

DCP Candidate Questionnaire – Anthony Graziano

Q: In an era of more limited resources, do you support a bond and mill levy initiative? If so, how will you build support from taxpayers for public school spending?

A: First, we must thoroughly evaluate district-wide spending and insure that we are operating as efficiently as possible and consistently student-focused. Next, it's imperative that extensive community outreach take place over the next 12 months to collect feedback from Douglas County taxpayers and provide them with current data for consideration. Based on our dismal fiscal forecast, we need to consider a future bond/MLO initiative in order to adequately fund our public schools. The community must play an active role in determining goals and timeframe of such a potential initiative. If the decision is made to pursue a bond/MLO, support and trust can be gained through transparent, specific language, outlining exactly where every tax dollar will be spent within our school district.

Q: What do you see as opportunities and challenges in this district? If elected, what will be your priorities?

A: DCSD is currently facing a historic funding crisis, record teacher turnover and executive accountability challenges. However, we have a strong community - one that will come together and support our public schools when trust in district-level leadership is restored. When elected, I intend to focus on spending priorities, finding viable avenues to attract and retain excellent teachers, and achieving functionality of the School Board through collaboration and consensus.

Q: What are your thoughts on the current budget for DCSD? How will you ensure that our students get the best education for the tax dollars spent?

A: Students must unequivocally be placed at the forefront of every budget decision. I am firmly committed to fiscal responsibility, and I will strive to regain the public's trust of our school district's spending by prioritizing classrooms over upper-level administration. I will help create a budget process that allows precise longitudinal comparisons, detailed departmental breakdowns, and a sensible timeline to place schools in a more optimal position for their site-based budgeting.

Q: What ideas do you have to attract and retain quality teachers in spite of state and district funding challenges?

A: Two things need to happen, above all else: we need to drastically improve the culture and climate within DCSD, so that our professional educators feel valued and respected. This starts at the top, with the Board of Education demonstrating consistent practices that support their profession, their schools, and their principals. Further, we must explore additional, long-term funding sources, such as a mill levy override, in order to provide competitive compensation for all our teachers.

Q: How do you define choice as it relates to public education? How would you like to see educational choice implemented in Douglas County under your leadership?

A; Public school choice is an integral piece to the overall success of a public school system, as it provides options for parents to best meet the needs of their students, as well as maintain accountability and inclusion. When elected, I plan to insure the viability of all DCSD schools through adequate funding, sufficient enrollment, and equitable opportunities throughout.

Q: Do you support the use of public tax dollars for private schools via vouchers and/or education savings accounts?

A: No. Furthermore, there is no data indicating the majority of our community supports vouchers, also known as educational savings accounts. I agree with the Colorado Supreme Court, who has deemed the DCSD voucher program illegal and unconstitutional, and I will work to withdraw this legal case as a Board Director.

Q: As a school board member, how will you work to ensure that parents, students, and community members have a voice, and that board practices are transparent and accountable to taxpayers?

A: I have already begun the process by meeting with community members, teachers, principals, committee members, business owners, and parents, so that I can listen to their concerns and ideas. My service on the Board of Education will consistently demonstrate ethical practices, open communication, and self-evaluation for ongoing improvement. I have great respect for the duties and responsibilities that public servants must uphold, and I intend to do so through my motto... "Listen, Serve, Repeat."