APS Candidate Forum

Question List

1. Explain your understanding of “above” and “below” the line funding, and how funding from the state should be allocated above or below the line.
2. Do you have any reservations regarding the teaching of human reproductive biology – that is, “sex education”?
3. Do you have any reservation regarding the teaching of evolution?
4. What are your priorities if APS is facing budget cuts?
5. From a student: What are your priorities on the kids who have no future and what would you do for them?
6. What program might address at-risk students’ needs and reduce our drop-out rate?
7. As a parent and teacher, I have seen how difficult it is to get reading intervention and support before 3rd grade. With the threat of mandatory 3rd grade retention for non-proficient readers, what ideas do you have to support reading success before 3rd grade when students are not so far behind that they give up?
8. What is your position on 3rd grade retention? If you are in favor, how would you fund the additional classrooms and teachers that would be needed? If not in favor, how would you fund the additional remediation programs, professional development and resource that would be needed?
9. Why is there an achievement gap between white students and students of color in APS and what would you do about closing the gap if elected?
10. ¿Continuarán las evaluaciones como SBA que están basadas con objetivos a nivel del país y no a la realidad de las escuelas? (Will you continue with tests like the SBA that are based on national goals and not the realities in the schools?)
11. ¿Habrá guías (libros) didácticas que orienten a los padres para poder ayudar a sus hijos con sus trabajos, homework, en casa? (Will there be educational guides to help parents help their children with their work, homework, at home?)
12. Please explain your position on the Common Core. Specifically, explain how or why you believe the Common Core standards are beneficial or harmful our students. Have you read the Common Core? What do you know about how they were conceived and designed? Explain how the Common Core benefit children of color and ELL’s.
13. The traditional school year is based on the needs of the agrarian/agricultural culture. Research has shown that children retain more learning when there are shorter breaks. Explain your view of year-round or alternative schools for all grade levels. Year-round education also can reduce the need for new buildings and decrease the amount of capital spending.
14. What do you believe are the best practices for family/community engagement?
15. Several years ago data was collected for five straight years on APS graduates who went on the UNM and CNM. About 60% of the five-year cohort of students who attended CNM had to take remedial math and about 53% had to take remedial English/reading. What will you do to stem remediation for entering college freshmen?
16. How will you support families, students, and teachers if they choose to opt out or refuse high stakes tests? What do you see your role as a Board member is in above situation?
17. What is the most important quality to look for in a superintendent? (A woman would be nice this time!)
18. What improvements are needed to improve education today?
19. What does the district do well/not do well?
20. How will you encourage the district to quickly test and place students in appropriate gifted programs? (They currently keep making delays and backlogs)
21. How will you ensure all parents are informed about the option to have their child tested for gifted?
22. Education is the means to develop our most precious resource – our children’s abilities. In the spirit of each child having access to the education level that is right for him or her, what is your position on gifted education and if you are elected, what are some of the steps you might think of to improve the education of highly gifted in NM?
23. Please share your position on a parent’s right to choose the school at which their gifted child receives gifted services.
24. The School Board and Administration seem not to understand the difference between policy-making and micro-management. This had led to hundreds of thousands of dollars being wasted defending lawsuits arising from alleged abuses of official power denying individual constitutional rights. If an incumbent, why should you be re-elected, if a challenger, what would you do to remedy the APS failure paradigm in this respect?
25. Would you talk about teaching critical thinking – how and how early?
26. APS currently charges after school enrichment providers $500 per year to offer their programs. My program, which runs once weekly chess clubs for kids, is being charged this fee at all schools, including schools where we offer a chess program free of charge. This year we have been charged $4000 for our clubs. This represents over 50 need-based scholarships to our clubs. What is your position on these fees that are hindering our enrichment programs?
27. Communication with parents has been an issue with all of the changes in state assessments (PARCC) and the new Common Core Standards. How will you better communicate to the parents of APS than they have in the past?
28. If you are one of the many candidates who would do away with high stakes testing, what would you suggest in its place?
29. Will you support releasing for public inspection the boards settlement agreement with former superintendent Winston Brooks?
30. The “P” in APS means public. How will you oppose the Governor’s Education Department with its trying to turn the “P” in to private – whereas only the elites and privileged will get an education while the 68% living in poverty will be dumped aside.
31. Do you favor 3rd grade retention?
32. The APS opt out form states clearly there are consequences for opting out, which include the lowering of a school’s letter grade and possible consequences to the teacher and the student. What is your position on consequences for a parent exercising his/her right to opt out and make educational decision for his/her child?
33. How will you encourage and create parent friendly schools?
34. How much involvement do you think the parents should have in development of the curriculum in APS?
35. After-school enrichment program providers are currently charged $500/year to teach a once weekly class. This is making it impossible for most community members to offer enrichment programs to our youth. What is your position on these fees?
36. What are your thoughts regarding “My Brother’s Keeper”? Do you support the initiative, and if so, what would you do to ensure its success?
37. Please ask the candidates to endorse or oppose community member seats on the APS School Board District and Community Relations Committee.
38. I think there has been too much running public schools as a private business. Education is not a for-profit business. Would you work to keep the business model out of public education?
39. What will you do to reduce class sizes?
40. If legislation passes to hold children back if they cannot read by 3rd grade, then what remedial action will be taken for dyslexics, almost all of whom are smart but have neurological problems that prevents them from translating letter symbols into words they already speak and understand.
41. What are your thoughts on Social Workers in Schools?
42. What is your position on PARCC?
43. What should be the School Board’s role in relationship with the Legislature?
44. The Board and the Superintendent have developed goals to improve the district. Are you aware of the goals and if so, would you change or modify any of the goals?
45. What will you do to challenge unethical policies that are being mandated by the governor’s office?
46. For all the candidates: If you don’t win this time, will you keep advocating for quality education and equity?
47. How do you think APS should deal with the future teacher shortage?
48. Will you insist upon the Board following the law on public information releases and be transparent in all matters?
49. Online testing is a prime candidate for data mining. How can we be assured that student data remains private? Frankly I don’t trust Pearson, et al.
50. In my opinion no educational system can work if 68% of the families and students live in poverty and the wealthy do not want to pay taxes that could run our schools and provide jobs for our families. What would you do to close the wealth/poverty gap effecting our schools?
51. Why do you think you would make a good board member and what do you bring to the table that others might not?
52. How can you justify cutting student testing if we could lose federal funds we so desperately need?
53. Do you believe in Family Engagement? And why?
54. APS seems to be driven by a “Not Invented Here” mentality in regard to solutions to one of the most pressing problems in the classroom, disruptive students, and solutions proven in other states but not ever considered here. Specifically, Los Angeles City Schools operates a
partnership program with the National Guard to develop intrinsic motivation in chronic troublemakers in danger of being expelled or dropping out. If elected or re-elected, what would you do to get proven ideas considered in solving critical problems in the classroom?

55. How will you work with the Public Education Department in Santa Fe to ensure the voice of APS and our needs, dreams, and desires for our students, teachers and community are heard and addressed?

56. In the past year, how much time have you spent in a classroom, and how will this impact your actions on the board?

57. I would like to know what actions you plan to take to ensure that programs for gifted students, especially C-level programs for highly gifted students, continue in APS schools.

58. Should candidates endorse community member seats on the APS school board district and community relations committee? Hopefully the Board will support this participation by the community.

59. To John Lopez: Why in your 40 years in APS, did you never join the AFT Union? Or support them?

60. Ask the candidates to endorse or oppose community member seats on the APS School Board and Community Relations Committee.

61. Give an example how you would work through a controversial issue with your fellow board members and superintendent.

62. How would you deal with divisive issues to achieve a positive outcome?

63. How will you interact with parents to streamline communication on issues? How will you get input from parents?

64. We hear a lot about how to educate the children who cannot read and are falling behind and how APS will meet the needs of those children. It is hard to sympathize with the children who are on the opposite end of the spectrum – the geniuses in our school system. How will you prioritize the education of the highly gifted and how can APS meet their needs if you are elected?

65. Do you advocate state or local development of APS curriculum?

66. Why is there a gap between white and African American?

67. How do you know kids stay in school?

68. I was a homeless kid and no one helped me get educated. So how do you know people could close the gap automatically?

69. Do you favor using student’s test scores to evaluate teachers? If so, what percentage of their evaluation would it be?

70. What improvements would you advocate for the Highland cluster schools?

71. It is my understanding that the state is really in control of local school districts. If this is so, what can each of your accomplish without real power?

72. Does APS teach civics and government? If not, why not? If not, what can you do to apply pressure to make such class/classes mandatory at the elementary, middle and high schools?

73. What is your position on charter schools?

74. Almost one third of the school year is not devoted to testing. What will you do to reduce testing time and restore instructional time?
75. Most candidates proclaim that, as current or former educators, they are the best choice to serve on the school board. Why are non-educators less effective or less qualified?
76. If elected, what would you do to support special education, specifically gifted education?
77. Please state your position on parents’ right to choose the school at which their child receives gifted services. Do all parents have the option to have their children tested to qualify for the gifted program?
78. What qualities, key policy positions and previous work experience are you looking for in a new superintendent?
79. Eight elementary school in APS use an “alternate” school calendar. If one is in your district, do you know whether the testing outcome is different from another school that is on the “regular” calendar?
80. Should APS administrators be allowed to take paid political leave to serve in the Legislature? Should teachers be allowed to take paid political leave to serve?
81. What percentage, if any, of a teacher’s evaluation should be based on student test scores and why?
82. Do you agree with the Albuquerque Public School board’s refusal to make public the results of an attorney’s investigation into former superintendent Winston Brooks, which ultimately led to his resignation and to APS paying him $350,000 to buy out his contract? Why or why not?
83. Do you support legislation that would require retention of third-graders who couldn’t read at grade level, coupled with intense early literacy intervention? Why or why not?
84. Can schools enforce parental responsibility, especially when their child has been accused of bullying?
85. Please ask the candidates to endorse or oppose community member seats on the APS School Board District and Community Relations Committee.
86. If elected, what would be your top priorities?
87. Rating our teachers and our schools on the basis of current outcomes and without providing sufficient instruction – for both teachers and students – will put public education in New Mexico further behind.
88. Do you believe schools should be given A-F grades according to the results of standard tests mostly prepared by out of state – profit-motivated – developers?
89. In searching for a new superintendent, which characteristics would you like to see in your next school leader?
90. How would you develop a new five-year plan for the district that focuses on academic programs, such as using technology in the classroom, looking into how teachers present information to students and raising the district’s graduation rate? How would the five-year plan map out how the district planned to pay for those programs?
91. Albuquerque Public Schools has partnered with Central New Mexico Community College to build a new building on the community college’s campus. The building is to house tow of the districts’ charter school, Native American Community Academy and the College and Career High School, and plans to open in time for the 2017-2018 school year. The partnership between the district and college is ideal for College and Career High School, which is already located on the community college campus, but quickly growing out of its current location. Half of the school’s
course load for students includes dual-credit classes. This allows students to earn an associate degree by the time they graduate from high school. Native American Community Academy also requires students to take some dual-credit classes. The total construction cost of the new building comes to an estimated $35 million. The plan for the new building cannot move forward, however, until voters approve it. Both district and community college must put the plan before the people in the form of bond measures in the 2016 bond elections, and both measure must pass in order for the deal to continue. What are your thoughts on the district and college collaborations to build new charter school buildings?

92. If you win and are an APS Board member for the next four years, what specifically will you do to provide our children a better education?