



**Albuquerque Public Schools
Questionnaire for Board of Education Candidates**

The Board of Education is an elected body created according to the laws of the state of New Mexico to serve as the governing board of the school district for the purpose of organizing, maintaining, and locating schools and for providing educational opportunities and services for all citizens residing within the school district.

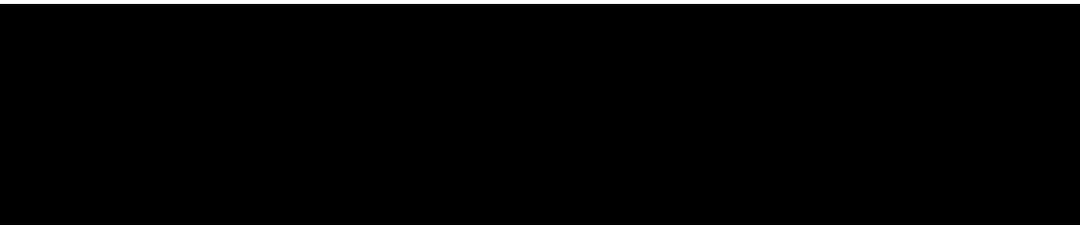
Candidates are requested to return their questionnaire to the Board Services Office, by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 4, 2013. Mailed questionnaires must be received by Friday, January 4, 2013. Address to: Board of Education Services Office, 2013 Board Election, Alice and Bruce King Educational Complex, 6400 Uptown Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, N.M. 88110. Questionnaires may also be faxed to 880-2575 by the deadline above. Please call the Board of Education Services Office at 880-3737 to confirm fax arrivals, or for other information.

**Personal Information
[Please Print, Type or Use Digital Form]**

Name:	Lorenzo	Louis	Garcia
	First	Middle	Last



Length of Residency in School District: All my life; 6 years in Duranes (North Valley)



Occupation: Currently unemployed; I have over 40 years working in the community, primarily with public health programs (health education, health promotion, and public health management), and in the fields of criminal justice (probation officer, and Counslor), and mental health community programs (Mental health Associate). I am actively looking for work.

Employer: N.A.

Business Address: N.A.

Business Telephone: __NA _____

Do you currently hold other public office?

Yes ___ No **X**

If yes, list office: **I am a current elected member of the APS Board of Education.**

Do you have any affiliations with the Albuquerque Public Schools? Yes ___ **No X**

If yes, what are your affiliations? **However, my daughter is a 1st grade teacher, and has been working for the past 13 years.**

Are you available to attend Board meetings the first and third Wednesday nights of the month at 5:00 p.m.? **Yes X** No _____

Additionally, there are four board committees that meet twice a month at 7:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. or 5:00 p.m. Are you available to attend committee meetings? **Yes X** No _____

If no, please explain why: **My situation may be challenged depending upon being able to negotiate time off, and flexibility, should I be able to secure employment.**

Periodically, the Board must meet during daytime hours for Board meetings, budget hearings, and luncheons. Are you available during daytime hours for these activities?

Yes **X** No _____

If no, please explain why: _____

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings, the Board requires approximately ten hours a week in reading, researching, miscellaneous meetings, school visits, telephone calls, and e-mail correspondence. Can your schedule accommodate the extra time involved in serving as a member of the Board of Education? **Yes X** No _____

Experience

Answers should be brief and concise.

1. Why do you want to be a board member for Albuquerque Public Schools?

I have decided to run once again for the APS School Board because my time on the Board has given me an opportunity to learn a great deal. I continue to learn and believe I can make an important contribution to our public education system. I have extensive experience in community social service programs, public health education and health promotion, as well as criminal justice and mental health community outreach and cultural diversity and proficiency training.

My primary concern is that public education has become one of the essential and critical crossroad battlegrounds for social justice issues in our nation; all directly impacting our children, families and communities. As such, it is critical that we work collectively when possible to **"keep the public in public education"**.

This unhealthy atmosphere has caused for innumerable conflicts, and at times put many good people into what has seemed to be untenable positions via their decisions made, as well as challenged those seeking opportunities to affect change to feel discouraged, disappointed, discounted.

I have and can continue to play a useful role. I can be a thoughtful member of the Board team. My hope and struggle has been to work to insure that communities, families, teachers and staff who are committed to working together can find common ground, support a different model.

There must be opportunities for constructive dialogue. Openness, and a willingness to create platforms for both discussion and action based upon sound reasoning should be the organizational norm. "Sound bite ideological propaganda", although emotionally appealing is both hollow, and endangers our most cherished institution of public education. We can not afford a lackluster effort on the part of anyone involved.

School bureaucracies can be intransigent, bull headed and top down in their management style under these difficult conditions. This blocks any input while problems in our communities both fester and grow. No one wins under these circumstances.

We can and must establish sound leadership at all levels of our organizational effort. Our political will must get beyond ideological posturing and subsequent compliance. This requires a rigorous disciplined effort and modeling a mutual respect and commitment to

build institutions that reflect the best of our democratic process that so far has been less than satisfactory.

Schools in New Mexico are not adequately and sufficiently funded contrary to the New Mexico constitution. The achievement gap must be addressed with a solid curriculum, and based upon sound pedagogy. It is my intent to call for the establishment of a bi-partisan community panel to advocate for a New Mexico town hall on this issue.

I am very concerned that teachers and educational assistants have not had a pay raise in four years and that insurance costs are being raised for all APS employees. The resultant inequities and disparities are not reflective of the kind of environment that I believe is constructive.

2. What is your interest in education?

In the best of all worlds, our educational institutions can play a very positive role in this human process. Learning environments function best when students and staff are respected, and thoughtfully challenged to grow as human beings. In the worse case scenarios, school environments can be crucibles for negative socialization particularly when as students are disrespected, become frustrated, cynical and apathetic. A student's creative intelligence can be nourished or ruined. Our organizational culture must insure the success of all students, not be satisfied with a repetition of past mistakes. Students must master the scientific method. My interest is in working together with others to insure that our public schools promote an environment that communicates respect, caring, and civic responsibility, and most importantly an enthusiasm for learning. Our work should include insuring that the conditions whereby positive results are more likely. Teachers should be supported to teach in a manner that looks for the teachable moment, inspires inquisitive minds, challenges students to grow in their capacity for self-reflection, and overcome whatever roadblocks that are in their path. Administrators should be capable of building organizational cultures and a curriculum that emphasizes teamwork. Both, have the responsibility to go above and beyond their call to duty, as professionals and treated as such. This includes re-establishing a robust sense of community.

3. How would you support the mission of the district?

I think I have and can continue to play a useful role. I can be a thoughtful member of the Board team. My hope and struggle has been to work to insure that communities, families, and those who are committed to working together find common ground and support a different model, where there's dialogue, and openness, and a willingness to create platforms for both discussion and action based upon sound reasoning.

4. What is your past and current involvement with Albuquerque Public Schools?

I am a current member of the APS Board, and as such I serve in the capacity as Chairperson for the District and Community Relations Board Committee.

5. What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of Albuquerque Public Schools?

Strengths:

- Excellent teachers, educational assistants, food service personnel, and administrators and support personnel particularly in our maintenance and operations departments.
- A spirit of openness and a commitment to transparency by the Board, and administrative leadership.
- A willingness by the Board to base decisions upon research, and non-partisan leadership for the most part.
- An excellent capital master plan and collaboration with the community Capital Advisory group, and commission has contributed to this overall effort.
- Collaboration with UNM Center for Educational and Policy Research has resulted in important information documented via geo-mapping of issues, like truancy. This has made for important opportunities to

generate awareness and understanding of the landscape of public education and related issues.

- Our annual meetings with Albuquerque legislators has opened up opportunities for dialogue over the past four years.
- The gubernatorial debate held two years ago highlighted educational issues and modeled a sound approach towards clarifying the candidates respective platforms.
- The institution of the APS Super SAC, was an important milestone. That is, we have been able to set up one forum whereby students can communicate their ideas, experiences and concerns directly to the Superintendent.
- Community meetings held to discuss the APS goals, the Budget, and specific issues has been unprecedented.
- District and Community Relations committee meetings are an opportunity to go into more in depth discussions about particular issues impacting APS. These often can involve participants from the community, other institutions, or State.

Weaknesses:

- APS needs to coordinate and integrate programs; not simply continue to mount more and more “additional duties as assigned” upon teachers and staff.
- Bullying by students is not tolerated, and it should not be acceptable as a management style by anyone at any level.
- Four years of chronic budget shortfalls has created a situation that promotes an overburdened and low staff morale.
- Cultural proficiency must be an ongoing organization priority, not hit and miss priority. This starts at the top; via modeling. We can do better.
- An integrated action plan must be developed, and established. This plan should include various levels; how we move forward in replacing our aging work force, establishment of a career ladder and exchange between APS and other institutions. Our current lack of a clear

vocational and career training strategy settles for marginalizing and pushing out students.

- We need an overall plan as to how dual language education is implemented throughout the District. At this point, it appears to be a “hit and miss process of implementation not based on any plan whatsoever, but, on a lack of cultural competency, and institutional racism.
- We can no longer settle for the whim or preference of intransigent Principals who would “rather not bother”, while they promote the illusion of “school success” from this line of convenient reasoning and educational gerrymandering. Dual language is a constitutional guarantee in our State, and we must comply with the founding fathers intent.
- All front office personnel, in our schools and APS administrative offices must be required to be bilingual. Our communities deserve to be welcomed into an environment that communicates both respect, and a “willingness to provide excellent customer service”.

6. What is the role of the Board of Education?

The Board of Education can play an important role to “set the tone” in the overall organizational culture into one that is both open, professional and communicates a positive learning environment. This includes the statutory responsibilities of supervision, and hiring and firing of the superintendent, setting public school policy, and approving the overall APS budget.

7. What is the role of individual board members?

Individual Board members must be committed to working together as part of the Board team to insure that the goals and objectives are met,

that children are safe, and that the philosophical approach to education is sound.

8. What should be the relationship between the superintendent and Board of Education?

The relationship should always be a professional one, whereby the atmosphere is constructive, ideas are thoughtfully discussed, and the individual board members model being rigorous in our reasoning and dialogue, to insure a sound curriculum is the basis for all academic initiatives.

9. What unique qualities would you bring to the Board of Education?

I believe I am capable of providing a calming force into the discussions, and deliberations, and that I can support the work of the board thru modeling constructive behavior, integrity and thoughtfulness. I have worked to support a development of community school approach in our initiatives. I believe that data based upon the principles of mutual respect, and action that reflects a clear understanding of the data and needs.

10. Other school/community volunteer activities related to the community:

I have a long history of community advocacy, leadership and activism to help build a foundation for long term constructive change. I understand the process of both dialogue and then need to pull together in a time of public need.

11. What do you think is the best way for the district to:

a. Improve academic achievement and close the achievement gap?

- WE must organize at all levels; (develop a plan with measurable goals and objectives by ethnicity) have a complete and thorough discussion about the issues, using current school by school data.

- All APS teachers must receive TESOL certification as a requirement for employment.
- b. Maintain financial accountability and still support student achievement, family and community engagement and a safe school environment?**
- Open and transparent discussions, establish pilot programs via magnet schools, that are allowed flexibility to both “think outside the box”, and experiment with creative solutions.
 - The community schools model should be the norm, and not the exception for all our schools.
 - Creative community-school partnerships should be our goal with clear timelines established.
 - All principals build a plan with their school and administrative teams.
- c. Make a safe and supportive climate for learning and working that maximizes student achievement?**
- Insure that the curriculum is rigorous, and pedagogically sound.
- d. Engage families and enhance partnerships in the community to maximize student achievement?**
- Families and partnerships will occur, if we require that this is our expectation, within a plan and measurable timeline.

By my signature, I affirm that I meet all requirements to become a member of the Board of Education.

