

Freedom Watch

School Board Candidate Survey Issue

October 2003

Harrison School District 2 Questions:

1. Why are you running for school board?
2. What are the most pressing issues the school board should address in the next two years?
3. Colorado state law created a pilot "vouchers" program beginning next school year (2004-05). Eligible students will receive tax-funded vouchers to pay tuition at a private (including religious) school of their choosing. Harrison District 2 is one of eleven districts mandated to offer vouchers.
 - A. Do you support subsidizing private school tuition with tax dollars? Yes No
 - B. What impact will the voucher program have on the school district?
4. Should the following issues be discussed in the health curriculum?
 - A. Birth Control Yes No
 - B. AIDS & STDs Yes No
 - C. Drug and alcohol awareness Yes No
 - D. Homosexuality Yes No
5. Would you support the inclusion of creationism (including creation science and "intelligent design") in the science curriculum?
6. What role should the school board play in curriculum development and textbook selection?
7. In your opinion, what do your district's CSAP (Colorado Student Assessment Program) test scores reveal about student achievement in your district?
8. Is there an "achievement gap" between minority and white students in your district? If so, what is the role of the school board in addressing this?
9. What are appropriate expressions of religion in schools by teachers and students?
10. What ideas do you have for ensuring a safe school environment for the diversity of students and teachers in your district?
11. Are teacher salaries in your district
 - A. too high
 - B. appropriate
 - C. too low?
12. How will you ensure that your district has adequate state and local property tax funding?

Candidate responses are listed in ballot order

Candidate Response: Steve Hester, Sr.

Occupation: Medical Supply at Memorial Hospital; retired military

1.

I believe I can make a difference for our students, parents, staff, and community members. Great schools don't just happen. They occur when people stand up and make it happen. There must be leadership on the board dedicated to doing what it takes to improve our schools.

2.

Accountability to taxpayers, parents, students, and teachers, and to be responsive to their needs. Taxpayers deserve schools that improve their communities. Parents deserve schools that meet the needs of their children. Students deserve classrooms that challenge them and maximize their growth. Teachers deserve a school system that supports them.

3.

a) NA! This question implies tax dollars belong to the State and not to the tax paying public, I disagree! I believe it's appropriate in limited cases for the parent to receive their tax dollars back to educate their children when they are trapped in failing schools that refuse to change.

b) Vouchers will not hurt the district. When I served on the school board from 1997-2001, I advocated to the district to do the things they would do if vouchers were a reality and they had to compete for students. In that, time period district achievement rose dramatically.

4.

- a) NO
- b) YES
- c) YES
- d) NO

The school curriculum is not an appropriate place for some of these important topics. These discussions are best left to family or other organizations. What qualifies a school to arbitrate over such serious personal issues?

5.

No.

6.

The Colorado Constitution assigns these important tasks to the school board by law. The board is locally elected so that it represents the will and desires of the community. Good school board members receive impute from the public, education professionals, and training in order to make these vital decisions.

7.

They show this district is on the path to achieving what others said couldn't be done. Significant improvements in achievement have occurred in numerous areas but there is still more work to do. It is important to make continuous improvements and not be satisfied with where we are.

8.

Yes, even though a gap exists achievement is up for all students! The role of the board is to ensure that expectations are high for all students. Too many times the achievement gap results from an "expectations gap," where expectations are lower for minority students.

9.

The constitution guarantees personal religious freedom. There are some restrictions for teachers, but wearing of religious symbols and expressions of faith should be appropriate. Students are free to express their beliefs as long as they don't force them on others.

10.

All students and staff deserve a safe and discrimination free environment. You ensure a safer environment with training for staff and enforcing of policies already in place for staff and students. Making more rules doesn't make schools safer, you need people to be involved to do that!

11.

TOO LOW. Good schools depend on having experienced and dedicated teachers. The district attracts many good young teachers. After several years they are highly sought after by other districts that offer better salaries. If great teachers are key, we should do what it takes to keep them in our district.

12.

First I will ensure we are spending the money we receive wisely. Too many times the first response is to ask for more money before we look for solutions in our own budgeting process. I would also ensure we are receiving our fair share under the complex state funding formula.

[back to the top](#)

Candidate Response: Dennis Slattery

Occupation: self-employed

Education: Associates Degree in Mechanical Drafting

1.

To see that all our students receive the best education we can provide them, to give the community a voice, to assure sound fiscal management of resources and to make Harrison School District #2 the district of choice.

2.

Student achievement and finance.

3.

a) I support what ever is best for each individual student.

b) Minimal impact. Depending on the number of students using the program.

4.

a) YES

b) YES

c) YES
d) NO

5.
No.

6.
Oversight and financial approval.

7.
The new programs that have been introduced in the district are working and that if we had the student for a year they showed considerable improvement in their CSAP scores.

8.
Yes. The role of the school board is to make sure that steps are taken to close the gap.

9.
Only those allowed by law.

10.
District 2 has implemented many new systems to assure the safety of students and teachers and continues to be a leader in this area.

11.
TOO LOW

12.
It is up to the voters of this state to make their voices heard to their state legislators on how important the education of their children is. That continuing cuts in education funding is not acceptable.

[back to the top](#)

Candidate Response: Mr. William R. Zalman

Occupation: Division Director, State of Colorado Department of Corrections

Education: Bachelor Degree, University of Nebraska

1.
As an incumbent, I would like to see the District continue in its improvement in public education. Our District has seen growth this year in student population, decrease in staff turnover, has made some great strides in closing the learning gap and has had measured success in increasing achievement scores.

2.
Harrison District 2 issues will continue to be continued academic achievement for our kids and public education's constant struggle with funding.

3.

- a) It's the law.
- b) None or very little.

4.

- a) YES At appropriate ages and with approval of parents.
- b) YES At appropriate ages and with approval of parents.
- c) YES At appropriate ages and with approval of parents.
- d) YES At appropriate ages and with approval of parents.

5.

No

6.

The school board's role is vital to ensure the proper process is followed and that the selection is reflective of the District and community needs.

7.

Harrison District 2 is showing continuous improvements. We are still below the state average but we are gaining at a faster rate than the state average gain.

8.

Yes, we do have an achievement gap. To close the gap is our highest priority identified in our Strategic Plan.

9.

Constitutionally, public schools cannot endorse a particular religion, but, too, constitutionally we don't restrict the 1st Amendment rights of free speech.

10.

We have district policies and training classes relating to anti-bullying, work place harassment. The Board monitors and supports the Superintendent's goals and priorities of his efforts toward creating a respectful workplace for our students and employees.

11.

TOO LOW

12.

We have no control over this issue other than communicating with our legislature.

[back to the top](#)