

Albuquerque Public Schools Questionnaire for Board of Education Candidates

Name: David Eugene Peercy

Length of Residency in School District: 6 years

Occupation: Software Scientist, Quality Engineer; Sandia National Laboratories

Do you currently hold other public office:

No

Are you available to attend Board meetings the first and third Wednesday nights of the month at 5 p.m.?

Yes

Additionally, there are four board committees that meet twice a month at 7:30 a.m., 11 :30 a.m. or 5 p.m. Are you available to attend committee meetings?

Yes

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

In addition to regularly scheduled meetings, the Board requires approximately ten hours a week in reading, researching, miscellaneous meetings, school visits, telephone calls and email correspondence. Can your schedule accommodate the extra time involved in serving as a Board member?

Yes

Experience

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

I want to help develop a close relationship between the APS Board and the new Superintendent, Winston Brooks. In particular, I am interested in how the Board supports the Superintendent in implementing goals concerning student achievement with appropriate measures of that achievement, improved graduation rates, and the integration of educational relationships across K-12 and universities within New Mexico.

2. What is your interest in education?

Education, and in particular public education, is the foundation for our democracy. We must provide the best possible opportunity for our students to become educated to sustain that democracy. I believe public education is perhaps the most important function of our city, state, and country governments.

Personally, education has also been an important part of my whole life. My parents were educators in the public school system. I went through the same public education system and received a PhD in Mathematics from New Mexico State University. I've taught at the University level and also in a private preparatory school. My two sons obtained an exceptional education

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through the APS public schools and both now have college degrees. My wife has a Masters degree in Speech Language Pathology (SP) and is currently an SLP Liaison for APS.

In short summary - I'd like to be a part of making the Albuquerque Public Schools educational process as important for all our students as it has been for me.

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

Superintendent Winston Brooks has put forth 8 Essential Goals Toward Better Education. One clear mission of the district is to ensure educational success within the district. Success is measured by evidence-based data that not only establishes milestone criteria, but progress toward those milestones. As a quality engineer I have been involved with successful quality programs with well-defined measurement processes and improvement strategies for organizations as well as project processes and products. I have been a key leader in many improvement efforts where the balance between cost, schedule, and performance has been critical. This requires negotiation, teaming, a commitment to flexibility, and at times compromise. I believe this experience will enable me to be an effective part of the APS Board's support and oversight of Superintendent Brook's Goals and their successful implementation.

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

Both my sons completed their 1-12 education through the APS system. My wife has been an SLP employee of the APS district for over 25 years. I have volunteered for science fair and science expo judging for many years. During my sons' high school participation in soccer at Sandia High School I was the chair of the Soccer Booster Club for several years. I support Sandia National Laboratories' commitment to science fair awards and scholarships. I have also mentored a special project in mathematics for a high school student in the past.

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

I believe the teachers are the strength of the Albuquerque Public Schools. Their dedication to the students and their education is incredible in the face of nearly constant change, disruptions, and administration activities that distract from their direct teaching duties. Somehow the non-value distractions need to be reduced. I believe the APS administration needs to be better organized - an effort that I know the Superintendent is trying to address. I believe the financial accountability of APS needs to be improved - both in its oversight and in its implementation. I believe the coordination among the APS administration, APS Board of Education, APS teachers, APS students and perhaps most importantly - the APS parents needs attention.

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

Basically, the Board of Education is responsible for the hiring, retaining, and replacement of the Superintendent of APS. If the Board and Superintendent are successful, then retainment will be the primary responsibility. The constant turnover of leadership undermines the coherence and constancy of vision and mission. It is the Board's job to provide oversight of and support to the Superintendent so he can provide leadership and accomplish the Board's vision for APS education. The Board supports the Superintendent in several key areas as indicated by the four standing committees: Policy/Legislative Committee, a Budget/Finance Committee, a Capital Outlay/Property/Technology Committee, and an Audit Committee. The function of the standing committees is primarily fact-finding, deliberative, and advisory, rather than legislative or

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administrative. Committee recommendations are made directly to the Board, which alone may take action. In addition there are Board duties related to responding to public queries in Open Meetings as well as ensuring the New Mexico State Board of Education policies and guidelines are adequately addressed.

7. What is the role of individual board members?

Individual Board members represent the best interests of their specific district, interact with their district constituents to understand potential issues and concerns that may need to be addressed by the Board, and provide essential communication back to their district constituents. Board members capture the will of their constituents, provide courageous leadership for the vision of a superior education for every child, are stewards of the public funds and trust, and provide transparent and inclusive decision-making processes that instill this trust.

Procedurally, individual Board members serve on one or more of the four standing committees, provide personal expertise and guidance as appropriate to other Board members, and support the Board as a team member.

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

The Superintendent and Board of Education should be a co-operative, integrated, but a somewhat independent team. Since the Board hires, retains, and replaces the Superintendent there is an employer-employee relationship. The Board provides oversight and fact-finding, deliberative information, and advice to the Superintendent. The Superintendent uses the Board for advice concerning general policy, financial, capital expenditures, and regulatory audits. I believe the planned training (goal #4) for understanding the role and responsibilities of effective school boards and superintendents will go a long way to determining this relationship.

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

As a trained scientist I hope to bring sound logic, measurement strategies, and quality organizational skills to the Board of Education team. As a proponent of public education and a problem solver from my mathematics background, I hope to provide concepts, strategies, and implementation guidance for APS problems and issues as they arise. As a research scientist and proponent of well-defined plans that include sustainment strategies, I hope to influence an educational approach that has an achievable vision with an improvement strategy to ensure the vision is systematically implemented. I believe in strong teaming and team accountability. I hope to strengthen these traits within the APS Board of Education and its relationships with other groups.

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

I am an active member of Sandia Presbyterian Church. I'm a member of the Long Range Planning Committee for the church. I have been a long-time member of the choir and accompanist for several church vocal groups. I have been the referee commissioner for our church Upward Basketball Program for the past several years. In the past I've been a soccer coach for over 13 years with several state championship teams. I developed the first (in the country) automated official's scheduling program for NMAA in the early 1980s and worked to support the evolution of that unique program for over 20 years on an essentially volunteer basis.

11. What are your thoughts about:

a. No Child Left Behind

Basically a good vision, lacks adequate funding to effectively achieve its goals and hence puts a

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tremendous amount of pressure on the core of the educational system - the teachers and the students. One value is that it has required data be disaggregated by ethnicity, meal assistance, language need, and special education so we know how previously "hidden" students are progressing. The key measurement should be adequate progress, not strict milestone deadlines. Adequate progress requires the disaggregated data in order to define what "adequate" means.

b. Closing the achievement gap

This can be difficult to measure unless we carefully define what achievement means and how that achievement translates into life success. There are competing goals for what "achievement" really does and perhaps should mean. "Achievement" in accordance with standardized tests and federal/state mandates is somewhat artificial in my opinion and not correlated with success after school. Requiring teacher accountability is appropriate - as long as there is agreement on what it means. Unfortunately, if this accountability is linked to measures that are not evidence-based and correlated with life success, then the process is flawed. Consistency in measuring and reporting, ensuring the baseline measurements are well-defined, and keeping the main goal of student capability and ultimate life success in mind will do a lot to close such gaps. I believe we have many "achievement" gaps that are important - yes, science, math, reading, writing - but how about music and the arts and basic understanding of our country's principles as educated through the social sciences and history? There are many challenges clearly prioritization is appropriate, but all student intelligences need to have a chance for achievement.

c. Parental involvement and community engagement

Absolutely essential. Can't emphasize enough the importance of the parent and community engagement in the educational process. The Board needs to be a clear communicator and listener to their communities.

Conclusion of Questionnaire