

Pikes Peak Region 2021 School Board Elections Voter Guide

D2 - Harrison

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 2 - Harrison

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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 2 Candidates

(in alphabetical order)



Janice "JJ" Frazier



Keesha Lewis

**Candidate
Chose
Not
to
Participate**

Kimieko Lei Otamura



Joyce Salazar



Michelle Wills-Hill



JANICE "JJ" FRAZIER

Candidate Information

Email Address:	jjfrazier58@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Retired, Public Education
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	30+ years

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

I provided administrative support to 6 superintendents of schools and numerous Boards of Education in 3 school districts for 40 years. I hold an MBA in Small Business Operations and Entrepreneurship and a BS in Management from Colorado Technical University (CTU). As Chair of the Board of Directors, I have led the Urbanites Leading the Pikes Peak Region, formerly known as the Urban League of the Pikes Peak Region, since 2012. Currently, I serve as Chair of the Law Enforcement Transparency and Accountability Commission in Colorado Springs. My experience in urban, suburban, and inner-city school districts, along with strong relationships I have established with local entities provide opportunities for me to promote the wonderful things that are happening in Harrison.

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

My vision is that HSD2 becomes THE school district of CHOICE in Colorado Springs, not only for our current families, but for newly arriving families. After all, the 80906 and 80916 zip codes in HSD2 boundaries were ranked No. 1 in the nation for home sales by Realtor.com. This motivates me to promote the great programs and services offered to ALL students in HSD2 boundaries and beyond.

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

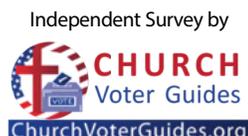
Public perception/lack of corporate investment. Due to the high percentage of students of color in Harrison School District 2, we either get a bad rap or are overlooked. Our school district has excellent programs and services, outstanding schools, and good test scores. However, because we're located in the southeast, we don't receive the recognition we deserve because of public perception. I envision HSD2 becoming THE school district of CHOICE in Colorado Springs. I will work hard to promote the great things happening in our school district. In addition, I would hope that local corporations will invest in our schools.

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?

The Harrison School District 2 Board of Education governs coherently. The Superintendent develops and maintains a multiyear financial plan that is directly related to the Board's Results priorities and Operational Expectations goals and that avoids long-term fiscal jeopardy to school district. (Quinn, R., Dawson, L., Good Governance is a Choice, 2019) The per pupil funding ratio is \$7084.

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

The Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) do not address Critical Race Theory. It does, however, address Culturally Responsive Teaching. That said, the Colorado Department of Education nor the CRS have an established curriculum for Critical Race Theory, and HSD2 does not teach it. However, I feel when history is taught to our students, it must be honest and factual.



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 do support comprehensive sexual education, simply because our world is forever changing. We must prepare our children for exposure to those persons who are not like them. Students are exploring their sexuality at younger ages and are reluctant to share what they are experiencing. We must provide support to prepare them for their life's journey.

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?

A student's initial education is taught by his/her parents. However, there are many components to sex education. If a parent feels they have the knowledge and expertise to prepare their student in all areas of sexual education, then they can opt-out of the class offerings.

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

I trust the Superintendent and her Advisory Council to follow the science and the advice of healthcare experts to assure the safety and security of our students, staff, and stakeholders in the school district.



KEESHA MARIE LEWIS

Candidate Information

Email Address:	LewisKeesha1987@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Owner Operator
Military Background:	Father Military
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	34 years

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

Formally as a Human Server Specialist, serving the communities. I advocated for an array of clients in need of assistance, benefits and social services. In addition, to this my family and I gave back to our community by volunteering at the Marian House Soup Kitchen, where we served the homeless and connected with our community in a different way. The Care and Share Food Bank an organization where I sourced healthy food items that meet nutritional guidelines provided for schools and families. As a VIP (Very Involved Parent) for seven years now, I was able to provide a helping hand with field trips, and school funding. Providing a support system for students and schools within our community.

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

My vision is to prepare our students for a rapidly changing world by bringing awareness to the global perspective. Consisting of respect, honesty, loyalty, perseverance and compassion the core values within the school district. Focusing on increasing the graduation rates, grants, scholarships, and test scores within our district. – Innovating and connecting student passions to student learning. Providing our educators with the essentials to educate new generations to come. I want to be the voice of each, and every school held within Harrison District Two to fulfill our purpose as a community.

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

A challenge Harrison District Two has encountered is the quality of education. The quality of education has been affected by COVID, and lack of resources. Limiting the ability for students to achieve various learning and extra curricula activities. To overcome this challenge, I would identify the problem within our community and place curriculum building in the hands of our community. I know what our district can deliver and achieve. So, let us make a difference together.

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?

All school board members are accountable for establishing the vision and goals for the public and charter schools within the district. Setting the standards for school performances in the success of the students. The aggregate current expenditures of all local educational agencies funding structure of the school district are currently making great progress, which I would love to be apart of. I would seek to reprioritize per-pupil funding by ensuring that the students receive updated technology, and school supplies within budget.

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

The Critical Race Theory is a way of thinking and teaching about America's past and present to our youth. By teaching CRT within our school district, we will be expanding scholars and students' knowledge on how the world developed. The CRT should be taught in a certain context based on the age of the students. Shining a light, on a part of the world that has not yet been discussed.

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 encourage to create a support system that educates youth from grades 6-12th on -comprehensive sexual -education with limited information to inform youth on sexually transmitted diseases. Gaining student awareness for the future as a helping hand for parents to lead their children down the right path.

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?

As a very involved parent within my children's lives I understand the impact we have on our children. Parent involvement with a student's education allows students to reach their full potential and academics and extra curriculums. By educating parents on how to educate their children we will create a better world.

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

I agree with vaccinations and mask mandates I would like all children to return to school/ homeschool. Let's keep everyone safe and keep the schools open.

KIMIEKO LEI OTMURA

Candidate Chose Not to Participate

Candidate Email Address: msdocotamura@gmail.com



JOYCE SALAZAR

Candidate Information

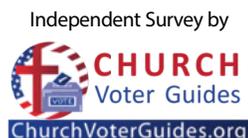
Campaign Website URL:	https://www.facebook.com/JoyceSalazarD2
Email Address:	JSalazarHSD22021@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Community Outreach Coordinator
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	47 years

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

I am passionate about helping people achieve their best selves and live their best lives which begins with equitable and quality education.

While I have many strengths in terms of philanthropy and civic engagement, my greatest strength is my ability to relate to the people in this district. I'm native to southeast Colorado Springs and have a profound amount of empathy and respect for the residents in this area.

The qualifications that I will bring to the board include 20 years of planning, 10 years of community organizing and partnership formation as well as a strong educational emphasis in social work, specializing in trauma informed care.



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

My vision for District 2 is that our youth will be adequately equip to accomplish their goals after high school, which includes, but is not limited to, navigating college and scholarship processes, understanding their civic responsibilities, and learning coping skills needed to push through cultural differences and life-challenges.

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

In my professional opinion, the top two issues in District 2 are early childhood literacy and parental involvement. I will help to improve childhood literacy by understanding the current statics and creating goals for development through identifying the challenges, and creating opportunities to improve outcomes. Additionally, understanding parental issues that occur from living in a marginalized community, and addressing those inequities, will hopefully increase parental involvement.

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?

Each year Harrison School District Two prepares a budget plan with the focus of utilizing available resources to best support educational success. The budget encompasses instruction at each school, transportation, food services, maintenance, administration and more. The District follows a multi-step budget development process that involves receiving input on values and priorities from staff, parents and community members. District leadership then prepares a budget plan that balances the priorities of the community with federal, state and local regulations; desired academic outcomes; student safety and fiscal responsibility (Financial Plan & Budget, Harrison School D2 2021-2022). It's my understanding that the per-pupil funding structure is \$9,148/ pupil. To determine if re- prioritization is needed, school board membership is critical to analyze current structures.

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

We have no curriculum because the Colorado department of education has not mandated therefore technically no school has it. However, I am very interest to learn more and act on community concerns.

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?

Parents or caregivers should play the primary role in teaching their children about sex. However, sex education workshops should be available for parents or caregivers, and limited class time for students to help families understand the risks associated with having unprotected sex.

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 or caregivers play a huge role in their children's education, and parents or caregivers should have the right to opt-out of activities based on their family values.

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

COVID-19 vaccination requirements, mask mandates, and quarantines are evolving, and I am concerned about understanding the community's needs regarding these issues.



MICHELLE WILLS-HILL

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	https://www.MichelleWillsHillforHSD2.com
Email Address:	mwh4hsd2boe@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Environmental Specialist
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	18 years

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

I am a community member and a proud parent of a daughter who attended and graduated from schools in the Harrison School District. My highest priority was staying involved with her educational experience. A strong proponent of the public education system, my efforts to stay an engaged parent realized the benefits of establishing collaborative relationships with teachers and administrative staff. My interests included participation in various school events and involvement in programs like the Youth Transformation Center Restorative Justice Program as a Parent Volunteer and a VIP Coordinator at Harrison High School. I currently serve as a community member on the Harrison School District Two Bond Oversight Committee.

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

My vision is in alignment with the Harrison School District's mission to graduate college and career ready students and supporting core beliefs that all students are capable of excellence, that we can maximize student success, and that the well-being of our students, staff, and families and community are worthy of these investments. I envision a community that invests more in the academic experiences through civic engagements and established partnerships. I envision a community that recognizes and celebrates the accomplishments of our scholars and embraces the diversity each brings to the table for the continued success and growth of our great community. Education is paramount for the continued success of this great district and the community we serve.

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

One of the biggest problems is community reputation due to poor perceptions continually media headlined. As a Board Member I will work to ensure support through local community engagement and investments and continue to work with local agencies and support services to ensure our students are provided access to the best of opportunities to reach the District's Mission of to graduate college and career ready students. As far as public perception, I will also continue the efforts to educate the public. I do not believe the public realizes the amazing things happening here and how talented our students are. I would champion those great things happening through media publications, community engagement opportunities, and other strategies to ensure our achievements always shine.

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?

The projected per pupil revenue for 2021-2022 is projected to be \$8990.80 with the statewide average at \$16,231. It is essential that the integrity of funding be maintained. Board members must stay informed of funding opportunities as well as changes in legislation that have potential impacts on the distribution of funding. A good board member will be supportive and champion the cause to ensure all funding opportunities are pursued to the highest degree possible, realizing that one of the biggest challenges for the Harrison School District is to ensure equitable educational opportunities are provided. Maintaining coherent governance will ensure that policies regarding expenditures and oversight of finances are maintained with the highest care given to transparency.

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 a body of legal scholarship and an academic movement of US civil-rights scholars and activists who seek to critically examine the intersection of race and US law and to challenge mainstream American liberal approaches to racial justice. It is really most appropriately a curriculum for higher education and not something to be taught in elementary, middle or high school academics. In the interests of the subject matter it should be noted that there is no approved curriculum by the Colorado Board of Education, and should therefore not be taught in public education in Colorado. I do believe that history should be taught as accurately as possible, and that should be the focus, and not CRT.

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 education has been taught with parental permission under the umbrella of health starting in middle school. I believe that first and foremost that the decision of the amount of educating is a part of the level of involvement and permission that should ultimately be given by the parent, and not solely by the school.

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 believe that parental engagement is essential to the success of the student. In the age of technology that we are in, the options for engagement have significantly increased, making it more possible to stay engaged. If the engagement with staff, and teachers is a parental priority and right, then decisions to opt-in or out are then based upon informed decisions, and I do support and respect parental input.

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

My concerns with COVID-19 protocols are related to the impacts to in-class learning. Performance data in K-12 schools has demonstrated that student academic growth and achievement have been greatly impacted as a result of pandemic consequences for the 2020-2021 school year. It is my opinion that vaccination decisions are ultimately family choices. However, in absence of vaccinations, I support mask wearing and whatever other protocols are necessary to maintain the in-class learning experience. Not all children can thrive in an online learning environment. Ultimately, some decisions regarding these requirements are out of the hands of the districts and are up to local and state health officials and I will support their prevailing governance.

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