

Pikes Peak Region 2021 School Board Elections Voter Guide

D49 - Falcon

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](https://www.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](https://www.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 49 - Falcon

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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!

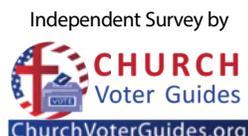
It's simple. Just share our website URL all around the Pikes Peak region:

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 49 Candidates

(in district and alphabetical order)

D 1



Dave Cruson



Jamilynn D'Avola



Fadil Lee

D 4



Tammy Harold



Ivy Liu

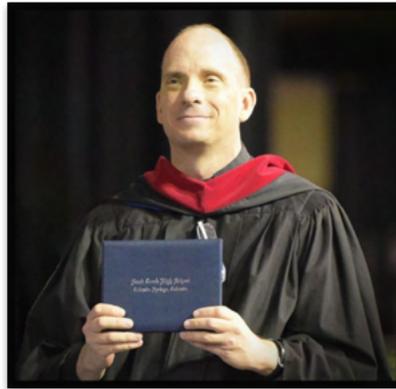
D 5



Elmer Harris



Lori Thompson



DAVE CRUSON

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	Dave4D49.com
Email Address:	Dave@Dave4D49.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Self-Employed, Part-time Pastor
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 have served as a volunteer in D49 schools and throughout D49 for over 9 years, including the past four and a half on the Board of Education. In my director district, I am the only candidate with considerable time as a volunteer in D49. I am the only current board member with children in D49 schools. The decisions I make as a board member affect not only my children, but all students. As a pastor, I have taught Christian Education to all ages for over 23 years. Both of my parents were public school teachers. Having watched their commitment and dedication to their students connects me to our staff.



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

My vision is multi-faceted. Student engagement is key. A part of that is most certainly student achievement, yet equally is the social emotional needs of our students. Our teachers and leaders are doing everything they can to create an environment of positive learning for all students. Another aspect is how we attract and retain high quality teachers and staff through compensation, benefits, and professional development. We need to address how we fully compensate these professionals and then do so. Another part is how we create a culture and environment of learning that is attuned to the whole student.

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

Growth, while maintaining our identity as the Best Choice to Learn, Work, & Lead. I was honored to be a co-chair of the Yes On 3B! campaign in 2016 that our voters trusted us to refresh and refurbish our existing schools, including charter schools, provide additional funds to our workforce for them to decide how to use it, enhance safety and security in our schools, and to build 2 new elementary schools (Bennett Ranch & Inspiration View) and a new middle school (in process). That vision and foresight has prepared us responsibly and transparently to be proactive in planning for the growth of D49. I want to continue to build on that trust from the community.

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 are advocates for not only their own school district, but also for the common good of all students in Colorado. From the beginning of my time on D49's board, I have been connected to our district's business office. I have been learning how Colorado's funding of education is not where it should be. I wholeheartedly support the work of Colorado's interim budget committee in working to make state education dollars be more equalized. State-wide, two solutions are a uniform mill rate and an override equalization formula. The D49 community continues to trust us, through transparency and clear goals, with how we spend local tax dollars.

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

My definition of Critical Race Theory is an academic notion that race is a social concept, where in racism is seen as rooted in our culture and our government to minimize the contributions of minorities with blame resting on the majority. CRT has not been, and will not be, taught in our district. If it had been or even started to, our local context, especially our school leaders, would have noticed. Engaging in critical thinking, while encouraging all students to succeed, is the goal of educators.

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/guardians are fully able to, and should, teach their children their own family values regarding sex education, especially if it differs from society. The conflict comes when one imposes their understanding of sex education upon another as superior. That is where the teaching of critical thinking is the most valuable part of education. I am satisfied in how sex education is currently being taught under state standards and expectations.

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/guardians are always the primary educators in a child's life. Public schools provide additional ways to support, and yes, sometimes challenge, a parent's teaching. The goal is always a child's understanding of learning in order to be a knowledgeable citizen.

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

As a person of faith and a leader of a faith community, I see public health as similar to public education. How do we follow Christ's command to "love your neighbor as yourself?" We want what is best for all people, to have life and to have it more abundantly.



JAMILYN D'AVOLA

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	JamilynnDAvola.com
Email Address:	Jamilynn@JamilynnDAvola.com
Occupation/Vocation:	5th Grade Teacher
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?

I am a mother, a teacher of 13 years, and a conservative. I understand the importance of choosing the right curriculum with the best outcomes. We need to implement research-validated curriculum and teaching practices, support teachers with trainings, and come alongside them with side-by-side coaching. I also train staff in professionalism, content specific curriculum, and data analysis and collection. I have an incredible understanding of what makes a school a great school: a supportive administration who encourages feedback from the staff, collaboration between grade levels across the school, a positive school culture, and coaching. I am a mom who wants the best education for her daughter and a teacher who desires to give every student the same opportunity for success.

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

My vision is to make sure all students in District 49 great a quality education that prepares them for the future. Every student needs to feel valued and pushed to be the best that they can be. I want our schools to be places where parents can confidently send their students knowing that they will receive an exceptional education and not be exposed to things that would go against their family values. I will make sure parents can exercise their rights to view all the curriculum and express their concerns about its contents. Parents know what is best for their kids so we should be a district that let's parents choose where their children go to school.

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

The Colorado Report Card for 2019 showed that only 48% of our 3rd-6th graders were proficient in ELA and only 34% were proficient in Math. This is unacceptable. As a teacher, one thing I know is that all students are individuals of potential and promise, and it is the teacher's job to cultivate their love of learning and to prove to them that they can be successful. It is the role of the board, administration, and teachers to implement research-validated curriculum and teaching practices in every classroom to make sure every student has mastered the basics of reading, writing, and math. Our schools must shift away from a "social justice" agenda and return to leading the world in academic excellence.

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 role of the school board is to review the budget and make sure funding is allocated appropriately. If the budget does not reflect what is best for students and what parents want for their children, then it should not be in the budget. Currently, the per pupil revenue is \$9,676 in our district. I would seek to reprioritize the budget because currently our teachers and paraprofessionals are underpaid. Effective teachers and paraprofessionals must receive competitive pay for the countless hours, blood, sweat, and tears that they pour into their calling every day because they are directly impacting the students. We should not, however, be spending money on curriculum, trainings, and programs that distract from the goal of learning.

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 Marxist ideology that has been around since before the 1970s. “Critical Race Theory” is based on the idea that everything in society must be view through the lens of race, and that our county is “systemically racist.” My question is how can a country that is “systemically racist” have leaders of all skin colors and cultures in all levels of business, politics, and society all across this great land? CRT seeks to further DIVIDE our nation, not heal it, by categorizing people into groups of “oppressors” and “oppressed.” People should be not be defined by their race, backgrounds, or circumstances. This victimization of certain groups of people has no place in our public schools.

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 is a sensitive subject that should be taught by caring parents and only when they determine the appropriate setting and timing. It should NOT be taught at the elementary school level. If Sex Education is offered in middle or high school, parents should Opt IN their child and only after they have had a chance to review the curriculum. Comprehensive Sex Education which includes LGBTQ+ books and curriculum etc. should NOT be in the classroom or in school libraries. For example, children’s books about being transgendered should not be read in classrooms as it would go against many families’ religion, values, and beliefs. It is immoral and will only bring further destruction to our society.

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 should have full direction of their children’s education and choose what, how, when, and where their children learn. Parents should have full access to the curriculum and be able to voice their concerns over anything they feel is inappropriate. Parents are the experts of their children, not the teachers, not the schools, not the government. I believe schools should give primary deference to the will of the parents, whenever it is fiscally possible and does not disturb the rights of other students to receive a quality education. Parents should be provided with opt-out options for anything that would go against their family values. For example, if literature books contain sensitive topics, parents should be able to opt-out their children.

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

Masks and vaccines should not be mandated and is a matter of personal choice. Parents have the right to choose what is best for the health of their families. When it comes to quarantining, I believe that only the child who is sick should be kept home regardless of whether other students were wearing masks. We need to stop quarantining healthy students as it negatively impacts their academic achievement and their mental health. Yes, COVID is very real and has affected many people including myself, however we have to weigh the negative consequences of quarantines and masks along with the effects of the virus itself. We cannot live in fear so much that we are unable to live our lives.



FADIL LEE

Candidate Information

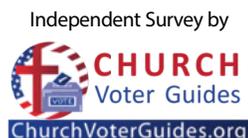
Campaign Website URL:	http://FriendsforFadil.com
Email Address:	FriendsforFadil@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Law Enforcement Officer
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	3 years

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

The current D49 School Board has lost its focus of ensuring that D49 is the best place to learn, work and lead and is being distracted by hot-button political topics. I will exercise my leadership and my experience of working with various groups to steer the board back to its essential mission of educating students.

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

My vision for academic excellence in D49 includes a robust civics education, vocational skills training, college preparatory classes, and a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program. I also advocate for demanding rigorous, challenging, and redeeming educational standards...and their application.



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

I am concerned with recruiting and retaining good teachers (and paraprofessionals), as well as improving student achievement and testing standards. Quite possibly I believe we have to consider a Mill Levy Override in order to address disparate funding. I will work with the administration, current board members, faculty and community stakeholders to develop a strategy in order to hire and retain more faculty and 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 knowing where the revenue is coming from to provide for the resources that the district needs. I believe it is the Boards responsibility to explore any and all possible future revenue. I believe the 2021-22 D49 budget sets aside approximately \$8k per-pupil while CO spends approximately \$11k per-pupil. We are not even at the state level. I believe we have to propose a modest Mill Levy Override to the electorate.

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

I am not a Social Scientist. From what I know CRT is a body of legal scholarship and has been taught mainly in post-secondary education. I don't think CRT needs to be taught in D49 at the primary, middle or secondary school level.

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?

As a churchgoing Christian (and parent) I would prefer to see an abstinence-only sexual education curriculum taught in public schools K-12.

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 agree with the idea that parents are best positioned to select the school or educational services that best meet the needs of their children. I believe parents have the best handle on what their children need and require to be productive and successful. Generally speaking I support flexibility, autonomy, choice, unrestricted ability and freedom. On a case per case basis, I am curious to know what certain local district or board policies need to be waived or opted out of.

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

No I do not.



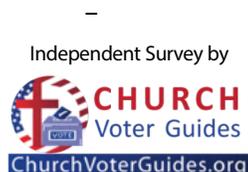
TAMMY HAROLD

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	tammy4d49.com
Email Address:	tammy4d49@gmail.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Accountant Small Business Owner
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	42 years (less one in Arizona)

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

School boards are the essence of our democracy with local control overseeing the education of our children. The electorate should have options and having spent 12 years volunteering in our schools and 8 years elected to the school board, I feel I can be a voice for students and parents. My track record of being open minded to different perspectives, responsive to community input, a good steward of public funds, supporting parent choice, and increasing student achievement have prepared me for the challenges facing our district. I have a wealth of historical experience and I am prepared to continue to listen, learn and work to improve D49 and District 4 to be the best it can be.



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

Our students need to be good decision makers, problem solvers, excellent communicators and critical thinkers along with the basic knowledge of math, reading, science and technology. Parental choice and engagement in partnership with schools is essential to student achievement. With high quality traditional, technical, charter, online, and homeschool options to prepare students to be successful graduates and adults. All aspects of the community working together toward a positive educational environment for successful students would be my vision.

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

After this last year, supporting students and staff to make up any lost learning to increase achievement is a major priority. Our staff and students are on the right path and they have already made significant gains. Shortage of teachers, paraprofessionals, and various support staff is harming student's learning. Passing our Mill Levy Override is essential to attracting and retaining teachers and essential staff to bridge the compensation disparity of teachers between D49 and surrounding districts. The MLO ballot measure will be a step in providing funds to retain and attract high quality teachers. While no one wants to pay more taxes, passing the MLO is a necessary investment in our kid's future education.

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 charged with setting policy and adopting the budget. By being transparent with policies and priorities, the board shows good fiduciary responsibility of taxpayers money. Per-pupil funding follows the student in D49. While a portion is allocated to administrative and operational expenditure, the schools and zones have the autonomy to budget their funds as best meets the needs of their students. Each school has a School Accountability Committee that advises on their budget and priorities. This funding structure has annual reviews with the board, schools and SACs and is working well so I would not change it at this time.

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 one of the most polarizing issues in our schools. CRT is an academic concept taught in university sociology and law schools based on the idea that racism is a social construct embedded in our lives, including legal systems. Teachers in D49 do not teach CRT and is banned. What is taught in D49 is US history including slavery and the Civil War, Japanese internment camps during World War II, women's voting and civil rights. Along with our rich history of democracy, freedom of religion, US Constitution and Bill of Rights. While some of our history is uncomfortable, history is taught so we can learn from it, allowing us to understand and reflect on our progress.

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?

Colorado does not require sex education to be taught in public schools. Local control allows schools to choose the curriculum to teach comprehensive and medically accurate sex education that includes the needs of all students. Charter schools can seek a waiver from the state's education laws. If a district chooses to teach sex education, LGBTQ along with the meaning of consent, pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted diseases are required to be included. Parents have the right to review the lessons and opt-out of the entire or part of the course. And I support a parents right to choose what is best for their kids and as a board member I would require the district to follow the approved curriculum.

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 first educators of their children. It all starts with a healthy home, nurturing environment and sharing core values. As children begin attending schools, a partnership is created between parents and teachers. Volunteering, attending school events and teacher conferences has shown to improve attendance and higher achievement. Being able to select a school that matches student interests and family values is why I believe in parental choice. Parents have the right to opt-out of curriculum they do not feel comfortable with their students being taught. When parents are engaged in the kid's education, they can better choose the best learning environment for their family.

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

I believe in parent choice for vaccines, masks and the importance of in-person learning. Schools should comply with regulations from the state and health department to keep student's health and safety as their very first priority. This is a challenging, new environment for our district and families to navigate. As risk and benefits are assessed with the ever-evolving data, decisions on how to best ensure our students' safety will change. Students do better socially and academically when they are in person learning. Whatever is necessary to ensure that for our students, I will support them.



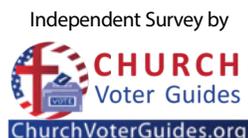
IVY LIU

Candidate Information

Campaign Website URL:	www.ElectIvy.com
Email Address:	Livin4jcd@yahoo.com
Occupation/Vocation:	Volleyball Official
Military Background:	US Navy
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	16 years

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

As a former Naval officer and business owner, I have had extensive training in leadership as well as organizational management. These skills have benefitted me much as a Board Member in my ability to understand D49 as a large system and how we can optimize organizational effectiveness.



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

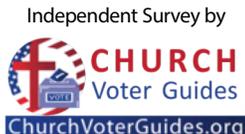
Many schools across all districts in Colorado and nationwide are struggling with substandard CMAS scores. Not only do we as a district need to single-mindedly focus on bringing the kids up to standard, we need to equip and empower all kids to soar with their abilities and create visions of lofty goals and aspirations. Some kids may not be receiving such upbringing at home.

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

Low academic scores should be our biggest concern as a district. Our district must operate with a master vision that must be shared with all levels of leadership from the very top down to the teachers and staff working directly hands-on with the children. We must focus on developing every child in academics and the accompanying mental/emotional wellness that stems from achievement. The vision must be clear and specific that is built on the expertise of teachers, principals, and all tiers of leadership.

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 Board should have direct oversight over the allocation of funding for the school district, based on district priorities set in collaboration with administration. The Board needs to consult with the Chief Financial Officer for reprioritization as needed to meeting the shifting demands of the fast growing district.



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 divisive doctrine leading to racial disharmony and tension. When one race is pitted against another based on false assumptions and twisted stats, volatility and instability ensue. CRT has Marxist/Socialist roots to divide and conquer.

Children are not born racists. Hate is taught. CRT is in itself racist by judging and condemning people by skin color. Our country is not perfect but still one of the best countries in the world with freedoms and opportunities which draw hundreds of millions of immigrants. We in the education system can mentor and empower young people with the right attitude, self-confidence and work ethics. It is detrimental to teach young people to make excuses and blame circumstances and people.

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?

No I do not support comprehensive sexual education. Young children do not need to be learning such topics. And teachers that attempt to teach this in the classroom without the knowledge or permission of parents should be fired. Such topics can be taught at home if parents so choose.

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 should have the final say in every aspect of a child's education. However, I do not systematically support opt-out options outside of sex ed. Any other opt-out options should be reasonable and considered on a case by case basis by school authorities.

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

Yes I am very concerned about COVID policies. The government and schools should NOT be dictating vaccination requirements, mask mandates, or quarantines. This has never been done in the worst of flu seasons. So why now with a virus that has 99.9~ survival rate?

The human immune system has fought off many diseases over the life time of a human. Beef up the immunity system and let's get back to normalcy that should have never gone away.



DR. ELMER HARRIS

Candidate Information

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Occupation/Vocation:	Assistant Professor
Military Background:	22 Years Active Duty
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	17 years

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

For several years, my daily work as a public school teacher involved working in environments with other adults and students whose work and academic lives were impacted by school board decisions. In most instances, the impact of those decisions was very positive. When that wasn't the case, I always felt a responsibility to discover why students and adults felt specific decisions weren't in their best interest; and to take time to listen to their concerns. Sometimes simply sharing additional details about the decisions was enough to alleviate concerns. Other times, it involved sharing how those individuals were impacted with the decision-makers and facilitating conversations where the concerns could be clearly and openly shared.

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

My vision for education in our community is one where key decisions that impact our schools don't appear to be made without significant input by those who're most impacted by the decisions. While it's within the realm of responsibility for boards to act and not consider the experience and expertise of other parties like teachers and families impacted by decisions, I believe an inclusive leadership model is the best for effective governance. Moreover, we must also be cognizant of not allowing outside issues that aren't impacting schools to govern board behavior. We must focus on actual day-to-day issues impacting students and not outside matters that serve as distractions from the business of education.

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

The important issues facing D49 in the future are around growth and the increased, necessary needs of students and staff; and ensuring individuals within and outside of our community continue to see District 49 as the premier destination for learning. Not only is this vital for new families who arrive in the area and have choices for where they'll educate their children; but also for those stakeholders who may not have family members enrolled in our schools, but we desire their support when it comes to voting on fiscal matters that impact our schools. Additionally, as board members we must ensure that our actions don't distract from the work of amazing staff and outstanding students.

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?

Despite data that show how increased school funding also produces higher graduation rates and wages for adults, our districts are underfunded; hence the reason it appears that were frequently requesting additional support from our local communities. We're also growing. School board members must be knowledgeable and prepared to address state and federal lawmakers concerning initiatives and legislation that impacts school funding. Moreover, we must be effective stewards concerning all funding, but particularly when we've asked taxpayers to provide additional support. Also, it's very important that we educate voters on initiatives that appear to provide some level of tax relief, but end up reducing funding for schools and services like law enforcement and other agencies that support our schools and communities.

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

Our District 49 teachers are not teaching CRT in their classrooms. As a university professor that trains teachers for a living, I, nor my colleagues, teach future educators how to teach CRT to students. Our classroom teachers teach according to current Colorado Academic Standards, and none of those standards address CRT. The energy and resources being devoted to this topic, that isn't a topic addressed by educators in D49 classrooms, should go towards comprehensive solutions that'll remedy the severe academic decline experienced by all students as a result of last year's interrupted learning due to COVID shutdowns.

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 students should be taught content in an age and developmentally appropriate manner that will ensure their personal safety and health. It's vital that younger children are taught basic concepts where they understand what's appropriate when interacting with other adults and children. Every instance of abuse is devastating and life-changing, and children must understand what's considered inappropriate and should be shared with their parent or other trusted adult/family member. In terms of older students, content should encourage them to abstain, but also address the reality that some students still choose to engage sexually with others despite conversation with parents. Again, the key is ensuring they're provided with the necessary information that will protect their physical and emotional health.

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 parents and schools should work together to ensure students receive what they need in school environments -- academically and socially. While I support the rights of parents to opt-in for sex education related content, I have some reservations about being able to opt-out concerning academic subjects related to Colorado Academic Standards that must be met for graduation and/or advancement. Teaching of math, reading, science, and social studies content according to established Colorado standards doesn't cause harm. Moreover, teaching students the skills that allow them to acquire, analyze, discuss, debate and choose whether to further explore topics on their own is essential to their personal growth and development.

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

My concern, and the concern of every parent, student, and staff member is that we engage in actions that promote and maintain safe and healthy learning environments. This is particularly important since the goal is uninterrupted in-person learning. Unfortunately, we've had instances in our district where in-person classes were suspended due to COVID outbreaks. It's my hope that lessons were learned, and we've made the necessary adjustments to prevent similar, future suspensions and to protect the health of everyone involved with our schools.



LORI THOMPSON

Candidate Information

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Occupation/Vocation:	Realtor
Resident of the Pikes Peak Region:	56 years

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

Both of my children attended schools in D-49. One was an honor student, the other was on an IEP (Individualized Education Program) with dyslexia, dysgraphia and ADHD. I had both good and bad experiences with schools in our district. I bring the perspective of a parent with 2 very different types of students. As both a business owner and a parent, I have volunteered within the district and have a passion for children and education.



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

My vision is to improve proficiency in core subjects, encourage voluntarism within our community to support our schools and help build a district of excellence! To create an environment where students of all abilities have the tools and support to succeed. To install within our schools a pride for our community and for our country.

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

Student needs, educational and emotional. There have been increases in teen suicides and overdoses across the country over the past year. We do not have enough qualified paraprofessionals to assist our teachers, class sizes are too large. We need to attract and retain good teachers Work to establish ways to confidentially identify high risk students and provide referrals/support for appropriate help. Find ways to pay our teachers a competitive wage, explore ways to hire the proper support staff such as paraprofessionals, bus drivers, nutrition services.

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?

Additional funding programs offered through either state or federal have to be carefully considered, what strings or curriculum is attached to that funding? If there are required curriculums, they must be reviewed for content. I support the upcoming mill levy override. It would increase teacher pay add funding for paraprofessionals. We are similar in size to D-11 and D-20, yet our salaries are 14% lower, and our administrative costs 17% lower. Per pupil funding is calculated according to the School Finance Act. The current budget is \$8338 for in person student. Our dollars follow the students, if a D49 family chooses a D49 charter school, the money goes to that school. There is more autonomy within our district.

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 theory that has as its basis that our country was founded on racism, and that systemic racism is at the core of institutions and structure. It does not define people as individuals, but divides them by race. I absolutely DO NOT support teaching this in our schools! Students must learn both the good and bad of American History, about the Civil Rights Movement and how we, as a nation, have overcome many of our challenges. There is always room for improvement in any country, but CRT dwells in the negative, it is one sided history. My father was white, my mother is Hispanic. I was blessed to be raised in a household where faith and hard work were emphasized, not identity politics.

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 not support. In D49, we teach biology, not comprehensive sexual education. Each family should choose what they want their children to learn about sexuality. It is not the role of public schools to teach this. Each family must decide what they want their children and young adults to learn. Likewise, in accordance with the D-49 Cultural Compass, all children and young adults should be treated respectfully regardless of their sexual identity.

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 support parental choice. We absolutely must facilitate communication and relationships between the schools and the parents. Parents are the primary educators for their children from the moment they are born. In a perfect world, there is a parent/teacher partnership to education. I am still friends with many of my adult children's teachers. Parents should be able to opt out of anything that conflicts with their faith, their values. Teachers and schools should be respectful and come up with alternative assignments. I recently heard of a school requiring students to pray to Aztec gods. I would have opted out of that for my own kids.

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

I believe it should always be up to the individuals whether or not they are vaccinated, and I am concerned by many of the vaccine mandates. Some states allow minors to obtain a vaccine without parental consent! I also believe that to mask or not to mask should be up to the parents, though state or federal emergency declarations can impact this as it did over the past 16 months. Currently, D49 leaves it up to the parents and I support that. We exercise local control. El Paso County Health is responsible for directing or enforcing quarantines. Our district reports infectious diseases to the health department.

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