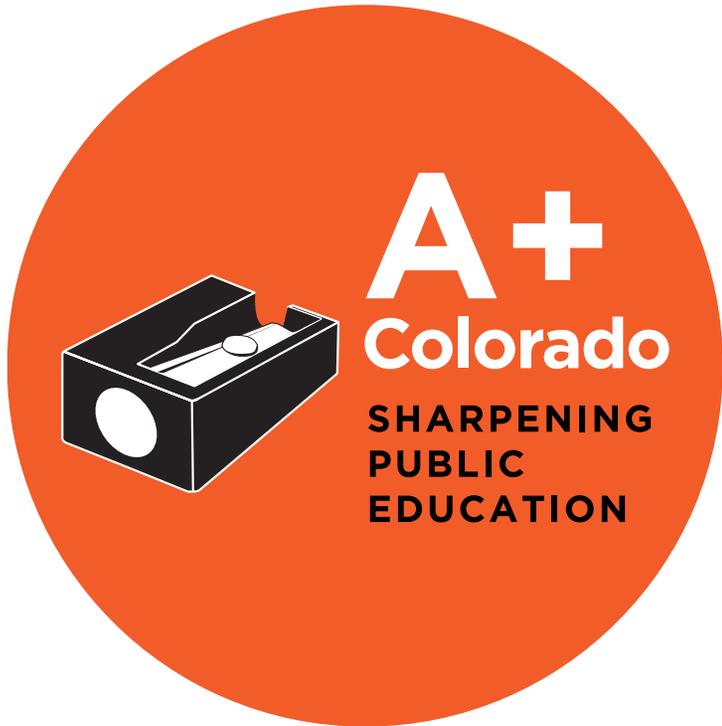


2017 CANDIDATE SURVEYS  
**AURORA PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**



# **Aurora School Board At-Large**



# AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS - INTRODUCTION

School board elections offer community members the opportunity to reflect on the state of their public schools and make a choice on a vision for the future. A+ believes that understanding who the candidates are, what they stand for, and their qualifications is critical if Aurora Public Schools will build momentum towards improvement that will guarantee every child a great education.

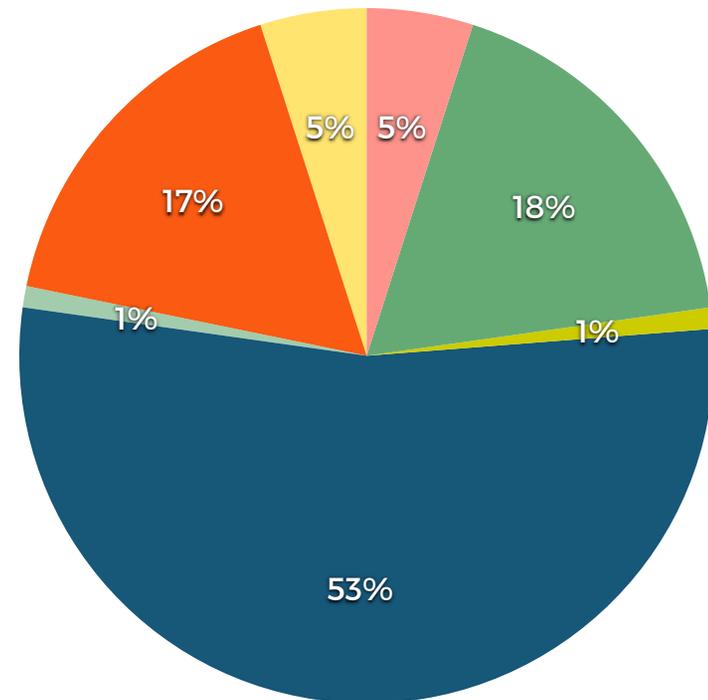
The purpose of this survey is to give Aurora voters a clear picture of where each candidate stands on the most important issues that the board oversees. All registered candidates were invited to complete the survey. Answers are published exactly as received.

<b>Student Demographics SY 2016-17</b>	
PK-12 Students	41,797
% Free and Reduced Lunch	66%
% English Language Learners	40%

<b>% Students Meeting or Exceeding Grade Level Expectations (2017)</b>	
English Language Arts (ELA)	24%
Math	16%

<b>2016 Graduation Rate</b>	
District Overall	65%
Students Eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch	62%
Students Ineligible for Free and Reduced Lunch	75%

**APS Student Race/Ethnicity SY 2016-17**



- Asian
- Black/African American
- American Indian
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Two or More Races

# PART 1: AURORA PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIES AND GOALS

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

The district's current strategic plan (APS 2020: Shaping the Future) is the right focus for APS to improve outcomes for all students.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
3	3	NR	NR	3	3	2	3	NR

NR = No Response

## 1.1 What might you change in Shaping the Future? How will you hold the district accountable to meeting the goals of Shaping the Future, or to improving student outcomes more broadly?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** In reviewing the core beliefs and identified goals for Shaping the Future, it is very important that we remain accountable. The strategic goals for all APS Students include the following: A plan for the student's future; A set of skills to implement their plan; and credentials to open doors. I think one thing that I would add is, equity. There are roughly 39,184 K-12 Students in the Aurora Public School District. The students come from more than 131 countries and speak more than 133 languages. We have a responsibility to support ALL students and families. Good school systems depend on good school boards. It will be my personal mission to consistently contribute to student achievement and to secure appropriate/effective staff training. As a board member, I will ensure that the tasks that promote improvement, accountability, transparency, and equity are performed regularly, consistently, and effectively.

**Jane Barber:** DPS has a program offered by African-American Equity Task Force which can be applied to our district with the inclusion of the Latino, immigrant and Refugee children. Using Partnership with Generation Ready which would help to Assess more equitably ALL students. DPS has much success working with this group. Do not think for a minute that I am blaming kids for our poor performance which they have improved in the last cycle.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** This plan really focuses on the student's responsibility and what that student will have to be prepared for the future. But I would add a more thorough component, that is district accountability. The district must do its part to help the families prepare their students. I would also throw in a component of community responsibility to help in preparing the student. The board must be accessible to the community, the immediate families, and to the teachers and staff. The board must have an ear open to what is working and is not working. That is the accountability piece.

## 1.1 (Cont.) What might you change in Shaping the Future? How will you hold the district accountable to meeting the goals of Shaping The Future, or to improving student outcomes more broadly?

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** Without an up-to-date and easy-to-understand report card to the community, we have no way to gauge the progress towards some of the metrics outlined in the plan. I also think that the plan needs to be far more specific about HOW we will achieve each goal. We need clear, achievable goals to increase basic literacy and knowledge in primary subject areas. I believe that on the district website, a yearly report card should be posted prominently to give students, parents, teachers, and the community a sense of the district's progress towards this goal.

Personally, I believe that the plan could be strengthened by making sure that the language is aligned with the annual CMAS (PARCC) student assessment. Since these scores are made public in the fall of each year, the district could use this to show progress towards the metrics of the Shaping the Future plan. Parents would also be able to use their individual student CMAS results to understand if their child is on track.

**Gail Pough:** When I look at the APS 2020 Strategic Plan, I appreciate the strategic efforts APS used to engage parents and community members in their planning process. I appreciate APS's goals for students and I agree with them, however, there is a lack of focus on literacy and other academic proficiency that is missing. College credits and industry certificates are important, but our students will struggle to earn AP credits if they are not reading at grade level. I want to champion a plan focused on expanding early childhood education, whole child programs, and successful early literacy for both native speakers and emerging multilingual students.

**Lea Steed:** I feel this is a step in the right direction. As a school board member, I would make sure that information is shared with parents and that every child is included in this vision, ELL, SPED, Homeless communities and children in the Foster care system. The other goal is implementation. The program is only as good as the capability and buy in of the individuals teaching. Another component would be supporting the teachers during the implementation stages.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

## PART 2: TEACHING, LEADERSHIP, AND LEARNING

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

Teachers and school leaders should be held accountable for student academic outcomes.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
3	3	NR	NR	3	4	3	3	NR

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

The district should consider creating a teacher compensation system that rewards teachers for high performance.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
3	1	NR	NR	2	4	3	3	NR

## 2.1 How would you ensure the district is meeting the needs of traditionally underserved student populations (students of color, low-income students, emerging multilingual students, and students receiving special education services)?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** Being culturally inclusive is not enough, there is a requirement that staff are able to respond to the sensitive needs of our families and students. It comes down to having accessibility to adequate training and resources to work with a diverse population. We need to use community resources to recruit culturally appropriate and responsive supports for our kids and families. If we want more parent and student engagement, it is important that there are resources to support, encourage, and empower them to be more involved.

**Jane Barber:** A task force such as African-American Equity in DPS could be replicated in Aurora with the inclusion of Latino, African American, and immigrant parents, community members, students, teachers and administrators.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** There must be a paradigm shift in our thinking and approach. There must be a need-based allocation of resources (funding, staffing, and support). And I believe it starts with comprehensive reform, which requires us to go beyond the one level of accountability (i.e. assessments), we need to use that along with other proven strategies to address the multiple needs of our students. We have to create an agenda that puts the student first and family second. We must look for and implement those strategies that have been found to work and meet the needs of the underserved population. In other words we must specifically focus our efforts on these vary students and create a plan for these students specifically. It is not a one size fits all for each student. As a board member that will be my focus, which is to advocate for and help fund those specific needs for those specific students, families, and communities.

**2.1 (Cont.) How would you ensure the district is meeting the needs of traditionally underserved student populations (students of color, low-income students, emerging multilingual students, and students receiving special education services)?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** Regardless of socio-economic status, cultural background, disability, immigration status, country of origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, tribal affiliation, or ethnic heritage, I believe that all students can learn and excel academically. I have witnessed this firsthand as a classroom teacher and remain committed to helping every student in the district succeed. This includes making sure that district views resources through the lens of equity. Resources should be distributed equitably to support the needs of traditionally underserved students. For example, interpretation and translation services should be concentrated and prioritized in schools with high-need for these services. Also, teachers with large numbers of historically underserved students - whether students of color, emerging multilingual students, or students with disabilities - need to be adequately supported to create inclusive learning environments for all students.

**Gail Pough:** It's no secret that we need more funding, and in a district that has struggled to increase funding, in a state that has TABOR, this will likely mean rethinking how funding is distributed, and ensuring that every dollar goes to kids in the classroom. Historically underserved students face systemic barriers, from the racism of low expectations, devaluing the potential of students with disabilities, to larger structures including housing patterns and funding mechanisms that segregate neighborhoods, and schools, based on race and income. High teacher turnover in schools that serve a high number of marginalized students is one manifestation, so regarding teacher compensation system, I do think it is worth exploring incentives for our most effective and experienced teachers to STAY in our underserved schools, so that all students have access to great educators. Educators are the single most important way that our district will ensure that all kids have access to the education they deserve.

**Lea Steed** I would look for potential ways to expand the community in schools partnership. Through conversations with school leadership and review of school improvement plans, the community in schools affiliate, site coordinator, businesses, and community partners should collaborate to recruit volunteers for tutoring programs, food and clothing banks, assist with translation and provide employment opportunities. I believe when we bring the right people to the table, we are able to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

## 2.2 What do you believe is APS' greatest challenge to having great teachers in every classroom? How do you suggest the district enhance or change its approach to this challenge?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** Teacher retention is a challenge that impacts the ability to having great teachers in every classroom. Issues of low achievement and poor learning climates affect teacher retention. Other issues such as, job dissatisfaction, inadequate administrative support, isolation, poor student discipline, lower salaries, and teacher's feeling powerless and having an inability to influence school decisions also impact retention and recruitment. Family buy-in is also difficult when we have many families struggling with housing and homelessness; often school is not a top priority for them. My opinions for improving teacher retention are simple: Provide Support, empower them to succeed, and create better work environments. Give them more opportunities to express their concerns and opinions. The School Board should not be so disconnected and isolated and we need to empower the teachers to tell us directly about their concerns. Perhaps, board members may be able to serve as mentors.

**Jane Barber:** When teachers are treated with honor and respect and are duly compensated, when teachers are not subjugated to mandates which are not thoroughly investigated before they become mandates, when traditional schools can apply the same waivers to their schools as do the charter schools and the charter schools are held to the same accountability, then maybe the challenge would not be so great.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** The greatest challenge is, that having great teachers may not be the primary focus of the district. That focus must change. APS must look beyond the financial cost of the teacher and focus on the cost of not having highly qualified teachers with diverse backgrounds and from diverse cultures. I would suggest and advocate for the district to attend job fairs all over the country. To attend job fairs at HBCUs, and to actively place advertisements in papers, magazines, and job boards in specifically targeted areas. The district really must put together a communication plan to specifically search out teachers from diverse backgrounds with a focus on high expectations for their students.

**2.2 (Cont.) What do you believe is APS' greatest challenge to having great teachers in every classroom? How do you suggest the district enhance or change its approach to this challenge?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** The national teacher shortage is real, and would more accurately be defined as a national teacher distribution crisis. Traditional and non-traditional teacher education programs have seen unprecedented declines in enrollment, but the effects are felt particularly in school districts that serve high numbers of historically undeserved students, and rural districts, and in particular subjects. This creates a pipeline problem that Aurora Public Schools may not be able to adequately address on their own.

I think the district should explore ways to strengthen existing retention practices for great teachers, mentoring opportunities for master teachers, and linkages with teacher education programs as we develop our educators of the future to best serve Aurora kids.

**Gail Pough:** See above - recruitment and retention is a significant challenge. We need to consider how we can incentivize great educators to teach and stay in Aurora - financially, with greater autonomy, with opportunities to grow in their careers as mentor teachers, I want to explore all ideas that work!.

**Lea Steed** Unfortunately, the state is experiencing a teacher shortage issue this is partly due the lack of funding. There is also the low representation of teachers of color, administrators in the building as well. Using a better recruitment strategy/model will increase the retention and recruitment issue.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

## PART 3: SCHOOL QUALITY

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

All families should have the choice to send their students to a school that meets their needs.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
2	2	NR	NR	4	4	4	3	NR

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

All new school applications with community support, whether charter, innovation, or district, should be considered by the district.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
4	3	NR	NR	3	4	4	3	NR

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

In 2016, the APS School Board and State Board of Education approved the first APS innovation zone as part of the district's turnaround strategy for several of its chronically underperforming schools. Do you agree with this as a turnaround strategy?

Kyla Armstrong -Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
3	2	NR	NR	4	3	3	3	NR

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

APS adequately engages families and community members throughout the turnaround process for chronically underperforming schools.

Kyla Armstrong -Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
2	4	NR	NR	2	2	2	2	NR

**3.1 How should the district define a “high quality” school? What do you like about the current system to capture school performance? What, if anything, would you change about how the district measures and communicates a school’s performance?**

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** High quality schools provide learning opportunities for ALL students using various supports and materials to engage students and faculty. High quality schools place emphasis on expanded learning opportunities such as extracurricular activities and art/music. Student success is the number one priority. It is important that we evaluate every practice, program, and procedure to ensure that all students are learning at high levels. At the same token, we need to engage our administrators, teachers, families, and students to find out what’s working. It is important that their voice be heard and we include their suggestions and take their feedback as to what is and what is not working. We can also build a mentor/partnership for educators and administrators to establish teams to create shared goals, coordinated intervention plans, and strategic plans to support student learning. We also need to have feedback from the teacher’s as to what’s working and what’s not working.

**Jane Barber:** A high quality school would be a school where the whole child is educated. That includes the Arts and physical education on a daily basis. The current system relies on too many tests. We must allow the teachers to teach not just teach to the test so they can keep their jobs. The kids gain nothing from the test and the teacher can lose everything. The district complies by the state requirements. It is not local control that measures and communicates school performance.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** I read a paper a couple of years ago called "Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools" by G. Sue Shannon, Ed. D. These nine bullet points define a high quality school: 1. A Clear and Shared Focus; 2. High Standards and Expectations for All Students; 3. Effective School Leadership; 4. High Levels of Collaboration and Communication; 5. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments Aligned with State Standards; 6. Frequent Monitoring of Learning and Teaching; 7. Focused Professional Development; 8. Supportive Learning Environment 9. High Levels of Family and Community Involvement. I like that there is a focus to address low performing schools, I think assessments are one way, but also I think the district needs to put a focus on teacher continuing education, teacher and classroom observations, and communication with families about the students and the needs of the student, and a high quality curriculum that meets the needs of the students and prepares students for assessments.

**3.1 (Cont.) How should the district define a “high quality” school? What do you like about the current system to capture school performance? What, if anything, would you change about how the district measures and communicates a school’s performance?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** Critical milestones, like third grade reading, are well-researched predictors of future success. Children who read below grade level by the end of third grade are much more likely to drop out of school in later years. I believe that student academic achievement and growth are important factors to include in the definition of high-quality schools. A high quality school is one in which all students, including kids of color, emerging multilingual students, and students with disabilities, are earning a great education. Both of these factors, in addition to preparedness for work and postsecondary success, are thankfully already included in the existing School Performance Framework. I think that the district has taken the right first step to communicate with students, parents, and the community about performance through the launch of their new interactive online map. In order for this to be a truly meaningful tool, easy-to-understand clarifying language would help bolster this resource.

**Gail Pough:** A high-quality school is one where kids are celebrated, loved, and earn great educations, regardless of their race, money, disability, immigration status, LGBTQ status, gender. Every kid deserves our high expectations. We need to believe that all of our kids can learn and achieve. We need to figure out how to get them there.

I like that the current system acknowledges the difference between growth and proficiency - we need to get all kids proficient, and we also need to be real that kids come in at different starting points. Great growth is something to celebrate as schools make progress to proficiency.

The district needs to actively engage the community about how they evaluate schools, and what the evaluations mean. As a parent I might choose to send my child to a school with a smaller achievement gap, or I might want to send my child to the school with top proficiency. Families need to know how the schools are doing, so the district needs to do as much outreach as possible.

**Lea Steed:** High quality school is where children are engaged, where the [response was not completed]

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

### 3.2 Research shows that Aurora Public Schools is a highly segregated school district by race and income with poverty concentrated in NW Aurora. What would you do as a school board member, if anything, to address this issue?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** It is critical that the Board focuses on programs to strategize improvement and student growth, particularly in NW Aurora. I was once a new student in Aurora Public Schools (Lansing Elementary), my family battled homelessness and system involvement. Being at school was like an escape from reality for me, dealing with such issues. My fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Fisch, made me feel like I belonged and was accepted regardless of the circumstances at home. As a board member, it is very important to me to ensure that students feel safe and that our academic community is supportive of the student and their family. We do that through building a network of support with community resources and being present as much at the micro and mezzo levels as the macro level.

**Jane Barber:** Again an equity task force if given complete transparency and accessibility to the records and results of the district. There are organizations that would help in this effort. our children can,t wait for the adults to decide what to do-what to do-what to do??? Their time is now.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** Set policy and focus that evaluates the needs of NW Aurora. In other words, we must address the needs of the students, teachers and families and allocated the resources to NW Aurora so that we can start to address the gap and begin to close the gap. Unfortunately, the board cannot change the environment of the community to create less segregation. The board does not have the power to change the housing situation or job situation, but the board can put resources there and bring its partners and community stakeholders there to implement programs and bring awareness to the area. The board can start the discussion on how to create change in NW Aurora.

**3.2 (Cont.) Research shows that Aurora Public Schools is a highly segregated school district by race and income with poverty concentrated in NW Aurora. What would you do as a school board member, if anything, to address this issue?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** I believe that the district should approach the allocation of resources through an equity lens. For example, this might allow for additional supports to be provided to highly-impooverished and ethnically diverse communities like northwest Aurora. I also believe that it is the role of the school board to actively engage the communities in these segregated areas, particularly if these communities have not historically invited to be at the table. There is strength in having the entire village coordinate and communicate with one another in order to successfully raise the child. We can't change where people live, but we can reconsider the impact that has on school segregation. Every school in every neighborhood should provide kids with an excellent education, but better transportation within the district would help ensure that our kids are not bound by geography.

**Gail Pough:** It's a huge problem. Neighborhoods are segregated, and in this country we generally zone schools, and fund them, based on neighborhood boundaries. We can't tell people where to live, and I hope that Aurora neighborhoods will continue to integrate. But I do think that we can carefully consider whether or not school boundaries are perpetuating decades of segregation, and whether options like better transportation so that kids from different neighborhoods can move more freely between the district would work. What would it look like if kids from NW Aurora and kids from out by Iliff Ave and Buckley AFB sat next to each other in school?

**Lea Steed:** As a school board member one of the first steps I would take would be to increase outreach to parents, organizations and businesses to create a bridge with the schools to help create programs and clubs to support the school. Second, I would reach out to schools in the district that are thriving to create a co-teaching program to assist teachers and administrators to develop successful programs to build up the failing school to it's full potential.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

## PART 4: GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITY

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

It is the role of a School Board Member to hold the Superintendent accountable to student outcomes.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
4	4	NR	NR	3	4	4	3	NR

Rate the following statements on a scale of 1-4, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4= strongly agree.

The priority of the school district should be improving student outcomes in low-performing schools.

Kyla Armstrong-Romero	Jane Barber	Kevin Cox	Debbie Gerkin	Marques A. Ivey	Miguel In Suk Lovato	Gail Pough	Lea Steed	Barbara Yamrick
4	3	NR	NR	4	4	4	3	NR

#### 4.1 What will be your two primary goals as a Board member? How will families & community know you are working towards these goals?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** Based on my research and understanding of key issues in Aurora Public Schools, there are several top priorities and concerns that I have that I'd like to address. Addressing the budget shortfall and establishing transparency is a top concern. It is the responsibility of the board to evaluate every program that APS has and its efficacy. This includes any private contracts that the district has and how they are held accountable. Considering the shortfall, it is important to have transparency and an improvement of communication about how the cuts will impact the entire district. Education needs to be the primary focus of the board and decisions should not impact overall service delivery and/or access to education for ALL students. The essential point is that we need to be very strategic in how we make our decisions and involve key stakeholders in the decision-making process. I will be transparent and I want the community to hold me accountable as their public servant.

**Jane Barber:** CHILDREN FIRST

1. apprenticeship programs so the kids know the value, to honor students who do not want to go college and are work-force ready.
2. Recognize classified people for what they contribute to our children's education.

CHILDREN FIRST

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** 1) Need based allocation of resources to schools. Every school is different and the needs of those individual schools are different. We must meet the needs of those schools to improve performance and close gaps. 2) Creating opportunities for family, teacher, and community input to the board. I want there to be transparency and accessibility to the board.

#### 4.1 (Cont.) What will be your two primary goals as a Board member? How will families & community know you are working towards these goals?

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** One of my primary goals will be to push the district for urgent change by looking at examples of success in surrounding districts and nation. There is no need to reinvent the wheel or start from scratch. Certainly, we must enact changes in Aurora Public School with respect to the nuances and unique aspects of the Aurora community. But this should not stop us from learning from (and perhaps working with) other school districts that have tackled similar issues before us.

Another goal will be to push for greater accountability and transparency to the students, parents, and community. Ultimately, it is the school district's job to educate our children. The district must be held accountable for their education and should make changes and course corrections along the way as necessary.

**Gail Pough:** 1. To ensure equity is kept at the forefront in the district. All children, no matter their socio-economic status, race, ability, or immigration status, should have an excellent education.

2. To expand services for translation. When teachers are not able to communicate about academic achievement due to a language barrier, parents can't advocate for their kids. The district should look to the multitude of community organizations for support, and for state, federal, and private grants to help the district pay for these services. Finally, sometimes it's about prioritization. The principals of the innovation zone in Aurora used their autonomy to ensure that their schools had additional interpretation services. The district should look at those decisions as they consider the broader district budgeting, parent teacher conferences, school board meetings, and every document sent home from school needs to be accessible to every family.

**Lea Steed:** My first goal is community and parent engagement. Studies show that when parents are involved in their children's academic development, that child thrives. As a school board member creating a feed back loop for parents to stay engaged is important. Translating information and consistent information sessions with parents and communities creates a connections and partnerships.

**4.2 What were one or two decisions that the APS Board made in the last four years that you strongly agree with? How would you work to support these policies?**

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** The strategic plan and goals for 2020 in partnership with the community was a decision that I strongly agree with. There is potential to make APS the greatest school district in the state. We can improve our graduation/ completion rates. We can also improve the drop-out rates. It will take an active and involved board to ask necessary questions, to get involved in the schools, and engage the community.

**Jane Barber:** 1. Signed the resolution to reaffirm APS' inclusive Practices and Beliefs for all Students Regardless of Documentation Status. 2. Held firm to keeping All-day kindergarten even during one of the worst financial crises of their history.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** APS has a welcome center that was started in 2015. The center has been a success with the goal of helping new families with transitioning into the school district. I would want to make sure that the welcome center is fully funded, and expanded to meet the needs of new families and their students. This has been an amazing and positive program, and we want to make sure that it will continue to meet the needs of the students and their families. Further, the welcome center needs to expand as the community expands, and diversify its services as the community diversifies. We must make every effort to be accessible to the community so that we can know what needs we need to meet for each student, and eliminate that learning gap and resource gap that exist.

**4.2 (Cont.) What were one or two decisions that the APS Board made in the last four years that you strongly agree with? How would you work to support these policies?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** I thank the school board for approving the Resolution to Keep APS a Safe and Inclusive School Community - the community-led resolution to support students regardless of immigration status passed in the spring. I feel that it is an important reaffirmation of the role that schools play in our community. It is also an important declaration of what role the schools will not play - that of assisting immigration and customs officials with the enforcement of immigration laws. Schools must be safe zones for all children.

I also applaud the steps taken by the school board to censure one of their fellow school board members when discrepancies with his resume became apparent. Faced with the inability to remove a sitting board member, the board took the maximum course of action by relieving him of school board-related duties. I believe that this action was the right decision to make.

**Gail Pough:** 1. Creating the innovation zone allowed schools within the zone to become more autonomous and allowed for flexibility in decision making to serve their unique populations. This allowed Crawford elementary to decide to not cut translations services (which were cut at the district level).

2. I was proud to support the Aurora School Board's resolution supporting our immigrant students - public school is for everyone in our community, and students can't learn if they aren't safe. My daughter Kris testified in support of the resolution at public comment because our family stands with all students.

**Lea Steed:** The APS 2020 Shaping the Future has great ideas that with the right support will be successful. I would work with the financial, communication parent engagement committees and value the input to make sure this is successful.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

### 4.3 What were one or two decisions that the APS Board made in the last four years that you strongly disagree with? How would you work to change these policies?

**Kyla Armstrong-Romero:** Good school systems are derived from good school boards. The graduation rates in the district are among the lowest in the state and the dropout rates are among the highest. It is important that School Board Directors are accountable and transparent with the community; that has not been the case historically. Although the strategic plan is reflective of the communities beliefs and goals; when talking about funding and budget cuts it is apparent that the community is not involved and/or engaged in those conversations. We can't engage the community only in the issues that make us look good...This election is very important; the board, faculty, students, and community deserve new leadership and fresh perspectives. Aurora is a diverse melting pot of different cultures; it is important that we support ALL students and ALL families to truly transform our schools.

**Jane Barber:** 1. Fletcher and their decision to make it a charter school even though the staff and the parents urged them not to.

2.DSST-I do not think it was in the superintendents venue to ask these people to come to our district. He should not have offered to help build their schools. Closely monitor their progress and lack thereof-make sure they take care of mentally and physically challenged students and not claim 'we can't do anything more for you". Charters need to figure out a way to to include everyone. Until traditional schools and charter schools are held to the same accountability, then there is no equity or equality. Thank you for your interest in Aurora Public Schools.

**Kevin Cox:** No Response

**Debbie Gerkin:** No Response

**Marques A. Ivey:** We have some great schools that are in extreme close proximity to one another. In fact we have two K-8 schools, William Smith High School, and Pickens Tech all right next to each other. I understand there is different criteria for each school, but it is a problem when you have used resources to build schools right next to each other. The schools should be spread out and placed in communities where the schools are most needed. At this point, this cannot be changed, but we can work to make sure that the schools are each meeting the needs of the population that it serves. And that there is equal access to the schools.

**4.3 (Cont.) What were one or two decisions that the APS Board made in the last four years that you strongly disagree with? How would you work to change these policies?**

**Miguel In Suk Lovato:** Some of the implementation plans for the innovation zone schools were less than inspiring. This moment could have been used to rally the troops around a bold vision for the future where we reaffirm our commitment and belief that all students can excel academically. My worry is that some of the schools in the innovation zone will demonstrate strong improvement and others won't. In Colorado, not all schools with innovation status have been successful. We need to learn from the successful innovation school models and apply these learnings in Aurora.

I also believe that the decision to cut interpretation services across the district was poorly executed. In a district with over 130 different languages, interpretation is vital. I applaud the innovation schools' decision to keep interpretation services despite the cuts. This made sense, especially when schools like Crawford Elementary use interpretation services three times more often than the average school in the district.

**Gail Pough:** 1. It's true that Aurora faces serious funding challenges. Enrollment is declining, and as it does, so does the budget. While I'm very glad that the proposed \$31m budget cuts were not as large as we initially thought they would be, I was and am very concerned by the tone of some of the suggested cuts - particularly eliminating full-day kindergarten and moving to a four-day school week. The chaos and panic that the proposal caused was very real, and we know that full-day kindergarten and more, not less, time spent in school are two of the very best things we can do to tackle the achievement gap. We need to balance the budget, but not by eliminating the very programs that we know work the best. Finally, at a time when we see disparities in the NW section of the district as compared to the SE section, the decision to decrease the budget in the Division of Equity undermines the district's equity goals.

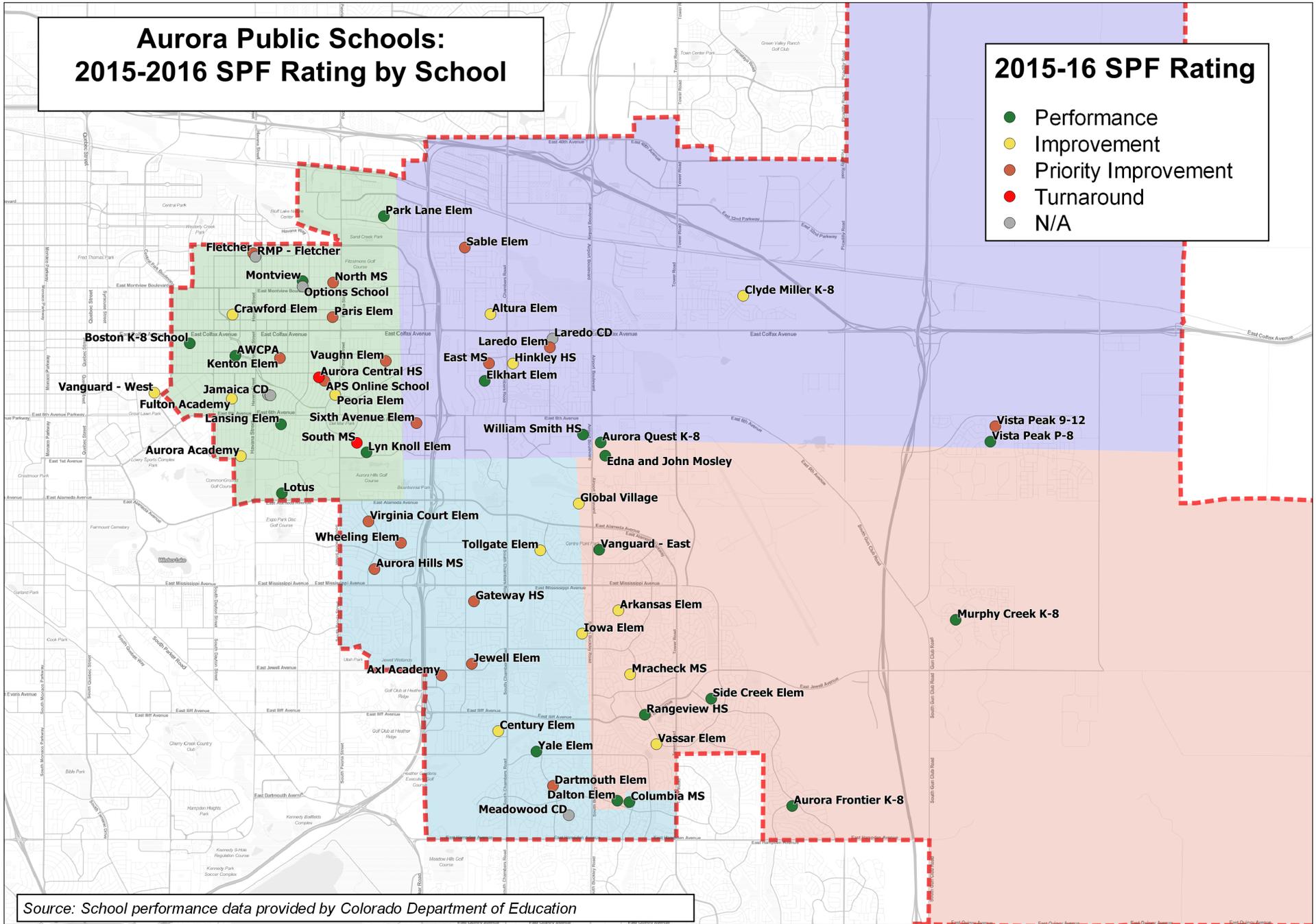
**Lea Steed:** Currently I am not aware of any decisions APS Board has made that I strongly disagree with.

**Barbara Yamrick:** No Response

# Aurora Public Schools: 2015-2016 SPF Rating by School

## 2015-16 SPF Rating

- Performance
- Improvement
- Priority Improvement
- Turnaround
- N/A



Source: School performance data provided by Colorado Department of Education