

Pikes Peak Region 2021 School Board Elections Voter Guide

D11 - Colorado Springs

501c3 - compliant and Nonpartisan

School Board Elections | November 2, 2021 | Mail-In / Drop-Off Ballot Voting Only



**YOUR VOTE
MATTERS**

October 8 - November 2, 2021

Online Voter Registration/Record Updating available until October 25th at: GoVoteColorado.gov

Contact Church Voter Guides at: Info@ChurchVoterGuides.org | Updated 10/15/21

For other Voter Guides and more information, please go to our website: ChurchVoterGuides.org

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

The Voter Guide information contained in this document is provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501c3-compliant and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate.

Pikes Peak Region 2021 School Board Elections Voter Guide for District 11 - Colorado Springs

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Introduction to the Voter Guide

Church Voter Guides is an independent 508c1a faith-based nonprofit organization. We serve the public by providing objective research and education on matters specifically of interest to Christians, primarily through the production and distribution of 501c3-compliant, nonpartisan Voter Guides.

Church Voter Guides does not endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

We are based in Colorado Springs, and the April 2021 City Council election in our hometown was our inaugural project. This new Voter Guide for the 2021 Pikes Peak Region School Board Elections is being distributed electronically only, both through our interactive website and by downloadable and printable PDF files. We have produced one Voter Guide for each school district that is: (1) conducting an election this year, and (2) for which at least one candidate in that election answered our Questionnaire. Our Voter Guides are being promoted through a wide-ranging network of area churches, faith-based non-profit organizations, mainstream and social media, and other means.

The purpose of our Voter Guides is to educate and inform voters of each candidate's positions on a variety of policy issues that they are likely to address if elected. As a Voter Guide designed to be distributed through Churches, we ask the candidates questions on topics that are of utmost interest to the Christian voter.

How to Get the Most Benefit from this Voter Guide

The core information in this Voter Guide comes directly from the School Board candidates themselves. We asked them questions, they answered (with a 120 word limit), and we have published their responses here. In order to understand and utilize this information to the fullest, so that you may vote in the most informed way, we suggest the following:

1. Pray and ask the Almighty for discernment. The Kingdom of God is all about truth, while politics is a system fraught with compromise. Make sure you consider the candidates' answers with a Heavenly mindset.
2. Ask yourself, "Did the candidate actually answer the question, or rather side-step it, or give a fluff, wishy-washy, and/or 'political' type answer that leaves you not really knowing where he/she truly stands on the issue?"
3. Learn more about the candidates in your school district, including their positions on issues we did not cover in our Questionnaire, by visiting their official campaign websites (if they have one.) The website URL for each candidate is listed in the Voter Guide.
4. Educate yourself more about the Christian/Biblical perspective regarding many of the subjects covered in our Voter Guide by reading topical articles on our website: www.ChurchVoterGuides.org
5. Use search engines to find additional information about each candidate, including written articles and videos, other voter guides, and even voting records for those who have served in public office before. You may even want to watch online recordings of your local School Board meetings to see how incumbents conduct themselves and vote.
6. Reach out to the candidates themselves through the provided email addresses and other means, in order to ask them questions of personal importance to you. Please make sure to show great respect toward each candidate and his/her time, especially to those with whom you disagree. Running for office is hard, stressful, time-consuming work, and these are your fellow citizens who have lives, families, jobs...and feelings (just like you!)



What makes a Voter Guide 501c3 - compliant and Nonpartisan?

Federal tax law permits nonprofit 501c3 organizations to develop and distribute materials about political candidates' positions on issues, in order to educate voters impartially and on a nonpartisan basis; meaning that it is free from party affiliation, bias, or designation. The IRS states that 501c3 organizations may conduct any range of activities to promote voter participation and educate voters so long as it is nonpartisan. But, 501c3 organizations are explicitly prohibited from supporting or opposing candidates for public office.

Some of the activities 501c3 nonprofits MAY perform: Conduct or promote voter registration; educate voters on the voting process; distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires, and **voter guides**; organize get-out-the-vote activities; encourage and help people to vote; educate the candidates on issues important to their organization; and continue to do issue advocacy during an election.

So, first and foremost: **Church Voter Guides** does NOT endorse or oppose any candidates for public office or any political party.

Second, all of our staff and volunteers are required to act in a nonpartisan manner when working for or representing the organization and the creation of the Voter Guide.

Third, we do not edit, revise, or editorialize candidate responses to our Questionnaire. We do not even correct typos. **Candidate answers are published verbatim**, ensuring that their responses accurately represent their positions and perspectives on these issues. We then simply share this information through the Voter Guide, and you decide whom you believe to be the best candidate.

To be fair and impartial, we reached out by email, text, and phone when determined necessary, to all registered candidates running for School Board throughout El Paso County and Woodland Park for their 2021 District Elections, inviting them to answer our Questionnaire. Candidate information is presented in alphabetical order by last name. If a Candidate did not respond at all, or did not choose to participate, or did not choose to respond to certain answers in the Questionnaire, then that is noted where applicable. If there were not enough candidates running for a specific school district for that district to conduct an election, then we did not produce a Voter Guide for that district. If in a specific school district none of the candidates running for election answered our Questionnaire, then we did not produce a Voter Guide for that district.

Join Our Growing Grassroots Coalition of Citizens, Churches/Nonprofit Organizations, and Media Partners Committed to Promoting the Voter Guide throughout Our Region

Let's get the word out!

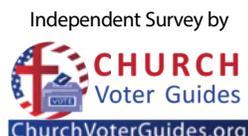
It's simple. Just share our website URL all around the Pikes Peak region:

www.ChurchVoterGuides.org

Tell your friends and neighbors. Post on social media. And ask your Pastors to promote it to your congregation (we'll even provide you/them with the announcement info and the PowerPoint promo slide, *'cause this is how we roll!*)

Please contact us for any reason, we'd love to colabor with you: **Info@ChurchVoterGuides.org**

The "Small Print": *The information contained in this document is being provided for informational purposes only. It was obtained directly from candidates and other sources, and we have done our best to convey it to you accurately, but nothing herein has been "fact checked". Utilize this Voter Guide at your own discretion. We take no responsibility for the factual nature of the content, or for publishing errors, etc. To the best of our knowledge, this Voter Guide is 501c3-compliant and officially nonpartisan, and thereby it does not support or oppose any candidate.*



District 11 Candidates

(in alphabetical order)



**Rebecca Acevedo
Kenderdine**



Sandra Bankes



Shawn Gullixson



John Gustafson



Al Loma



Lauren Nelson



Julie Ott



Chris Wallis



Jennifer Williamson

Independent Survey by





REBECCA ACEVEDO KENDERDINE

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	https://Teacher4D11sb.wixsite.com/my-site
Email Address:	Teacher4D11sb@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Retired D11 Teacher
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	20 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

As a retired school district 11 teacher, I believe not only teachers but also students should have representation from someone that has worked for CSSD11 for 14+ years. The development of all children should be of utmost importance to everyone. We as educators, community, parents should make it a common goal to make sure all children receive a well-balanced academic education to help them become productive citizens within our society. My experience has given me the opportunity to be a good role model for all of my students and I hope to carry that over into a board director position.

Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

My vision for the school district: a laser focus on ensuring that our students get the very best -- highly qualified teachers, advocacy for all stakeholders with students as our number one priority, and an ongoing, transparent dialogue between our school district and the community it supports.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

One of the biggest challenges in the district today is the shortage of staff. Proposing a solution for the shortage would be to offer higher wages and excellent benefit packages. Currently in Colorado we have student teachers completing their student teaching in many schools from within the district. This would be one way of recruiting highly qualified teachers who are able to experience daily district operations.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

Colorado continues to have the worst school funding situation in the country. School boards must do what they can to ensure each student receives the support they need. The state legislature has annually underfunded the school finance formula causing per pupil spending by nearly \$3,000 below the national average spending. School board members can add to the operating budget with limited mill levy overrides that increase local property taxes.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

Critical Race Theory is an academic concept. The main idea of CRT is that racism is a social construct—not just the product of individual bias or prejudice, but also something embedded in legal systems and policies. Due to the high influx of culturally diverse students within D11 I believe that all students should receive an education that provides culturally and diverse academic information for all races to learn about. I support and trust kids will make up their mind about the facts of the history of our country without a biased instruction.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

My position on comprehensive sex education, speaking from the standpoint of having a Physical Education Endorsement, is that Health Education is important for older students to learn about their social, psychological and physical development. I believe that parents should be able to talk to their students about any sex related topics.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parents play an important role in their students' education. It is important for parents to stay informed about what their children are learning and communicate with the teachers about any issues the students may experience while in school. It is the parent's decision to make on any topics related to sexual education that their children would be exposed to. I support any decisions parents make for their child to opt out of any topic related instruction.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

Covid-19 did have an undeniable impact on learning in 20-21. There was a big "learning loss" gap that showed on testing scores during the pandemic. Many students did online learning which instead of improving student success it lower testing scores. As someone with a low immune system I have concerns about receiving an experimental shot that I know not how it would affect my system. Everyone has the right to either accept or reject shots and mask. Children have immune systems that protect them.



SANDRA BANKES

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	Sandra-Bankes.com
Email Address:	Bankes4D11@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Retired Elementary Principal
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	40 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

My experience in both business and education provides me with a leadership style that encompasses process with outcome. I started in higher Ed in junior college and rose through the ranks to graduate from the University of Denver. Those experiences have enriched my practices and vision so I can guide the district in building strong programs with measurable outcomes. As a former principal and teacher I have experience in performance based goals for students and staff.

Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

The greatest impact on our future is providing our children with the skills, compassion, and vision to lead productive lives in adulthood. Professional development training for staff should be aligned with current best practices of the teaching of reading, writing, math, science, and intentionally tied to providing highly trained teachers for all students. The district's reputation for excellence and professional development opportunities should be a draw for both parents and highly trained staff.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

District 11 has seen a steady decline in student enrollment as parents are choosing other educational opportunities for their children. The academic achievement for all students has been in a steady decline driving, as parents become aware, a disconnect between what they want in a school for their children and what is being provided. What I hear from parents is they want the school to reflect the values taught at home, curriculum that centers on mastery in reading, writing, math, and science. It is the board's responsibility through the superintendent to focus on those content areas, recognize excellence and provide intentional instruction to remedy the gaps in learning.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

While the district may lobby at the state level and propose bond issues, it is the school board who prioritizes the distribution of such revenues to fund staff positions, professional development, programs, central office personnel, capital improvements. The per pupil funding is over \$8,000.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

CRT is a master's level exploration of a theory based on American history through the lens of slavery. CRT has no place in K-12 education

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

Sex ed in District 11 falls under Health. The district has agreed to allow our middle and high school students to participate in the 2021 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey. The letter home states: The survey will ask students about health topics including: exercise, diet, alcohol, tobacco, drug use, mental health, suicide, bullying, sexual behaviors, and how they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey also asks students about school-life, school safety, trusted adult relationships, and other things known to be connected with healthy choices. The specific questions ask: Are you transgender, have you had a sexual experience, etc. Sex education has no place in K-12 education.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parents are their children's first teachers. Teachers, principals, superintendents have been trained in teaching our students using best practices, knowing that children are in school for 12 years. It's parents who know their children best and longest. We know when parents are actively engaged in their children's education, children do better.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

My goal is to keep our kids in school. There is so much conflicting information about COVID-19 protocols that parents have to assess their tolerance for risk and make the best decision for their family.



SHAWN GULLIXSON

Candidate Information

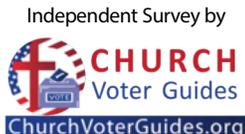
Campaign Website URL:	www.GullixsonforD11.com
Email Address:	GullixsonforD11@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Banker
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	29 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

I will continue to bring a blend of my personal experience as a D11 student, as well as my professional perspective as a community advocate and regional bank leader.

I graduated Mitchell High School, and my daughters are both D11 students. I understand the D11 experience as a student and a parent.

I also understand D11 through the lens of a businessman and community advocate. In my work leading a regional bank market, I see the role that D11 plays in building our future workforce and helping to maintain property values in a large area of our community. I am also an advocate for investment and accountability in our District, and therefore bring a strategic approach to our decisions.



Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” – MLK Jr. These words have formed the bedrock of how I envision the role of education in a student’s life, and in the life of our community.

I firmly believe that the vision and function of education in Colorado Springs is to produce students who are equipped to think critically about the world around them, and who constantly ask how they can make things better. Ultimately, the vision for education in Colorado Springs is much like the vision statement laid out for District 11 – to empower the whole student to profoundly impact the world.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

Our biggest challenge is effectively aligning the building blocks being put in place to reframe success for our students, their families, and our staff. Over the past few years, D11 has made significant strides in rekindling community partnerships; identifying and creating additional career and technical education opportunities; developing academic pathways for more personalized learning; and investing in professional development opportunities for teachers. We also recently adopted the first ever facilities master plan to help us strategically manage our physical assets.

As a result of so many significant changes, our challenge moving forward is to keep these opportunities in sync so that our students, families and staff truly benefit from the ‘rising of all boats’ that each effort aims to accomplish.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

School board members play an integral role in funding for the school district as we help to maintain the budget, remove barriers to utilizing additional funding opportunities, and support efforts to continue to invest in the financial sustainability and efficiency of our schools. As a banker, this has been an area that I have paid particular attention to with regards to how effectively we are managing our assets and investments, and how those are leading to stronger outcomes for the District.

My ongoing approach to per-pupil funding is to ensure that we are being as efficient in the use of our funds outside the classroom so that we can truly maximize funding inside the classroom.



CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

I have publicly stated in several settings that CRT will not and does not belong in our K-12 curriculum. It is an academic framework, the exploration of which is more appropriate for students in post-secondary institutions.

Pivoting to the issues that CRT attempts to provide a lens to, however, D11 has developed an equity policy that seeks to address racial and socio-economic challenges head on. We have implemented more personalized learning opportunities that enable us to support a student as a whole person, regardless of external identifiers. In short, we are doing our best to carry out Dr. King's dream that our students be treated solely according to the content of their character.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

I believe that sexual education in public schools should not be taught before middle school, and that the details of which should be transparent for parents to be able to decide to opt in or out.

I believe the primary focus of sexual education in public schools is to ensure that students understand how to create healthy and safe boundaries and situations for themselves.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

My deepest hope is for parents to be intimately involved in their student's education. From over five years of experience on the Board, I genuinely believe that parent involvement is one of the most critical factors to students' success.

I also believe additional opt-outs should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Overall, I believe in Dr. King's focus of education to equip students to think critically and inquisitively. If the opt-out is in pursuit of that goal, then I do not have objections.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

As a result of my experience as board president, bank president and father of two navigating 2020-2021, my top priority is to do what we can to keep our kids in school. The recent mask mandate was intended to, according to public health guidelines, improve the ability for more students to stay in school.

I do not support vaccine requirements; it is up to individuals to choose what is best for their health situation. And I hope that we can get back to a space in which masks are a choice. I will continue to do what I can to keep students and staff from spreading the virus, as well as maintaining the chance for students to stay in school.



JOHN GUSTAFSON

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	www.ElectJohnGustafson.com
Email Address:	Johnpepegus3@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Small Business Owner
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	Born here and lived here the past 7 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

If I'm elected I believe that my personal experience as a family man and father of two young children, both of whom are D11 kids, as well as my professional experience as a blue-collar small business owner who lives and works in this community, will benefit our school district by nature of my perspective, my passion, and the amount of dedication I am willing to give to make our district great for everybody's children.

Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

My vision for education in our community is one of high academic standards, a competent and professional teaching staff who are motivated and able to deliver high-quality scholastic resources to ALL of our students, and an inclusive congenial environment where children can grow, learn, and thrive in order to become the leaders of the next generation.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

The biggest problems facing our district are cultural and economic. We need to be honest about what they are and where they came from. We need honesty about their scope, severity, and possible pathways for actual and real resolution. Our schools are institutions specially crafted to address academic and scholastic challenges brought forth by the advent and evolution of our civilization; they are not economic institutions and they are not cultural institutions and as such are fundamentally incapable of directly addressing those cultural and economic challenges that confront our community. Other leaders are responsible for those challenges and they should rise to the occasion.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

School board members play an important part, not only in the disbursement and allocation of federal, state, and local funding, but also as mediators and communicators of their respective constituents vis-a-vie the social and political mandates that sometimes come attached with prodigious federal and state funding. Sometimes pushback is the most appropriate, and most honest, form of communication.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

CRT is, in my opinion, a pseudo-religious method for perceiving the world. It's been concocted by avowed atheists who, unwittingly, answer the unceasing call of the Great Spirit who lives within all our hearts by manifesting a novel form of social religion devoid of spirituality, awash in division and hate, and clothed in the finery of social justice and equity and therefore able to pass muster with decent people who are manipulated by media and ideologues. CRT should not be taught in schools. CRT will destroy the social fabric of our communities. CRT will dis-empower the very people it purports to help and leave our entire community unable to respond to the challenges of the future.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

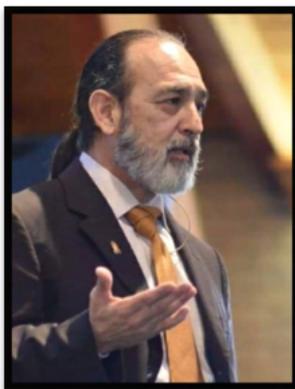
If comprehensive sexual education in our schools includes details of LGBTQ sexual relationships and if it somehow tries to 'normalize' a phenomena that is being experienced by adults in a very personal way as those adults deal with the past, present, and future trauma inflicted upon them by a disintegrating civilization than it should certainly NOT be in public schools. Not in kindergarten. Not in grade 12. Nowhere in between. That's not to say that people who live in the world shouldn't be talked about, uplifted, and celebrated. We just shouldn't glorify and glamourize the destructive nature of our disintegrating civilization and celebrate the degree to which it disorients life and degrades the human spirit.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parents play a very important role in student's education and parent voices need to be heard. If parents need to opt out of certain facets of their children's educational experience in order for them to stay in our district then they should be respected.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

I have many serious concerns about Covid-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and or quarantines. To begin with the possible vaccination requirements... I think it's crazy that at this point more people aren't talking about a global prohibition against gain of function research. It is a crime against humanity. It is also crazy that people aren't allowed to talk more about the long-term genetic implications inherent in jabbing novel molecules into our bodies on a regular basis. This approach will eventually degrade our bodies to the point where we are simply incapable of living as spiritual beings on a journey of evolution.



AL LOMA

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	www.ElectLoma.com
Email Address:	Arlomajr@liberty.edu
Occupation/Vocation:	Senior Pastor
Military Background:	Army Veteran
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	25 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

I am a former D11 School Board member. I have established 1 private online school, an Early Childhood Development center, and Charter School. I have an Ed.S in Educational Leadership, a Masters in Strategic Leadership, and a BS in Public Administration.

Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

90 to 100% reading and math proficiency for 3rd and 4th graders by 2024.



Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

Social engineering is of deep concern and must be removed from public education. An all hands on deck mentality to improve test scores will refocus our attention where it belongs.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

Board members must take a more active response to budget concerns. History proves that more money is not the solution. All money should follow the student. To include but not limited to title funds.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

Simply put CRT is racism by another name. CRT adds no value to public education. In fact, it clouds the minds of our young by creating a weaker class of children. CRT is divisive at its root.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

State law asks school boards to have sex education. But the local school board has the final say. I do not think it healthy for children to be taught sex or sexual orientation in public schools. If made available, parents should have to opt-in to this or any other type of controversial education.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parents are the sole arbiter of their child's education. School districts are in place to assist the parent. Parental opt out is important and respects the parent's God given authority.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

Yes. The science backed by several studies prove that masks do not work. Additionally, the science cannot prove the effectiveness nor the long term effects of the shot. As such, masks are useless, and mandates are political at best; at worst demonic. Moreover, Studies are just now revealing that mask damage a child's emotional growth.



LAUREN NELSON

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	www.LaurenNelsonD11.com
Email Address:	ElectLauren.Nelson@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Stay-at-Home Mom
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	24 total years (Born and raised, then 12 years away for college and career in other CO towns. Returned 6 years ago to raise family.)

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

Prior to being a stay-at-home mom and children’s Bible study teacher, I worked as a Food Scientist in Product Development for major food corporations. I worked with marketing, finance, regulatory, plant operations, suppliers and laboratory team members to create quality products within strict budget and timeline constraints. Project management and research oriented skills were necessary to launch products successfully into the market place. Similarly to my previous career the public school system has stakeholders (tax payers and parents), customers (parents) and consumers (students). The school board must focus on delivering a quality product – excellence in education for all students. I am committed to prioritizing academic growth within District 11 using the problem solving skills developed throughout my education and career.



Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

Students must master subjects for life-long success: reading, writing, math, civics and critical thinking skills. Currently less than 20% of D11 students are proficient in math in third to eighth grade. Less than 35% in English Language Arts. This must be corrected! My vision is that the grand majority of D11 students meet or exceed grade level expectations rather than the minority. Increasing academic learning must be the priority of the school district. As a member on the school board I will dedicate my time to helping the district improve the education for its students.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

The biggest problem is that current leadership is not focused on academic excellence for our students and instead focuses on social and political ideologies such as CRT. Time, funding and resources are being spent in areas that are not helping kids learn how to read, write and understand math. Student's education from District 11 is in a state of emergency but very little communication or efforts are being spent on this issue. The district must refocus on the crisis of our student's education. As a board member I will ask the hard questions. I will determine where time and money are being spent, and do the research to find solutions that will help students learn.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

As a school board member I want to send as much money as possible into the classrooms. Curriculum, management of the superintendent and budget are the responsibilities of the school board. Every taxpayer dollar must be spent wisely and with fiscal transparency. Federal funding does play a part in school districts but largely it comes from local and state levels. In El Paso County in 2020 school districts received 66% of property tax distribution (the remaining divided among the county, library district, fire, etc). I want to ensure this huge sum of money goes directly to the schools and into the classroom to school based staff, aids, teachers, principals – staff and resources that have a direct impact on students education.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

CRT is a worldview that sees society through a lens of oppressor versus oppressed. It's rooted in Marxism and is a philosophy that MUST NOT be taught in ANY public school. Identity politics based on the color of your skin, you are either oppressed or an oppressor, is NOT the education I received when going through D11 schools. This concept was introduced decades ago in Universities and is now being introduced in K-12 schools across the U.S. CRT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO GRAB HOLD IN THE K-12 SCHOOLS. Teaching this ideology will bring about the destruction of our country, driving us towards socialism and away from personal liberty, free thinking, and personal responsibility.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

Any school that teaches sex education must allow curriculum to be approved by each child's parent before being taught to the children. The education should be biology/anatomy based and leave the rest up to the parents. Discussion of Comprehensive Sex education and Transgender issues do not belong in public schools K-12. Details other than anatomy/biology are not to be taught by anyone other than parents because it is not the role of the government to determine what is best for a child, it's the parent's. Public education must not teach anything that parents could find in conflict with their moral or religious beliefs.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parents are a child's first teacher and must be trusted to make the best choice for their student's education. Parent's must be empowered to make decisions regarding all aspects of their children's education. A parent knows the child better than anyone and is best able to determine if curriculum is appropriate, beneficial to the child's education and well being. This could range any number of subjects that a parent may deem the content more appropriate to be taught at an older age and therefore must be granted the ability to opt out.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

Covid can be a serious illness for some of the population. The decision to vaccinate children must be made by the parents. It is not for the school or government to dictate whether a child receives a vaccine. The parents know what is best for their child, no one else. Parents are to guide the decisions for their student, this includes older students as well, minors of any age. I am concerned that mask mandates and quarantines are detrimental to children. I believe it should be parent choice of whether students wear masks to school. A balanced view of Covid precautions as well as overall student well being must be accounted for.



JULIE OTT

Candidate Information

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Occupation/Vocation:	Community Volunteer
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	26 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

I currently serve on the District 11 Board of Education as Vice-President and previously served as Treasurer. I am an active, invested board member; I served on the District’s Strategic Plan Core Planning Team and the Facilities Master Plan Committee, and currently serve as the board’s delegate to the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) and on a CASB legislative committee. A parent of two D11 graduates, I served in parent organizations including Coronado High School’s PTA and School Accountability Committee. I helped found a successful charter school in 2010 and served on its board as secretary and board president. I also volunteer with the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan non-profit, empowering and educating voters.



Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

Education should engage and empower all students to learn to the best of their abilities and graduate as well-rounded individuals ready to succeed in life, engage in their communities, and make a difference in the world. Students should have a variety of academic options and succeed with the support of enthusiastic, well-qualified teachers, support staff, principals and administrators who collaborate with engaged and supportive families and community members, that create a joyful learning experience leading to a love of lifelong learning.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

Significant problems include declining enrollment, low achievement on standardized tests, and aging buildings. The biggest problem facing the district at the moment is probably a staffing shortage. From the challenge of having enough bus drivers to take children to school, to having enough educators to teach, or having kitchen staff to feed students meals, staff is in short supply. We should create an environment where D11 is the best workplace in the region by building a collaborative and empowered culture of trust and mutual responsibility with competitive pay for all staff.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

School board members are responsible for allocating funding within their district through the budget they adopt each year. They may also advocate for additional funding with federal and state governments and/or ask local voters for additional funds to support educational efforts or infrastructure. My funding priorities are to support students' academic, social and emotional needs, as well as their safety and security, so that they can be successful; that does require thoughtfully adjusting priorities from time to time, depending on the needs. We must also meet our legal requirements as mandated by federal and state government.

CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

My understanding of CRT is that it is an analytical tool primarily used in university-level courses with the goal of helping university students analyze the impact of historical and present-day racism, and to better understand system inequities.

CRT is not part of the kindergarten through 12th grade Colorado Academic Standards and it is not used in our District 11 schools. I don't expect that to change and, since it is a graduate level course, I don't think it needs to change.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

I support age appropriate, research-based comprehensive sex education for all students so that they can make informed and healthy decisions about sex, sexuality and relationships.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parental involvement in their child's education has many benefits, including better achievement, better attendance, and higher engagement levels in school. District 11 has a board policy allowing an opt-out if religious or personal beliefs are contrary to content or a class or particular activity and I have no objections to it.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

My goal is to keep students safe and in school for an in-person education. Taking care to protect ourselves and others from the virus, through vaccination and masking, helps reduce quarantines for students and staff and thus keeps students learning in person in a classroom.



CHRIS WALLIS

Candidate Information

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Occupation/Vocation:	Logistics Director
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	9 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

I'm a Colorado native and a proud father to a D11 student. I've been honored to serve on the Board for the past year and I'm proud to have the support of our teachers. Prior to my service on the board, I was active on the Parent Teacher Association and School Accountability Committee at my child's school. I've spent over 15 years leading teams in the results-oriented world of transportation and warehouse logistics. I currently serve as Logistics Director for our local food bank. I have a track record of delivering sustained results and I look forward to doing so on the school board.

Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

Like many other proud D11 parents, I believe we deliver high achievement by meeting the unique needs of each student. It is essential that we provide our students and teachers with the tools they need to achieve excellence. District 11 is currently developing an Academic Master plan that will offer parents broad educational options to choose from while still delivering a high-quality base curriculum. Among these options are a robust new investment in our award-winning Career and Technical Education programming and new magnet programs that will raise the bar for excellence in the region.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

For too long, public education has sought to deliver a one-size-fits all education for students while undervaluing the contributions of educators. Students thrive when they have access to educational experiences that are personalized to them, and teachers thrive when they are valued and supported. As school board director, I will support innovations that increase educational options for students through aligned magnet program pathways and improve neighborhood schools regardless of zip code. I will support policies and practices that reflect the value of the important work that our educators engage in daily.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

Colorado ranks near the bottom of states for funding of public education. It is important to find new and innovative ways to pursue funding education while at the same time advocating for legislative support for our underfunded schools. Thanks to the support of our voters last November, District 11 successfully removed some government restrictions on funding. We therefore can pursue private grant funding in a way that we have not been able to in the past. We must aggressively pursue this private funding and continue to advocate for additional support at the state level.



CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

Critical Race Theory is not taught in District 11. I would not support its adoption within the District 11 curriculum. We must fearlessly examine the whole of American history for opportunities for pride while also engaging in self-reflection that allows us to recognize where we have fallen short. District 11 should ensure we deliver a civics curriculum that is honest and representative of many historical perspectives. This will best prepare our students to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

I support age-appropriate sex education for all students that is grounded in scientific facts and discusses the definition of consent regardless of relationship dynamics. As a part of this curriculum, it should be made clear that abstinence is the only method of birth control that is 100% effective.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

Parent involvement is an essential component in public education. Schools must continually work to engage the families in our community to support the learning experience. Parents always have the option to excuse their student from a particular unit of learning.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

As a parent, I saw firsthand the impact that a remote learning environment had on my child. Though our teachers worked tirelessly last year to mitigate the impact, an improvised remote learning environment is not ideal for students. We know that our students are challenged with learning loss because of the unpredictable realities of the last school year. We also know that the biggest impact was felt by those students already struggling to achieve. This year, it is critical that we maintain in-person learning environments that are safe, supportive, and ambitious.



JENNIFER WILLIAMSON

Candidate Information

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Occupation/Vocation:	Pastor
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	5 years

Experience: If you are elected, what experience (personal, professional, other) do you bring that will benefit your school district?

I'm the parent of two D11 students and a youth pastor to area teens. I was Audubon's PTA President for two years and am now the School Accountability Committee chairperson. As a parent of young children, I'm deeply invested in D11's future. Through my involvement, I have gotten to know the teachers and staff, and what they need to succeed. As a youth pastor I understand the varied experiences, frustrations, and hopes of teens. In my fifteen years as a pastor I have learned how to listen, care for, and lead people.



Vision: What is your vision for education in our community?

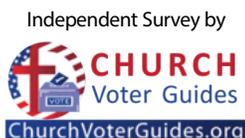
In all I do, I strive to live out my calling: “love God, love your neighbor.” If I am not doing everything I can to ensure an excellent education and safe environment for all students in this city then I’m not loving my neighbor. My vision is a school district where excellent instruction is the focus and the needs of all students are met. Excellent instruction means supporting what works, like the Career and Technical Education program — making sure it is properly resourced to continue to grow and increase graduation rates. Meeting the needs of all students means offering strong programs for areas like gifted and talented and special education, as well as developing new pathways for student success.

Biggest Problem/Solution: What is the biggest problem facing your school district? What is your plan to address it?

When making the decision to run for school board I met with teachers, students, parents, and community members. I asked them what they believe is the biggest strength and the biggest weakness of D11. A repeated concern was the need for collaboration; teachers, students and parents want to feel heard and valued. This happens by listening, engaging in meaningful conversation before decisions are made, and including as many people as possible in the decision-making process. The result will be better-equipped teachers, valued students and invested parents all working toward well-educated students and proven results.

Budget/Financial Role: What role do school board members play regarding the federal, state, and local funding for your school district? What is the per-pupil funding structure of your school district and would you seek to reprioritize it? If so, how?

School Board members can align resources to fit the needs of the schools. They can advocate for increased funding and also provide transparency in spending. The priority in spending should always be to stay close to the student. This means that the highest allocation of resources should be to the things that directly impact the student like teacher pay, classroom aides, and special education services.



CRT: What is your definition of CRT (Critical Race Theory)? Do you support its teaching in your school district? Why or why not?

My understanding of CRT is that it is, primarily, a theoretical approach taught at the graduate level, and is not meant for K-12 education. But this is a term that I have heard many people use to mean different things. To me, the primary goal should be to ensure students are taught history as it actually happened, based on the facts of our past. I do not believe that shame has a place in the classroom, nor should anyone be viewed as a victim or oppressor. It's up to all of us -- in the school and out -- to ensure that all are valued, no matter the color of our skin.

Sex Ed: Do you support comprehensive sexual education, including details of LGBTQ sexual relationships, being taught in public schools K-12? Why or why not?

The district follows HB19-1032 and the guidelines from the state regarding sexual education with the option for parents to opt out. I believe we should have opportunities for our children to learn about their bodies and that parents should have the choice if they prefer this to be taught at home.

Parental Role: What role do you believe parents play in a student's education? Do you support parental opt-out options for more than just sexuality education? If so, for what?

I have been very intentional about getting involved in my children's education (i.e. volunteering at the school and staying informed). I believe that, as much as possible, parents should be involved in their kids' schools, because parental involvement is the key to a child's academic success. Schools need to find ways to engage parents as partners in education. Parents are the primary educators of their children and should have decision-making power.

COVID-19 Protocols: Do you have concerns about COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and/or quarantines? If so, what are they?

My children were very ready to be done with online school last year, they love being in person with their classmates and teachers. Every parent I have talked to said their kids feel the same way. The isolation of online learning took a toll on the teens I serve as a youth pastor and the learning gaps are evident from testing. Given the current quarantine regulations (if there is a positive case but everyone is masked then the exposed students and teachers do not need to quarantine) I understand the decision on masking for now. This has meant a reduction in unnecessary quarantines and more students able to stay in person for school.



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