

## Scott Graves School Board Questions and Responses

a. Why are you seeking an appointment to the CCSD Board of Education, and what policies will you prioritize if elected?

When my wife and I moved back to Colorado from Texas we knew we wanted to either live in Littleton Public Schools, where we both graduated from Arapahoe High School, or Cherry Creek Schools. We were thrilled to find a home in Cherry Creek that we could afford. Cherry Creek has always had a reputation for excellence, even when we were in school 30 years ago.

Over time we began to notice some discrepancies in that reputation. As we dug deeper, we discovered that academic achievement is not where we thought it was. While many of our kids' teachers were wonderful, there were policies from the administrative level that got in the way of instruction.

I want to free teachers to be their best selves and create positive outcomes academically for students. To do this we need to emphasize the importance of academic achievement, provide a safe and welcoming learning environment for kids, and foster the parent-teacher-student partnerships that are crucial to a child's success.

b. What experiences and qualifications do you have that uniquely prepare you to be a CCSD Board of Education member?

First, and most importantly, I'm a father of five fantastic sons! Raising them has been one of the great challenges and successes of my life. In addition, I'm a former schoolteacher myself, having taught band, orchestra, choir, theater, and general music at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. I have a Master of Arts degree in Education and a Bachelor of Music degree. I absolutely loved this work, and it was a privilege to see the growth in my students.

Unfortunately, after the financial crisis I was laid off. I moved back to Colorado from Texas and started a small business, which has now been successful for 12 years.

In short, I can communicate easily and hear and understand the concerns of parents, teachers, and community members and represent them effectively.

c. In which school or district organizations are you, or have you been active? PTCOs, PASS, IPAC, DAC, SEAC, GTPC, Leadership Cherry Creek, etc.?

We have worked closely with teachers and support staff during the education of our five sons, four of whom are special needs. Special education, therefore, has been an especial focus for us. In addition, through my business, I have financially sponsored curriculum programs at Overland High School and student music and athletic groups at Grandview High School.

d. Explain in what areas you believe the Cherry Creek School District excels.

My 4<sup>th</sup> son has an extremely debilitating anxiety disorder. It prevented him from attending school. After 5 years of trying various ideas, we heard about Elevation from a friend at church. He is now attending there and is THRIVING!

Cherry Creek does a great job with providing options for various student needs. But we need to do a better job of letting parents know about them so they, in consultation with those they trust, can put their children in the best situation for them to thrive.

These options are also spread over a large geographic area, without access to transportation. The job isn't done. Let's support parents and kids by continuing to create options for them.

e. Cherry Creek School District believes in equity for all. As a CCSD Board of Education candidate, what have you done to increase your knowledge regarding equity, including racial, gender, gender identity, and academic needs (Special Education, Gifted and Talented, English Learners)?

I indeed believe in fairness for all. All students are capable of success, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, or academic needs.

My four special needs kids are all twice exceptional, meaning they struggle with some areas (in their case, mental health) but are gifted and talented in other areas. They are unique, as is every individual child. Every child has their own strengths and weaknesses. We should be putting them in a position to excel at their strengths, while giving them support around their weaknesses, as individuals. My concern is that if we continue to see kids as members of groups, we will miss what makes them special.

f. What are your beliefs about the school district's responsibility to keep students safe, and does that include public health?

A physically and emotionally safe environment is necessary for a child to succeed. I'm extremely concerned about the rash of school shootings we've had, from East High School to Highlands Ranch STEM School to my own alma mater, Arapahoe High School. Our children are precious enough to do whatever is necessary to prevent this type of event EVER happening in CCSD. Therefore, I support having an SRO assigned to each school, trained to work with the age group they are assigned to, and trained in conflict resolution techniques.

Almost as important as physical safety is emotional safety. Every student should feel welcome in their school, free from ridicule for their opinions, values, or beliefs. There should be no tolerance for any student, and especially any staff member, who bullies, intimidates, or otherwise belittles any student or staff member for expressing themselves appropriately.

The reality is that these negative interactions will occur, no matter how hard we try to prevent them. So, we must also teach students and staff members how to be emotionally resilient, not emotionally fragile. Many negative interactions happen simply by mistake, and relationships can be mended through understanding and an extension of grace.