



# NEW MEXICO BUSINESS COALITION

## 2021 Albuquerque Public Schools Board Candidates Survey

Q1

Contact Information

**Name: Julie Brenning**

Q2

Please list your campaign website or other online sources where voters can learn more about you and your positions:

[www.JulieforNM@gmail.com](mailto:www.JulieforNM@gmail.com) Facebook: Julie Brenning for APS School Board District 7

Q3

What APS district are you running for?

District 7

Q4

As a school board member, what will be your top priority?

I believe I have the right combination of character and professional experience to bring our community together to solve the challenges we face in this district. I am a mother to three children, two of whom are school-aged and have special needs. Quality education in APS is essential to all other positive socio-economic outcomes in Albuquerque, including public safety, employment, and maintaining our democratic freedoms. I am committed to doing everything in my power to provide a quality education to all of our students. My top 3 priorities are: Support our students' and schools' unique needs. We learned during the COVID pandemic that we need to meet the needs of schools and students with dynamic and innovative solutions. To meet these needs I plan to start three task forces: 1) The Family Empowerment Task Force to focus on alleviating the effects of poverty in our district; 2) The Innovation Task Force to focus on strengthening community schools and other innovative politics; and 3) The Educators and Admin Task Force (which is also related to priority 2, below) to focus on retaining and recruiting high quality teachers. Recruit and retain high quality teachers. We have a shortage of teachers in the APS District and many will be retiring soon. I have a plan to work with NM Workforce Connections and the PED to create a path for our local EAs and others to become successful teachers. I also plan to strengthen recruiting efforts in our colleges and universities. As a board member, I will prioritize increasing educators' salaries. I will work with the NM State Legislature to increase wages and ensure high quality health care for our teachers. Listen to parents and community voices and ensure school board transparency. I will gather everyone around the table - families, parents, students, teachers, principals, legislators, community leaders and others - to knock down barriers to learning for our students, together.

Q5

When voting on an APS policy, what do you think is the most important thing to consider?

As an international researcher, I worked for a nonprofit that was striving to decrease violence against women. I published a peer reviewed report on best practices for good policy making. I make my policy decisions based on three principles: 1. Evidence, science and data - what are the best practices 2. Community voice - bringing community and all stakeholders to the table. It is especially essential that student voice be heard and their input taken seriously. 3. Policy impact on families - how will policy impact women and children and is it empowering for families? Everyone has different ideas on what would be in the best interest of students - at each step I will bring my years of experience solving problems in our community and ensure that all voices are brought to the table.

Q6

What experience do you have in creating budgets and what will you prioritize in the APS budget?

We need a responsible, effective and transparent budget. I have experience working with tax-payer budgets in my work at Bernalillo County and the NM State Legislature. My Priorities Are: Support funding that stays in our classroom - such as necessary HVAC repairs and technology and supplies for our students in the classroom. Our kids deserve an environment where they can thrive. Support to attract and retain critical support staff - such as our bus drivers, custodians and educators. They need better support and funding. Support for services that target our at-risk students - This funding will look at decreasing drop-out rates and increasing resources for our vulnerable populations. This includes involving more opportunities for apprenticeships, work in the trades, internships and other preparation for post-HS graduation.

Q7

Please provide your position on the APS Superintendent's contract being tied to student outcomes and explain why you feel that way.

I will look for these three characteristics when hiring, firing and evaluating our APS Superintendent: Dynamic leadership. I want a leader who is willing to admit to challenges we face and be willing to make innovative and effective decisions that will improve this district. I want a brave, courageous but also caring leader who will do what is best for our students, even if that means making tough decisions. I will collaborate with the superintendent to drive and enact innovative solutions. Decisions based on best practice. I want a Superintendent who is willing to implement policy and make decisions based on evidence, data and best practices. There are examples of school districts that have 'turned around' and we need to implement these same best practices. I will support evidence and data based decisions. Anti-corruption measures. One of the main duties of the superintendent is oversight of APS management. The Superintendent needs to have a systemic process in place for fiscal accountability to prevent corruption in this district. I will hold the superintendent to this standard.

Q8

What factors should play into a decision on closing a school?

There are two factors I would consider when making the decision to close a school: (1) community voice and (2) support for improvement. Community voice, particularly families with students at that school, should have a direct say in the decision to close that school. If there are adequate supports, such as community schools and community leaders, ready to improve the school, then I would consider not closing it.

Q9

Do you support or oppose mandating that children are taught Critical Race Theory (CRT)?

Other (please specify):

This question is not within the jurisdiction of the APS School Board; the school board does not write or set curriculum. The NM Public Education Department is the correct entity to address this question. The three duties of the APS School Board are: 1). District policy, 2) Review and pass the APS budget and 3). Evaluate, hire and fire the Superintendent.

Q10

What do you think is the most important skill(s) a child should learn in school?

Social skills;

Communication skills; or

Basic skills of reading, writing and math.

Other (please specify):

All of the above. I believe in the whole child metric when measuring a students success.

Q11

Should teachers be held accountable for students' academic achievement or lackthereof? Why or why not?

Teachers are the backbone of our education. They should be evaluated on personal progress, effort, training attended, experience and measurable teaching improvements made. This accountability can be accomplished through interviews, recording of training and presentations on an education portfolio. The number one indicator of academic success for a student is actually not the teacher. Sixty years of research shows the number one indicator of academic success is the socio economic condition of the home the child lives in. 67% of our APS students live in poverty. This, and high rates of adverse childhood experiences in the home, contribute to barriers to academic success. An incredible teacher should not be held accountable for these socioeconomic conditions that are not in their control.

Q12

How should the Capital Master Plan reflect the continuing decline of APS enrollment?

I believe the focus of the Capital Master Plan should be on existing infrastructure of our schools. For example, many of our downtown schools are deteriorating. We should focus these funds on schools that students attend right now, improving facilities, classrooms and access for all students.

Q13

As an APS Board member, please explain your position in regards to involving business community members in advising how best to prepare students for future careers.

I believe the strengths of our private sector are essential to bring to the table for our students and schools. I support the full involvement of business and community leaders in our Community Schools. I have worked for Community Schools in our APS schools. Community School Councils collect data about the individual schools needs and meet these needs with community leadership. For example, there was a need for career readiness skills found in our high schools. I partnered with local banks and business leaders to create a new, innovative curriculum for our high school students. These lessons help our students prepare for post-graduation education and employment and include lessons on financial literacy, employment readiness and other essential training. We should continue these essential partnerships to prepare our students for future careers.

Q14

Please provide details of any arrest record you may have.

None

Q15

Please describe to voters why you are best candidate to fill a position on the Board of Education.

I am the only candidate for District 7 who has worked in our APS schools. I am the only candidate for District 7 who has professional policy experience. I am ready to bring our community around the table to face the challenges we have in this district with innovative solutions. I commit to bring innovative solutions, dynamic leadership, and a heart full of commitment to our School Board.