



# NEW MEXICO BUSINESS COALITION

## 2021 Albuquerque Public Schools Board Candidates Survey

Q1

Contact Information

**Name: Danielle Gonzales**

Q2

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

[www.gonzalesforaps.com](http://www.gonzalesforaps.com) [Facebook.com/GonzalesforAPS](https://www.facebook.com/GonzalesforAPS) Twitter: @DGonzalesEDU

Q3

What APS district are you running for?

District 3

Q4

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

As a parent/guardian of 4 school-age kids, I see firsthand that our kids are not all right. We must focus our efforts on COVID recovery in a way that pairs academic acceleration and mental health supports. I will prioritize student learning and make sure that our resources - including new federal stimulus dollars - are going to where they're needed most.

Q5

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

The data and evidence or research base around each issue/policy, paired with the lived experience and perspectives of students and families.

Q6

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

I run a national nonprofit and manage a multi-million dollar budget every day. I also serve on several nonprofit boards providing budgetary oversight. I spent 11 years as a grantmaker for two national foundations, making, managing and providing review on grants up to \$100 million. I would start by prioritizing transparency around how dollars are being spent, and then reallocating resources toward where there is the most need, ending corruption and holding senior leaders accountable.

Q7

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

I do believe the superintendent's contract should be tied to clear metrics for improvement, including student outcomes, as well student and family satisfaction, enrollment, and efficient district management.

Q8

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

Closing schools should be a last resort. Before that, we should consider whether the school has adequate resources: a great principal, well-prepared teachers, high quality instructional materials, adequate funding, social workers/counselors and mental health supports and community partnerships. We should measure student reports of their learning experience and allocate resources toward improving it. We should engage families and students to seek their perspectives on the future of the school and provide them choice and access to better options. We should also consider enrollment trends and if a school is under-enrolled, provide opportunities for charter schools operators to assume control of the school.

Q9

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

Other (please specify):

Critical race theory is not actually taught in K-12, it is a theoretical and legal framework. I don't support speech codes or other government restrictions on what teachers can/can't say. We should prepare teachers to have complex and difficult conversations. I support teaching accurate history and acknowledging that race and racism do exist historically and today.

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 - these skills are inter-connected in practical life and should be in school as well. It is possible to teach all, when we follow the latest practice and research on brain science.

Q11

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

Yes, along with other measures to include peer/leader observations, validated and research-based student surveys, teachers' self-evaluation of their performance, and standard professional performance standards such as attendance and communication. Our students and their future are too important to not have accountability. In general, we should expect one-year of academic growth in one year's time and should measure that growth. We also need to invest in more teacher training because the ultimate measure isn't whether they teach content, but whether they facilitated student learning. As a parent, I have seen my child bring home work that is far below her grade level, which is unacceptable. In addition to holding teachers accountable for student achievement, we should hold school leaders and administrators accountable too.

Q12

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

The Capital Master Plan should track to enrollment trends. We should sell or lease unused property and reallocate funding toward areas of growth. We should seek to partner with charter schools to co-locate charters in vacant or under-enrolled schools, a practice that is common in other cities experience similar declining enrollment trends. We should have a comprehensive review of demographic trends and partner with the city and developers to understand population trends so we have a comprehensive and proactive plan, rather than one-off reactive decisions.

### 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 board and district leadership should partner with the business community to ensure that our schools are aligned to labor-market needs and trends, and to ensure schooling advances individual and collective economic mobility, ultimately that is one of the chief purposes of education. We should foster partnerships between individual schools and businesses and industry to create pathways and apprenticeships.

### Q14

Please provide details of any arrest record you may have.

I was arrested in the U.S. Capitol in June 2018 for protesting the Trump administration's child and family separation policies and the cruel treatment of children and other migrants seeking refuge from violence in their home countries. This was a misdemeanor charge for "Crowding, obstructing, or incommoding."

### Q15

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

I am a mom of four school-age kids, a former teacher, and I've worked over 20 years in education. I run a national nonprofit that partners with large districts to help them improve. Professionally, I see proven strategies that are helping other large districts improve, while APS remains stagnant. There's no reason we can't make those same changes, we just need leadership. As a parent, I've seen firsthand how our kids are not alright. Stress and anxiety are at an all-time high and our schools and families are at a breaking point. We must focus our education system on COVID recovery, providing both academic acceleration and social/emotional and mental health supports. I have the expertise to understand the problems of today and the perspective to plan for the issues of tomorrow. I'm running because I want every child in our city to get an excellent education that prepares them for success in life, no matter their zip code. I'm running for school board because I love my hometown too much to sit on the sidelines during this historic moment.