; however, the policy is only as good as its open and transparent application.
Do you believe that all educational professionals have a right to organize?	Yes, all educational professional have a right to organize
Given limited resources, would you choose lower class sizes or higher teacher salaries?	Lowering class sizes or raising teacher salaries with limited resources is a false dichotomy. I support abolishing TABOR at the state level, reforming our school funding formula with weights for students with the most need, and increase the flow of resources to the classroom so we can both manage size and teacher salaries.
The ratio of administrators to teachers is much higher in the DPS than in all its surrounding school districts. Are you satisfied with the Administration's justification for more administrators because DPS receives and administers many more grants?	The Denver Public School district has been moving to shift funds and autonomy to school leaders. I support this shift as a way to help balance the ratio of administrators to teachers.
Do you support limits on campaign contributions and full disclosure of donors for school board candidates?	Yes! The state legislature should place caps on school board races and have publicly financed elections. I signed the petition to get publicly financed elections as a municipal ordinance but school board races are managed by the state legislature.
Do you favor allowing school staff members including teachers to be designated as security officers and to carry concealed firearms?	Never. Firearms have no place in school.
How do you think mandatory attendance should be enforced?	Treating parents as partners is a great way to ensure students come to school on a consistent basis. My school had a school attendance partner, who was a parent who was employed by the school part time to ensure families had what they needed to get their children to school. Truancy courts and fines should be removed from our educational system because they disproportionately harm people of color.
Though Denver voters approved a mill levy increase to broaden offerings in fine arts and physical education, some schools do not yet offer this broader curriculum. What should be done to implement the will of the voters?	The Mill Oversight Committee should conduct an analysis of schools that do not offer broader curriculum and transfer funds to those schools. Schools can also offer with community-arts organizations to bring the fine arts to students on a consistent basis. My students loved when the symphony came to our school, and I had the freedom to teach a fine arts elective on Fridays. I taught Art of Social Change the first semester, and Fashion as Art the second semester to students in my grade-band team.