

Please list your website, Facebook page name, twitter account, email address or any other means that a voter can contact you.

Susan McMahon for Schools:

Website: www.mcmahon4schools.com

Facebook: Susan McMahon for Schools

Twitter: @McMahon4Schools

Email: Susan@mcmahon4schools.com

Phone: (720) 523-3272

Please state your views on the following:

1. What is your vision for Douglas County School District?

I am running for Douglas County School Board because I believe we, as a community, are at a crossroads. Our district needs to get back to the basics and focus on providing the kind of quality public education Douglas County is known for. As a mother of three boys attending public schools, I am pleased with the services the district has provided for our family. I take great pride in the fact that the Douglas County School District is considered one of the premier districts in the state and a model for many others across the nation.

Currently, there are many options for families to choose from; however, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done if we wish to remain competitive and continually provide the kind of services all students are entitled to under the law. It is time to make sure our school board is upholding its obligation to our students by enacting the kind of reforms needed to ensure every child has the opportunity to receive a high quality public education in Douglas County.

When elected, one of my first priorities will be to ensure that the needs of each student are met by focusing the Board's efforts on the individual students within our network of neighborhood schools and public charter schools. I plan to evaluate existing programs, identify the gaps in services and make sure we are providing each student with the resources they need to succeed. By researching and reevaluating programs within the existing framework, the District will be better equipped to serve the needs of all students, teachers, and administrative staff.

My Goals:

Focus on providing a safe and quality education for all children. Ensure each child has a safe, high quality learning environment and make a notable reduction in

the incidents of bullying. I will make it a priority to address the deficiencies within the current school system, identify whose needs are not being met and why, and make sure any student with special needs is accommodated within our public schools system.

Support teachers and educational professionals in the classroom. Bring teachers, educational professionals, students, families, taxpayers, parents and administrators together. By collaborating with one another and building a strong network of dedicated and informed citizens, we can achieve our common goal of providing a high quality educational environment to every child, one that fosters creativity, nurtures the spirit and provides every opportunity to thrive in their academic and social environments.

Provide accountability of your taxpayer dollars and spend our resources wisely. We need to put an end to the current system of outsourcing taxpayer dollars to neighboring districts. I plan to look for more creative ways to save resources by cutting costs and evaluating overhead spending. A strong public school system is something we, in Douglas County, should be proud of. As one of the top performing districts in the state, it is imperative that we continue to provide the necessary resources to maintain this tradition. A strong public education affects everything from our property values, to our quality of life and our community spirit. We need a strong public education system to build a community, and we need the community to help build a strong public education system.

2. What is your view on the Douglas County School District Bond/Mill question (3A 3B)?:

I support the bond/mill levy, or 3A and 3B as it will appear on the ballot. The current board voted to enact a budget which was contingent upon passing a bond/mill levy override this November. Over the past few years, the operating dollars in the district have been significantly reduced and we are looking at even deeper cuts if the bond/mill does not pass. Because of the current budget cuts, we need to look at additional funding methods to help improve some of our aging school buildings, to help reduce class sizes, and to enhance technology in our classrooms. Parents are already feeling the burden of a reduced budget as they pay additional transportation fees and provide school supplies to help teachers in the classrooms.

I am concerned, however, due to the division in the community and lack of trust of current Board and it's rushed policies, that voters may not pass the

bond/mill levy. We have not seen a revenue increase since 2003 and voters turned down a similar proposal in 2008.

I urge the community to take a look at the proposal on the Douglas County School District's website, and make an informed decision. Our children deserve access to the resources this bond/mill will provide.

3. What is your view on Prop 103? Proposition 103 creates a five-year timeout from education cuts and raises an estimated \$3 billion over that time for preschool, K-12 and higher education. Sales tax would go from 2.9% to 3% and the personal and corporate income tax would go from 4.63% to 5%. This issue will be decided by the voters of the entire state of Colorado.

I realize there is a need for a new statewide funding model and this initiative is a step in the right direction. I would like to see more equitable funding models at the state level, and am focused on the local issues of ensuring that the local bond/mill levy passes so that we may see a direct impact here in our own community.

4. Do you believe that Douglas County School district is equitably funded at the state level?

Douglas County currently receives the lowest amount of Per Pupil Revenue, or PPR, from the state of Colorado when compared to neighboring districts. While it may not seem equitable, the Douglas County School District prides itself on remaining one of the most efficiently operated districts in the metro area. Our students consistently outperform those in neighboring districts and have one of the highest academic achievement rates in the state. This is a testament to the District and we should continue to strive to perform at these levels.

Deep budget cuts, however, threaten to reduce the District's effectiveness. If we wish to remain competitive, offer world class education programs, maintain our infrastructures, and hire and retain the highest quality teachers, we need to make sure we are supporting our district financially both at the state and local levels. Our public school system is one of the main reasons families move to Douglas County. Our public schools are the backbone of this community and affect everything from our property values, to our quality of life and our community spirit.

5. What is your view on vouchers in Douglas County School District? One criticism of the voucher program is that the standards of private schools are different than those

of public schools. If the Choice Scholarship Program should prevail in court, do you believe that schools that accept taxpayer dollars should have to comply with the same standards as our public schools? For example, should participating private schools be able to discriminate based on race, sex, religion, disability or sexual orientation?

I fully support options for choice within the public school system and believe we should continue to enhance our system of public, charter, and innovation schools; but, I disagree wholeheartedly when it comes to giving our tax dollars away to private schools, many of which are not even in Douglas County.

The voucher issue is one that has split our community; half of the families in the District's own survey said they were against vouchers. It's time to move on and rebuild the trust between the Board and the parents, taxpayers, students and teachers here in Douglas County. And that will be my first priority as a board member.

6. What is your vision on meeting the needs of special education students?

It is imperative to ensure that each child has a safe, high quality learning environment within the public school system in Douglas County. I will make it a priority to address the deficiencies within the current school system, identify the needs are not being met and why and make sure any student with special needs is accommodated within our public schools system. It's not just the right thing to do, it is the law.

7. What is your vision on retaining and recruiting highly qualified teachers? I support having a pay for performance plan in place as long as all those affected by the program are involved in the program planning and implementation.

Teacher salaries in Douglas County are typically lower than those in neighboring districts and many of our good teachers are unable to afford to actually live in the District. A pay for performance plan will allow Douglas County to remain competitive and will offer the opportunity for teachers to opt-in to a program that will allow them to earn additional compensation based on rigorous assessments.

As long as the existing Pay for Performance Framework is executed in a fair and equitable manner, everyone involved is given the same opportunities to succeed, and all affected parties are involved in the planning and implementation, I believe this is an opportunity for Douglas county to be one of the most competitive and innovative districts in the state.

8. What should be the role of political parties in school board elections? Have you accepted the endorsement of a political party, or any other organization? Have you accepted funds from any source other than private citizens?

School board elections are traditionally non-partisan. Historically, political parties have remained neutral in school board elections. It is in the best interest of our children that political parties stay out of the election process. Too often, we lose focus of the real issues facing our schools and our children by politicizing school board races. When political parties get involved, it tends to turn the focus away from what should be the most important issue facing our schools, which is to collaborate and engage in dialogue that is productive to moving our schools forward.

I have not accepted the endorsement of any political party and all of my campaign contributions have come from individual donors. I am proud to have received support from parents, teachers, administrators and concerned community members across the county, and will only accept resources from individuals and organizations that reflect my personal values.

9. The Choice Scholarship program was found unconstitutional in a recent court decision. School board members take an oath to uphold the Colorado Constitution. As a member of the school board how will you deal with the conflict of the BOE continuing to support and defend the Choice Scholarship Program?

Throughout this campaign, my opponent has attempted to make issue of and criticize me for being one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit that has lead to a judge stopping a program that clearly violated Colorado law. My opponent has accused me of having a conflict of interest because I stood with the plaintiffs to stop this program which attempted to divert hundreds of thousands of dollars out of our public schools, and in fact, out of our district.

I joined as a plaintiff to give voice to the thousands of people who knew that this program was not only bad for Douglas County, it violated the law. The judge validated those voices by enforcing the law. And while the current board plans to continue to pursue the lawsuit, when I am elected , I will continue to speak for the people of Douglas County at every one of the Douglas County School Board meetings.