



## **DCSD Board of Education Election, 2011 Candidate Questionnaire and Campaign Information**

### **\*CANDIDATES:**

- **District A:**
  - Susan Meek
  - Kevin Reilly
  - Craig Richardson (currently sits on DCSD BoE)
- **District C:**
  - Gail Frances
  - Kevin Larsen
- **District F:**
  - Susan McMahon
  - Justin Williams (currently sits on the DCSD BoE)

*\*This is a district-wide election; **all** registered Douglas County voters may vote for one candidate in all three Districts.*

### **About This Document:**

- All candidates for DCSD Board of Education were asked to:
  - Submit answers to eight questions (the answers provided were pasted into this document “as is”).
  - Provide their campaign website, personal contact information, or contact information for their campaign manager; several of the candidates’ websites contain an opportunity for people to submit their email address in order to receive updates/information directly from the candidate.
  - Include any upcoming fundraising or volunteer events.
  - Submit any campaign material, fliers, etc. These documents are posted under “2011 DCSD School Board Candidates” link on [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net).

**Anyone with questions about this document is encouraged to contact Courtney Smith, Vice President Douglas County Federation:**  
[cksmith@dougcofed.org](mailto:cksmith@dougcofed.org)

## Susan Meek (District A)



### 2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates

#### 1. Occupation and work experience.

I am an Education Strategist at BreakAway, Ltd., a small software company based in Maryland. BreakAway utilizes game and simulation technology to transform the way we work, learn, and live our lives. In addition to managing projects and supporting customers, I provide strategic direction and proposal/project development in the education sector.

Before joining BreakAway in March of 2011, I worked for Douglas County School District and the Douglas County Educational Foundation serving Douglas County students, schools and the community. My track record includes:

- ***Apple Awards Program*** – Established this annual fundraising event that honors teachers who have demonstrated superior ability to foster excellence in education and continuous improvement of student learning throughout Douglas County School District. The Apple Awards has raised more than \$470,000 in proceeds during the past six years.
- ***Digital Educator Program*** – Partnered with Apple to design and implement this award-winning professional development program providing hundreds of teachers training in integrating technology into their classrooms providing 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments for our students.
- ***Expert Technician Academy*** – Launched this industry/workforce/education partnership that addresses hard-to-fill skilled employment needs in Aerospace, Energy, IT, and Bioscience industries. Since 2008 the program has prepared hundreds of youth and adult learners for entry-level professional positions, industry-recognized certifications and college credit.
- ***DCSD Financial Transparency Website*** – Developed, in coordination with the ITS Department, the online repository of DCSD financial information to provide greater financial transparency concerning how tax dollars are spent and how DCSD operates.

Previous work experience is available on my website at

<https://sites.google.com/site/susanmeek4douglascountyschools/services>.

2. Educational background.

**The George Washington University** (1992 - 1994)

MBA: Business Economics and Public Policy

**James Madison University** (1987 - 1991)

BBA: International Business; Management; French (minor)

3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.

My involvement in Douglas County School District (DCSD) began a decade ago when we moved to Douglas County. I am a parent, parent volunteer, taxpayer, and a former employee of the school district. As a parent, I have served on my children's school PTO and SAC organizations. In addition to the items I already mentioned in question #1, I represented DCSD on various STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) initiatives throughout the state and in Douglas County and represented the school district when dealing with the District's corporate partners. Finally, I spent nearly two years in the District serving as the Communications Director where I was able to obtain a strong understanding of the entire school district.

4. What made you decide to run for school board?

I am running to add a new perspective to the Board of Education – a perspective that is not driven by politics. I believe in the value of public education. I believe in the power of community and that we can achieve significantly better results when we decide to work together rather than at odds. And finally, I believe in Douglas County. We are at a critical juncture in our community where people are divided and complex issues are presented in sound bites that do not provide the level of detail to make the best decisions for our students, schools and community. If we continue on our current path, the collective “we” will suffer. I am committed to doing what is best to bring people together and to move our schools forward so that we best serve students while preserving the values and beliefs of our local community. I have no deeper agenda than to utilize my experience and talents to serve Douglas County students, schools and community.

5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?

Three factors – a slowdown in student enrollment growth, the beginning of the state's inability to fund K-12, and the failure of the 2008 local budget/bond election – resulted in DCSD initiating a three-year budget reduction process beginning in 2008-09. This budget reduction was planned at approximately \$30 million over the 2008-09 through 2010-11 school years. The reductions were made by

- reorganizing and reducing central office staff and services
- reducing funding to school sites
- reorganizing and reducing programs
- freezing employee salaries

As the national and state economy worsened, state level revenue shortfalls then hit in the 2010-11 and 2011-12 school years. Since K-12 education makes up 43% of Colorado's state budget and DCSD's portion of K-12 education dollars is between 7% and 8%, the reduced state funding significantly impacts Douglas County School District. Over the past several years, the state level reductions amount to more than \$50 million. To account for the reduction in revenue, the District has:

- made further reductions to school sites resulting in increased class sizes
- made further reductions to central office staff and services
- added new fees for technology, transportation and athletic participation
- continue to freeze employee salaries

I am concerned that no one has been discussing the next projected state level reduction estimated to be \$16 million less to DCSD for the 2012-13 school year. This reduction was not included in the Blue/Black Budget scenarios and is not a talking point for the current budget and bond election.

- If the current election fails and if the \$16 million reduction from the state occurs, the District will need to cut \$26 million from its budget for the 2012-13 school year.
- If the current election succeeds and the \$16 million reduction is necessary due to the state level reduction, we still need to cut \$6 million from the budget and have no money to initiate the Pay for Performance Plan that we are promising our voters.

Either way, the District and Board's actions will continue to erode public trust.

6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD. DCSD offers parents and students many choices -- more than any other school district in the state of Colorado. We have charter schools, magnet schools and open enrollment opportunities at our neighborhood schools. I support these opportunities for students and parents to find the best learning environment and instructional practices to address the unique learning needs of students.

As you can imagine, choice and options are highly valued by the Douglas County community. It is easy to list those choice schools as our 11 charter schools, the night high school, alternative high school, etc. But that is an incomplete description of choice in Douglas County. In addition to the choice schools mentioned already, our neighborhood schools have incorporated various choice programming (schools of science and inquiry, IB, AP, etc.). In fact, in the 2010 Choice survey, parents indicated that "proximity to their home" was a choice that 80% of parents highly prioritize. In fact, this rated higher than the priority rating of test scores, which received a 77% priority rating.

A current issue that needs addressed in regards to neighborhood and charter schools relates to equity in funding between the types of schools. Item #3 under Choice in the DCSD Strategic Plan lists "Creating a 'Level Playing Field' for All DCSD Schools." In particular, I am anxious for the results of the review of disbursement of all federal, state, local revenues to DCSD schools, which is scheduled to be completed this Fall.

7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?

Yes, I support the 2011 bond/mill levy override election. In my opinion, when determining whether the school board should move forward to put a mill levy and bond measure on the ballot, the Board members responsibility is to determine whether there is a true need on the District's part, whether the administration has created a viable plan for how the funds would be expended, and whether the local community would be supportive of such a measure.

- 1) As to whether there is a need, class sizes are at levels where parents are expressing true concern and parents may choose to leave the school district if they are not satisfied with their options. In addition, I believe in fairly compensating hard working employees who have had their wages frozen for the past three years. As in any market economy, those employees have the ability to leave a school district that does not adequately compensate them for their work.
- 2) As to whether there is a well-articulated plan for how the mill levy revenues will be used to address the financial needs, I am less confident. I would like to see more substantial details around exactly how the money will be spent and allocated.
- 3) As to whether the community would be supportive of such a measure, I believe there is enough evidence of support to place the measure on the ballot. Data to support this opinion include:

The favorability rating for a \$20 million mill levy has increased from 50% to 56% over the past year according to the two polls that were conducted in May 2010 and in April 2011. Polls and surveys can be found on my website at <http://www.tinyurl.com/425h3dh>.

In 2010, the poll found that people equally weighted two concerns -- 1) improving K-12 education and 2) strengthening Douglas County's economy and protecting jobs. In 2011, the poll found that the top priority to be improving the quality of public education and it rated 14 percentage points above improving the economy and creating jobs. This rise in concern around improving public education is significant.

Recent parent and staff surveys have shown significant drops in the response to "the District is headed in the right direction." Survey data for 2010-11 school year is not available. However, the 2009-2010 surveys found a 9 point drop for parents and 15 point drop for employees.

***The average homeowner is estimated to experience an initial annual tax increase of \$45 due to the proposed mill and bond measure. However, we all know there are many factors that come into play as to what the actual impact would be on a homeowner. In order to be as transparent as possible, I've created a tax calculator so that anyone who wants to calculate their own impact can do so and can make an informed decision based on their own assessed home value. My website has this calculator.***

Taking into account the above information, I believe it is the appropriate time to place a mill levy and bond measure on the November ballot so that citizens have the opportunity to vote on whether they are supportive of this investment in public schools at this time.

8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?

I have no deeper agenda than to utilize my experience and talents to serve Douglas County students, schools and the community. I do not start with presupposed positions based on political ideologies when faced with difficult and significant decisions. I start with “listening.” I start with research. I start with seeking to first understand the true nature of the problem before drawing opinions and conclusions. I am a pragmatic and logical individual who believes in the value of public education. And finally, I am a visionary with the ability to strategically implement – I will utilize my innovative thinking and successful track record building strategic partnerships to ask the right questions to ensure responsible leadership prevails so that we can achieve amazing results for our students.

**Campaign Information:**

- **Campaign Website Address:**  
<https://sites.google.com/site/susanmeek4douglascountyschools/> or  
<http://www.tinyurl.com/425h3dh>.
- **Name and contact information for: Susan D. Meek:**  
[susanmeek4dcschools@gmail.com](mailto:susanmeek4dcschools@gmail.com)
- **Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc.:** available under the “2011 DCSD School Board Candidates” link at [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net)

**Upcoming Campaign Event**

- Please join me for a fundraiser and social on Friday, September 23rd. **Be Informed, Be Engaged, Be the Vote** to make a difference for Douglas County students, schools and community! Support Susan Meek's Board of Education Candidacy. You are invited to a fundraiser on Friday, September 23rd from 5:00 to 7:00 pm at the Galleria Room at the Schomp BMW 1190 Plum Valley Lane, Highlands Ranch CO 80129 (Lucent and C-470). RSVP at [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?hl=en\\_US&formkey=dGcxVm12YVZHaEJ6QWRBYW45Wjlpbmc6MQ#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?hl=en_US&formkey=dGcxVm12YVZHaEJ6QWRBYW45Wjlpbmc6MQ#gid=0).

## Kevin Reilly (District A)



**Kevin Reilly**  
for  
Douglas County Schools

*Stronger Schools  
Brighter Futures*

### **2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates**

- 1. Occupation and work experience.- Neuropsychologist in private and hospital consultation practice. Over 25 years of experience in this profession.**
- 2. Educational background.- Licensed Psychologist, Doctor of Psychology (Psy.D.), Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology, Bachelor's Degree in Psychology**
- 3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.- I have a 16 year old daughter who has been in Douglas County Schools since Kindergarten. I volunteered when my daughter was in grade school and support her academic achievement.**
- 4. What made you decide to run for school board?- Initially my dismay at the private school subsidy voucher program. When I became aware of the political agenda of the school board I realized something had to be done to protect our schools.**
- 5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?—This is the 4th year of salary freeze for teachers. The school district and teachers have reached a tipping point—our schools require more funding and community support. There have been increasing fees and decreasing options for special programs and basic services in our schools.**
- 6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD.—As above, there has been increasing pressure on neighborhood schools. Charter schools are schools within the school district to provide additional options (and potential innovation) for Douglas County students.**
- 7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?—The current school board was very clear in their agenda when voting for the Bond/Mill Levy ballot issue. They were opposed to proposition 103 because they do not want to fund traditional public education. They were for the mill levy primarily to fund their agenda of Pay for Performance and vouchers. I am for proposition 103. Personally, I cannot vote to support the board's agenda through the mill levy. This will be the first time I will ever cast my vote against 3 A&B—because it ultimately does more harm than good.**
- 8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?—I have worked all my life in healthcare and community service. I believe that our schools are an important foundation for a strong community. I listen carefully to what is being said and also pay attention to what is not being said. My core values are to do the right thing and consider all sides of an issue carefully. I plan to counter-balance the current political agenda with reasonable discussion and decision making.**

**Campaign Information:**

- Campaign Website Address: **Reilly4DCSchools.com**

**Name and contact information of campaign:**

Sarah Mann Campaign Manager, Kevin Reilly for Douglas County Schools Cell  
303.907.8961 | bayousarah@aol.com  
[www.reilly4dcschools.com](http://www.reilly4dcschools.com)

- **Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc:** available under the “2011 DCSD School Board Candidates” link at [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net)

## **Craig Richardson (District A)**



### **2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates**

#### 1. Occupation and work experience.

- I am currently Vice President and General Counsel of the El Paso Corporation Pipeline Group, the largest network of interstate natural gas pipelines in North America, delivering approximately 30% of the natural gas consumed in the United States across critical national infrastructure. I am the chief legal officer of the Pipeline Group, managing a team of in-house and outside legal professionals from coast-to-coast, and am responsible for all legal matters in the Pipeline Group enterprise, which is a multi-billion-dollar business with thousands of employees.
- For a number of years prior to joining El Paso, I was its outside lawyer and served as counsel for other clients – including George Lucas, Union Carbide, American Airlines, Price Waterhouse Coopers, and many others – in the private practice of law at two national law firms, with offices in both San Francisco and Denver. I am a member in good standing of both the California and Colorado bars, and I am admitted to practice before various federal and state courts around the country.
- Prior to my legal career, I worked in a number of civilian capacities in the United States government, including the White House’s National Security Council, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo, the Bureau of Intelligence and Politico-Military Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon. I began my federal service as a Presidential Management Fellow.
- For over two decades, I also served as an officer in the United States Navy Reserve, having been commissioned as an Ensign (Special Duty; Intelligence) in 1988 and retiring as a Commander in 2009. Among myriad military assignments, I served as the Officer in Charge of Naval Reserve Intelligence at United States Northern Command, the combatant command responsible for the defense of North America. I was recalled to active duty in Operation

Enduring Freedom, following the events of September 11, 2001, during which I commanded a joint (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines) team of intelligence professionals, providing space-based intelligence analysis in direct support of combat operations in Southwest Asia. For my service during the following year, I was awarded the Navy Meritorious Service Medal (with oak leaf cluster) and the Joint Service Achievement Medal. On six occasions during my reserve military career, I received active duty orders to the White House's National Security Council, where I supported Presidentially-initiated military, counterterrorism, and intelligence operations around the globe, from Afghanistan to Bosnia to Haiti to North Korea.

2. Educational background.

- I am proud to have attended K-12 public schools in my native California – in the very school district in which my grandfather worked as an elementary school custodian and my mother worked as an administrative assistant for most of their adult lives.
- I received my Bachelor of Arts *cum laude* in Government from Pomona College and was admitted to *Phi Beta Kappa*. While at Pomona, I was named the Harry S. Truman Scholar from California, an award created by Congress in memory of the former President.
- During the year following my undergraduate education, as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar, I pursued non-degree studies in Central American history and politics at the *Universidad de Costa Rica* in San Jose, Costa Rica. While in Costa Rica, I conducted a major national security study in cooperation with the U.S. Embassy and the local Gallup research affiliate. These studies followed my academic work at the *Instituto Internacional* in Madrid, Spain.
- I was awarded a Master's Degree (M.P.A.) in economics and national security studies from Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. While at Princeton, I served as an aide to Ambassador George W. Ball, a senior national security advisor to five U.S. Presidents.
- I have a Juris Doctor (law) degree from Stanford University. While at Stanford, I was Associate Editor of the *Stanford Law Review*.

3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.

- Since June 2010, I have served on the Board of Education, having been appointed to fill a vacancy that arose in the representation of District A, where I reside. I currently also serve on the Board's Government Relations Committee.

- I have three children – all of whom attended public schools. My oldest daughter, Julia, is now a junior at the University of Denver. My son, Bradford, was just graduated from Mountain Vista High School and now attends the University of Colorado at Boulder, as freshman. My youngest daughter, Leslie, is a junior at MVHS.
- I have served in various volunteer capacities in the District, including serving as a Mock Trial Team attorney-coach at Mountain Vista High School, on volunteer outdoor cleaning crews at Mountain Vista High School, and a donor (along with the El Paso Corporation Foundation) to the Douglas County Schools Educational Foundation.

4. What made you decide to run for school board?

- I view the opportunity to remain on the Board through the lenses of (i) a *business* leader and (ii) a *national security* leader:
  - First, as a business leader, I understand what is going to be required of our public school system to meet the demands of American business in the 21st Century and in a global economy.
  - Second, as a national security leader, I comprehend what is going to be expected of the next generation to preserve and sustain American exceptionalism and leadership on the world stage.
  - Viewing the district through these two lenses, I want to work hard to keep our District schools great and help take them to the next level of excellence. I particularly want to focus on enhanced performance in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), as well as Languages. These are areas critical to both the needs of high-quality American corporations and businesses in the coming century, as well as to the projection of American power to promote peace and stability in the global arena.
  - I also want to improve our thoughtful understanding of longitudinal data about the students who graduate from our schools and enter the higher educational system or the workforce. This is an area -- specifically, how well our students perform in post-secondary educational settings as well as the types of professions they pursue and early-career compensation they receive -- where the data we have are non-existent, limited or opaque. These data are essential to holding our District accountable for results, as well as celebrating our District's achievement.
- I believe I have much more work to do on the Board. Going forward, I intend to be keenly focused on (i) enhancing total compensation for our outstanding District professionals (both teachers and classified staff, as well as principals and school-based leaders), (ii) reducing class sizes, (iii) ensuring that we have

state-of-the-art facilities, both in terms of technology and basic capital infrastructure, (iv) empowering neighborhood schools to compete on a level playing field, (v) implementing our open enrollment improvement program (as set forth in the Choice Blueprint) with alacrity and excellence, and (vi) continuing to empower parents to make the one-size-fits-one, informed decisions about the educational milieu that is most conducive to the academic achievement of their children (through such mechanisms as our improved website and other choice-enhancement/informational tools).

5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?

- The District has experienced successive years of cuts -- driven largely by deep and sustained reductions in the level of state funding that the District receives. For example, the District had to make significant budget cuts beginning with the 2008-2009 fiscal year, continuing through the 2011-2012 fiscal year. In FY 2008-2009, the District's budget was reduced by about \$15.3 million. In FY 2009-2010, an additional \$18.0 million in cuts was implemented. Student fees increased to a level of \$3.8 million and budgets were reduced by a total of about \$23 million in FY 2010-2011. The cumulative effect of these year-over-year reductions in available resources has taken an enormous toll on our ability to execute our mission with excellence.
- Most acutely, these cuts have precipitated an unsustainable freeze in the compensation levels of our District professionals, who continue to labor under a compensation system that makes no sense. As a result, we are losing our top talent to competing alternatives. Because teacher quality is the single most important determinant of the academic success of our children, these cuts will eventually result in poorer academic outcomes, as our great teachers begin to leave the District to pursue better compensation elsewhere.
- The aforementioned budgetary reductions have also resulted in programmatic and curricular cutbacks that will have long-term, deleterious consequences for the outcomes of our students, if left unchecked. We have reduced our language programs in primary education to the bone. Our Gifted/Talented programs have experienced deep cuts at all levels. The array and quality of electives and advanced-placement courses at the high school level have suffered severely.
- From my perspective, these impacts are not sustainable. Indeed, they are unacceptable.

6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD.

- Our traditional neighborhood and charter schools are the twin pillars of the educational delivery system in our District. As a Board member, I am

committed to supporting and serving *both* types of schools, and I want both neighborhood and charter schools to succeed in our District.

- While we obviously have many more neighborhood schools than charter schools in Douglas County, and the involvement of the latter in the high-school end of the system remains limited (although that is changing), both are essential elements in the Board's Choice Blueprint. Both types of schools share a *common mission*: the academic success of our children. Both are essential to providing meaningful choice and optionality to District parents as they search for the best curricular and ambient fit for their child.
- I also know that there are, in some cases, vast differences between neighborhood and charter schools -- differences that have real-world financial, planning, programmatic, curricular and other consequences for each specific school. These are differences that we celebrate because they provide a diverse array of choices to our parents. They are differences, nonetheless, that we must recognize and for which we must compensate in the overall management of the District.
- Neighborhood schools, for example, are required by law to provide what I call "no-notice" educational service: they must accept *any* child who walks in from the street, no matter what time of year or what time of day. By contrast, charter schools typically have an admissions process that screens applicants and yields a cohort of students at punctuated times during the academic year (the autumn and spring semesters). Providing no-notice service generates administrative and human resource costs, requires reservation of sometimes unfilled capacity, substantially complicates planning, and creates enterprise risk.
- Another difference between neighborhood and charter schools lies in the quality, quantity, depth and breadth of services to special needs students that neighborhood schools must provide under applicable law. These services tend to be much more costly than average per pupil spending.
- For their part, charter schools face substantial differences in the capital portion of their balance sheets. Unlike neighborhood schools, they must typically fund capital costs (upfront equity, debt and debt service) out of current expenses (O&M). When we examine per pupil revenue (PPR) at a charter school, the PPR integer often *includes* capital costs, which are routinely *excluded* in the PPR numbers for neighborhood schools. By contrast, neighborhood schools benefit from a substantial, exogenous capital contribution by the District, which covers their plant and equipment, with debt serviced at the District level using the District's superior credit metrics.
- These are real differences, and we have to account for them in the financing, planning and operation of all of our schools -- both neighborhood and charter. As a Board member, I am committed to ensuring a level-playing field in our

District as we make choices and options available to parents, who are the most accurate decision-makers about the precise educational setting that works best for their child.

7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?
  - I support the Bond/Mill Levy Override initiatives, and I voted "aye" at the August 30 Board meeting placing the initiatives on the November 2011 ballot.
  - I support the Bond initiative because we need to build new schools to account for continuing growth in student population. The simple demographics and mathematics compel that result. The bond will also help restore some of our existing facilities -- worn down by years of use -- to a clean, safe and efficient state.
  - I support the Mill Levy Override because I want to keep class sizes from getting further out of control and because I want to transform how our District professionals are compensated. Under the District's proposed Pay For Performance plan, we will start compensating our truly great teachers with salaries worthy of their excellence. I want to see six-figure total compensation packages for our top performances in hard-to-fill subject matters, and I want to see professional compensation at all levels of performance linked to fair, accurate, diverse, and comprehensive metrics. As stated above, teacher quality is the *decisive* determinant of the academic success of our children. We simply must allocate more resources to the truly outstanding teachers and classified staff in our District who make student excellence possible.
  
8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?
  - The values I bring to the Board reflect every chapter of my background discussed above. They are values resulting from my own public education experience, values deduced from my education at some of the most excellent universities in America, values reflecting my commitment to the defense of this country for over two decades, values that embody my understanding of what American businesses need from the next generation of employees to compete on a global scale, and values that derive from my experience as a parent who is intensely devoted to his kids.
  - I could sum these values up as follows: Excellence, Accountability, Stewardship and Integrity. I know that if I navigate by those four stars, I will succeed as a Board member.

- My *views* about specific policy issues are obviously less important than my *values*. The latter are, and ought to be, more enduring and transcendent. After a year of service on the Board, and after casting many votes, I think my views are well and widely known. They will continue to describe my work on the Board, if I am re-elected. If I had to sum them up, I would say that they center on empowering parents as decision-makers and recognizing them as the primary customers of the educational enterprise in our District. At the end of the day, the District *raison d'etre* is to serve parents and the children in their care.

### **Campaign Information:**

- Campaign Website Address: [www.craigfordcschools.com](http://www.craigfordcschools.com)
- **Name and contact information for campaign:**
  - mailing address: Craig Richardson for Douglas County School Board, 9371 Alcosta Place, Highlands Ranch, CO 80126
  - email address: [cvrichardson@msn.com](mailto:cvrichardson@msn.com)
  - phone: 303.470.7239

**Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc:** [will soon be available on candidate website](#)

## **Gail Frances (District C)**



### **2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates**

1. Occupation and work experience.

I have been employed in the Financial Industry for the past 27 years and hold FINRA Series 7 and 63 Registration. Many of the companies I have worked for range from Fortune 500 to non-profit and include: Boettcher, The College For Financial Planning, American Funds/Capital Group, Merrill Lynch and Wells Fargo. I have supervised large groups of direct reports, developed training documents to migrate functions over three separate site locations across the US, and have worked with the pension plans of large companies as well as individual investors.

Volunteering:

- Volunteer with Head Start
  - I have always been passionate in my advocacy for children
- Volunteer with The Winter Park National Sports Center for the Disabled
  - The joy I experienced working with mentally and physically challenged students has been unmatched
- Volunteer at the Boulder County Safehouse
- Served as a Board Member on the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce as Chair of the Economic Development Committee
- Volunteer instructor for the College for Financial Planning High School Financial Planning Program
  - Teaching high school students in Evergreen how to budget for purchases was as insightful for me as it was for them
- Volunteer with The Backcountry Wilderness Area of Highlands Ranch

2. Educational background.

I was a single parent and raised my daughter while working full-time and taking charge of my education. My education was fully funded upfront by me without any loans or interest paid. I have earned the following:

**Master of Public Administration**, University of Colorado

**Bachelor of Arts in Biology**, Metropolitan State College

3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.

I have had a long-time interest in the quality of Douglas County Schools, which was my major consideration for relocating to Douglas County in 1997. I believe a truly robust economy that serves everyone in the community is only possible when there is access to high quality public education. I am a parent, grandparent, taxpayer, property owner, stakeholder, and concerned citizen. I view the recent draconian move by the board to siphon taxpayer money and funnel into private schools as the first of many steps to dismantle public education. The fact that the board began funding a legal defense fund in March of 2011 indicates that the intellectual and fiscal resources of the board have been squandered on shoring up an unpopular and questionable battle while our children and teachers suffer the effects of looming budget cuts. This behavior demonstrates poor fiduciary responsibility, a lack of foresight, and irresponsible fiscal accountability.

4. What made you decide to run for school board?

I am outraged at the manner in which the current board and Superintendent have pushed through an unpopular and questionable agenda in support of vouchers, which benefits the few at the expense of the many. This action demonstrates blatant insensitivity and disregard of the voices of the community.

5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?

I have personally talked with hundreds of teachers, parents and students to learn of already squeezed personal budgets that have been further decimated by steadily increasing fees for supplies and bus service. I hear of classroom size increases that now threaten student safety and impede the learning experience, and teacher's salaries that rank among the lowest level in Colorado. What I hear is disconcerting. These are our dedicated teachers who have gone without pay increases for three years! We suffer all of these cuts while our Superintendent, who is exempt from a 360-performance review, enjoys one of the highest salaries in the state.

Something is horribly wrong with this equation.

6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD.

The incredible range of Douglas County neighborhood and charter schools that rank among the highest achieving schools in the state is a testament to our teachers who have done more with less, a remarkable feat.

7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?

We desperately need funds for our schools and support of 3A and 3B is imperative. Regrettably, I am hearing from our community that there is widespread distrust of the board and an unwillingness to have faith in them as responsible stewards of any future funds raised. Many in our community are distrustful of the mill levy wrapped around a \$10 million PFP marketing maneuver devised by the board and Superintendent. The new six page PFP marketing document posted on the DCSD website is vague and was crafted without collective input from teachers. This bait-and-switch tactic so common in the market driven marketplace has no place in public education.

8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?

I am running as a concerned citizen and community stakeholder with deep concerns about the future of our children, our teachers and our community. I bring an extensive business and corporate background and I'm deeply troubled at the notion that DC schools should be run as profit centers.

I will advocate for public schools and I pledge to:

- Instill trust, transparency and diversity to Douglas County School Board of Education
- Invest in preserving the public in public education
- Be a champion for our children and teachers

**Campaign Information:**

- Campaign Website Address: [www.gailfrances4schools.com](http://www.gailfrances4schools.com)
- **Name and contact information for campaign:** Please contact me directly at [gail@gailfrances4schools.com](mailto:gail@gailfrances4schools.com)
- **Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc.:** available under the "2011 DCSD School Board Candidates" link at [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net)

## Kevin Larsen (District C)



### 2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates

1. Occupation and work experience.  
I have been an actuary employed in the life insurance industry since 1985. Actuaries study and model financial risk. I have also been a consultant, and spent a year working as a teacher in Douglas County School District.
2. Educational background.
  - Bachelor of Science in Mathematics with an emphasis in Actuarial science from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.
  - Graduated with distinction in 1985.
  - I have also attained professional credentials through continuing education:
    - Associate, Society of Actuaries
    - Fellow, Life Management Institute
    - Member, American Academy of Actuaries
3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.

Since 1994 my wife and I have had children in DCSD schools. Over those seventeen years I have stuffed Thursday folders, founded and coached a Math Olympiads team at Fox Creek Elementary, coached a MATHCOUNTS team at Cresthill Middle School, and announced softball games for Highlands Ranch High School. I served on the Fox Creek School Advisory Council in the late 90s and was its DAC liaison. In August 2009 I joined the District Accountability Committee (DAC), representing the Highlands Ranch HS feeder area. In April 2010 I was appointed to the Fiscal Oversight Committee. I became chair of the DAC in October 2010 and in that role I have tried to invite all stakeholders (parents, teachers, school leaders, the community) to come together to learn about education issues and engage with one another to find common ground.

4. What made you decide to run for school board?

I am running because I bring both a vision and a track record of working to make this school district better. This is a natural, incremental step that culminates thousands of hours given during seventeen years of involvement, from the classroom to a macro level of the entire district. I have studied and understand the issues paramount to DCSD, from providing a full range of educational options for students and parents, to the state and local funding mechanisms and how they interrelate, and accountability in academic performance throughout our district. I have the ability to help people understand complicated issues, and I search for facts amid the furor that sometimes

accompanies vigorous discussion in our community. Finally, I bring experience from leading other organizations when they dealt with both change and some passionate struggles.

I have been passionately interested in Douglas County schools and an active contributor in numerous ways for many years. Some have read the minutes – I have put in the hours, thousands of them, making this a better school district. My occupation as an actuary gives me a skilled perspective to look at financial projections and risk. My enthusiasm as a coach and mentor has helped many kids and parents find their sweet spot for learning. My record as a leader who welcomes facts and listens to many viewpoints is well known. My experience as an active parent of three successful Douglas County students gives me the appreciation to value and honor the central role a parent should play in the education of his or her child.

**5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?**

Because of a forced dependence on a dysfunctional state educational funding system and a difficult economy, local school districts have seen cuts in the state share of per pupil revenue. DCSD is even harder hit as some of the factors in the byzantine funding formula put our district at a disadvantage in its share of the state dollars.

The magnitude of those cuts is many dozens of millions of dollars over the past three or four years. We have seen cuts to world language, instrumental music, introduction of usage fees for transportation. Salaries have been frozen for the last three years while benefit costs have increased, and each of the past few school years has included furlough days. And while DCSD has tried to keep its focus on preserving support in the core classroom instruction level, class sizes have increased.

**6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD.**

DCSD has around 80 schools of many forms. Within neighborhood schools we have 9 high schools, 9 middle schools, and 49 elementaries. We have an alternative and a night high school. We have a dozen charters and option schools, including a couple that will soon go through high school.

For neighborhood schools the district uses site-based budgeting (SBB) to give principals a portion of the per-pupil revenue to fund staffing and programming while keeping a portion to cover building maintenance, administrative services. Neighborhood schools have school accountability committees (SAC) comprised of parents, a teacher, and community member to work with the principals to provide input to budgeting, school improvement goals, and communication with its school community.

Charter schools receive the per-pupil allotment and then purchase back services they need from the district. Each charter has a governing board (which must include parents) that oversees and works with the school leadership personnel.

Recently, the district has worked to eliminate some inequities in how funding is distributed between differing forms of schools so that per-pupil money better follows the students in whichever school they attend.

7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?

There are three measures under consideration this fall that would affect DCSD funding. I'll address each one:

– The Mill Levy (3A)

I favor the mill levy override (3A) because first, it stays 100% in Douglas County, and second, it enables us to implement a key reform initiative in Pay for Performance. This is an exciting time for DCSD to be leading the nation in innovation. But we've got to back up attracting and retaining the best teachers and the hardest-to-fill teachers as we compete with other districts. We now have the ability to improve, train, counsel, and if necessary, export the underperformers, too, with the 2010 passage of SB-191.

This measure would also bolster resources to stem the increase in class sizes, and it would fund supplies for the classroom so our teachers don't have to dip into their own pockets or request parents to provide things that we should be providing as a district.

– The Bond (3B)

I favor the bond (3B). Again, this is completely local money, not exported to the rest of the state. It enables us to fund some new schools or additional wings in identified growth areas, such as Parker and Castle Rock. It lets us address some sorely overdue maintenance in our buildings (a safety issue) and equipment, and it funds technology infrastructure and tools that are much more than just wi-fi, but a platform for delivering education in the future. We will acquire and implement some very rigorous and comprehensive school performance tools that would be available to schools and to the public to get a much better view of a school's academic accountability.

– Proposition 103

I oppose this measure. Why? First, because it would simply fund education via the status quo; there is no component for innovation, educational reform, or results-oriented funding. Second, because it would cost Douglas County taxpayers more money in increased taxes than DCSD would get in additional funding. In other words this would exacerbate the already dysfunctional statewide school finance system where Douglas County School District taxpayers don't get their fair share. This measure redistributes wealth, and as a steward of the Douglas County taxpayers, a responsible board member should oppose this. In fact, our school board has unanimously opposed Prop 103.

8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?

My occupation as an actuary gives me a skilled perspective to look at financial projections and risk. My enthusiasm as a coach and mentor has helped many kids and parents find their sweet spot for learning. My record as a leader who welcomes facts and listens to many viewpoints is well known. My experience as an active parent of three successful Douglas County students gives me the appreciation to value and honor the central role a parent should play in the education of his or her child. My volunteering in buildings has earned the respect of teachers who know I listen to all points on issues.

**Campaign Information:**

▪ **Campaign Website Address:**

<http://www.LarsenforDCSchools.com>

<http://www.facebook.com/Larsen4DouglasCountySchoolBoard>

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**Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc:** available under the “2011 DCSD School Board Candidates” link at [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net)

## Susan McMahon (District F)



### 2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates

**1. Occupation and work experience.**

*I am an elected member of my SAC(School Accountability Committee). I am dedicated to community involvement and dedicated many hours of volunteer time to local organizations, charities and neighborhood public schools. In 2009, I completed Leadership Douglas County, a prestigious and intensive leadership training program and believe strongly in community stewardship. For nearly a decade, I have participated in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.*

*I am a parent of three students currently enrolled in Douglas County School District.*

**2. Educational background.**

*Bachelor's degree in Education; University of Georgia.*

**3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District.**

*My involvement with the Douglas County School District began 11 years ago when my oldest son entered the district for kindergarten. I am a classroom volunteer, elected member of our School Accountability Committee, and volunteer for our Parent Teacher Involvement Board.*

**4. What made you decide to run for school board?**

*I am running for the Douglas County School Board because I want to ensure the best opportunities are available for all our children, teachers, and staff across the district. We are at a crossroads in our community, and I want to return the focus to the classroom. As a parent, volunteer, and community member, I can no longer stand on the sidelines. I am running for Douglas County School Board to help rebuild trust in our leaders and to ensure our district remains efficient while providing a quality and safe education for all children.*

**5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts?**

*Douglas County schools have not seen an increase in revenue since 2003. A proposition was offered to the voters in 2008 but was denied. Class sizes are on*

*the rise, with as many as 47 students in some classes at the high school level. Being an elected member of my school accountability committee, we had to make the hard decisions as to how to implement the budget cuts without negatively impacting the classroom.*

**6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD.**

*Neighborhood and charter schools are public schools. More attention needs to be placed on the fact that we have wonderful options here in Douglas County, and improve communication strategies. Neighborhood schools and charters are just two examples of the array of options DCSD provides for our families.*

**7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not?**

*Yes, I support the Bond/Mill levy Override ballot measure as it has been proposed by the current board of education. However, I am concerned, due to the existing division in our community and the lack of trust created by the current Board's institutions of rushed policies in 2010/2011, that the voting community might not support the current proposal.*

**8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education?**

*I value:*

- *public education*
- *collaboration and communication*
- *the teachers and staff that we entrust our children with 5 days a week*
- *input from teachers and practitioners before implementing effective policies*
- *effective use of funds and resources*

**Campaign Information:**

- **Campaign Website Address:** <http://www.mcmahon4schools.com>  
<http://www.mcmahon4schools.com>

- **Name and contact information for campaign:**

Volunteer Coordinator: Delana Maynes

Email: [Delana@mcmahon4schools.com](mailto:Delana@mcmahon4schools.com)

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1. **Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc.:** available under the "2011 DCSD School Board Candidates" link at [www.dcft.net](http://www.dcft.net)

## Justin Williams (District F)



### 2011: Questions for DCSD School Board Candidates

1. Occupation and work experience. –Business Owner, Investment Advisor.
2. Educational background. B.S. University of Utah
3. Describe your experiences/relationships with Douglas County School District. Of course, being the incumbent, I have had a lot. I have spent a lot of time in schools all over the district. I now have kids at 2 neighborhood schools. I can't count how many schools I have toured and listened to the principals, staff, and teachers. I think I have a good idea about what's going on in the district. But I also know what's going on in the community.
4. What made you decide to run for school board? I am deciding to run again because I believe that I understand what's best and my views best represent the views of Douglas County residents.
5. Please explain your knowledge of the budget cuts that DCSD has been faced with over the last several years and the impacts of these cuts? – Let me just say the cuts make me more sick than anyone. Those are cuts to our family's schools. I don't have kids in private schools. All of those cuts have impacted my family. But we had no choice on making the cuts. And I can't recall making a cut that didn't come as a suggestion from the superintendent. I've followed their lead.
6. Tell us what you know about the neighborhood and charter schools in DCSD. – I know quite a bit about both. I know that I love my neighborhood schools and I know that there are many that love their charter school. The charter schools in Parker all have over 1,000 people on their waiting list. I think that people seek the charter schools for lots of different reasons. I love my neighborhood school and am sticking with it.
7. Do you support the November 2011 Bond/Mill Levy Override Election, why or why not? No- But the question is not if we need the money. There is no discussion about that. We need the money terribly. We should have made it through this recession before asking, but I stand with my other board members and will work to develop the pay-for-performance plan. The "no" vote was because of the current economic state. I just feel the community is in worse shape than the district.

8. What values and/or viewpoints would you bring to the DCSD Board of Education? – I bring the viewpoint that is unique from any other incumbent or new candidate: That of an entrepreneur who has ridden the economic wave... I have won some and lost some. Things have rebounded for my profession, but I still remember what that sting feels like. There is no one else on the board who has felt that sting. If there are any teachers that I represent, it's the ones that got laid off that had no job for a while. Also, I have 5 kids who are all neighborhood school kids (my 3 year old will be at Frontier Valley while I am in my second term). My children's education is as important to me as anything in my life.

#### **Campaign Information:**

- **Campaign Website Address:** [www.electjustin.com](http://www.electjustin.com)
- **Name and contact information for campaign:** Dustin Zvonek  
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- **Prepared campaign documents/fliers/etc:** none provided