

Tamra Fenberg
Restore the Balance's School Board Candidate Survey

1. What motivates you to run for school board? **I have been engaged with the DSD with my six children since 2011. I was encouraged by friends in the community to use my experience to serve on the board. Now that my youngest girls are Juniors at DHS I have the time to commit to this. I have a desire to improve the relationship between the schools and the community and most importantly bring parents together to support the schools and create unity for the improvement of our children's education and future opportunities.**

2. What qualifications do you bring and how are you preparing to serve if elected?

I feel my lived experience in the School District gives me a crucial foundation for knowing the real life struggles and challenges happening in the district. My formal education and training is in Social Work. I naturally think in terms of new perspectives, connecting resources with needs, and understanding the necessity of meeting the individual needs of students and families. I am beginning to understand more fully the governance model. I feel as an educated and capable person I will learn quickly my responsibilities on the board.

3. Do you agree with the seven principles Restore the Balance feels should guide political conduct in Colorado? If you do not agree with one or more of these principles, please identify and explain why.

I agree with your seven principles. I have not engaged with political circles because of the extreme nature of the conversation and the fear based tactics that divide our community and country. I will work as a board member to prevent the district from being a battle ground for political agendas and to bridge the gap between all sides to benefit our schools and students. My campaign slogan is "We're all in this together." The divisive nature of the current political climate is a hindrance to our district's success and student achievement.

4. Durango School District and its board members have been the target of misinformation campaigns and legal threats. How should the school board address controversy, misinformation, and public criticism?

There is a great need to listen to understand. We have to increase the quantity and quality of communication and connection. Parents are frustrated and do not feel heard. There is a lack of trust in the board, and with some schools, by

parents who do not align with everything the board is doing or how they are doing it. People are angry. This campaign has connected me with those who feel pushed out for not jumping on board with the District's policies. They feel disregarded. I did not run for the board because I have strong feelings against the board or some sense of political agenda. I am a parent who sees a need that is not being met. The board represents the entire community, not a party. We need a strong working relationship between parents and the board. The Board is in a position to set the tone of collaboration and compassion. Misinformation is an interesting term recently employed to explain away the dissenters feelings about what is happening. The school board would be more successful if they engaged in discourse with those who are upset instead of trying to prove themselves (or what the test scores really mean). I do not believe the issues are what people are mad about, but it is a doorway for them to express their overall dissatisfaction with how they are being treated by the board. The board has missed the point of all the anger and need to reflect on how they can use their seat to unify our community and to identify processes that lead to this divide.

5. **What does "common ground" mean to you in the context of board decision-making?** Everyone wants a choice. It is in our nature. We learn this with toddlers at a very young age even before they can walk or talk. To want to choose is inherently human, and also very American. We cannot demand that one group give up their choice so we can have everything we want. Yet that seems to be the tactic of the day. Finding Common ground means looking for where we agree and not on our differences. In relation to the board it means the students are our common ground. Everyone is in agreement that what is most important is student success; that each student will have the best preparation possible for launching into adulthood. We cannot have great schools if we decide to focus on one issue over another. There are priorities of course, and compromise requires sacrifice, but that being said, we can do it in a way that is truly inclusive and equitable and ultimately best for the students. Finding common ground in the process requires flexibility and open mindedness. It requires keeping an eye on the long-term goal, not the hype of the week or year. Collaboration and cooperation are key to staying on common ground as a Board member.

6. If elected, how will you listen to and represent the concerns of constituents who don't agree with you?

This is the most important question for a board member. My goal in running is to bring people together. To work against the politicization of the schools and district. I do not see serving on the board as a way to get what I want, but to create policies that improve student learning and academic achievement. I will advocate for cooperation and value each person's perspective.

7. What are the top two to three issues facing Colorado and briefly how do you plan to address these issues if elected?

School Safety, Rapid Technological Advances and of course funding. I am just beginning to understand how the schools are funded and the budget cuts that are going to be required. I do not feel well educated on how to approach this issue. I do believe if there is greater trust in the schools and curriculum, that we could obtain financial support locally. We will have to consider what the essentials are and be willing to make some very hard decisions. We have to continue to advocate for the state to recognize the importance of education and invest in our kids for the future of our state. We have a great culture established for university-bound students, and I will work to develop a similarly strong culture for those who are technically minded. As AI and other technology continues to expand, we are at a perfect cross roads to reinforce the value of technical training.