

Kids can't vote...
BUT YOU CAN



2011 District 2 School Board Voter Guide

The Facts You Need to Vote
For School Board on May 17!



A+ Schools is a nonpartisan organization. We do not support or endorse any specific candidate. Our goal is to educate the community and promote increased participation in school board elections.

District 2 School Board Candidates

On May 17, voters will choose School Board directors from a field of candidates. A+ Schools has asked the candidates to help voters decide by answering a few questions. Districts 2, 4, 6, and 8 are up for reelection in 2011. Districts 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 will be up for reelection in 2013. A+ Schools neither supports nor endorses any specific candidate.

Meet the Candidates:

What are your most important personal characteristics or traits as they relate to the office you seek?

Please describe your strengths in at least 1 of the 5 A+ Schools indicators of effective governance: focus and mission, transparency, conduct, competency or role clarity.

What do you believe to be the role of the School Board as it relates to how the district operates and how do you plan to uphold this role, if elected?



Dara Ware Allen

- School Board Director since 2009
- Executive Director, Youth Works Inc.
- Resides in Highland Park
- Cross-filed as both Democrat and Republican

www.friendsofdarawareallen.org

Throughout my professional experiences, the ability to work collaboratively and build win-win coalitions with a cross-section of individuals and groups is a skill that comes naturally to me. From working with governmental, corporate, educational, and non-profit executives as well as individuals from a grass-roots level, I am often able to build consensus among key stakeholders. I would continue to use this ability to enhance strategic discussions and planning around PPS educational priorities and initiatives.

I along with other current members of the Board take all of the indicators identified by A+ Schools of effective governance very seriously. Of all of the indicators, I expend particular effort in striving to continuously build my competence as a board member. It is important to base our decisions on data (informal and formal) and a high level of preparedness. Ultimately, our individual competence is a direct reflection of our effectiveness overall.

The School Board's role is to work collaboratively together with the Superintendent and designated staff while giving voice to the concerns and best hopes of PPS residents.

Photo not provided.

Celina Basant

- Education Instructor, Community College of Allegheny County
- Resides in Spring Hill
- Democrat

Website not provided.

As a veteran educator, my personal experience will be great help in guiding my tenure on the school board.

No response given.

School boards play a pivotal role in driving the direction of the school district. I plan to pull from my experience in education as a consultant, a reformer, a small school creator



Regina Holley

- Future Educators of America, Indiana University
- Resides in Highland Park
- Democrat

Website not provided.

My most important personal characteristics are passion and dedication. I am passionate about helping children develop into adults who are productive economically and who strive to help strengthen their communities. I am dedicated to the development of a school system where children are being educated by highly qualified teachers, administrators and policy makers -- thus making us all equally responsible for the welfare of students within our city.

Competency - Having served as an administrator in the Pittsburgh Public School District, I was able to rally staff, parents and community members in the creation of a learning environment that consistently raised the achievement of students. This was done through the establishment of a vision that centered on "no excuses" as related to student achievement. I was a risk taker who effectively correlated the district's vision with the needs of my students.

The School Board should work as ONE community with the core mission of making sure that every student is positioned for academic success. Boards can no longer work as fragmented segments only concerned about their individual constituents. This will require a collegial, accountable and respectful working relationship and broader knowledge about teaching and learning. Boards must realize - when one segment of schools fails to reach proficiency - the entire district fails.

Elected for a 4-Year Term with No Term Limits

Every candidate was sent the same questionnaire and given an opportunity to respond. A+ Schools neither edits material submitted nor changes spelling, punctuation or grammar. All candidates were asked to limit their response to 75 words or less. Candidates for each School Board district are listed in alphabetical order by last name.

If elected, in what policy area will you show the most leadership and how do you intend to do so?

What do you believe to be the most critical issue facing the Pittsburgh Public School District and, if elected to the board, what specific actions will you take to address it?

In the upcoming months, the school district could lose many millions of dollars in state funding. If you were elected to the board, what would be your course of action to address a large funding cut from the state?

Dara Ware Allen
(continued)

An equity policy was approved by PPS within the past year. This is a good start in recognizing that equity requires focused attention and intentional effort. As Chair of the Education Committee, we proactively develop an annual schedule of educational priorities. Two priority items scheduled for 2011 are: 1)Assuring Equity Across the District-Follow-up to Achievement Gap/Equity Report (April) and 2)Identifying Success Within- developing a process for identifying promising practices within our schools to replicate.

Student achievement of all students is a critical issue facing PPS and our region. Successful implementation of the Empowering Effective Teachers Plan; continuation of the 9th grade Promise Readiness Corps; implementing period 10 more broadly as a credit recovery intervention along with reforming summer school at the high school level to stem learning loss; and addressing inequities across schools are all opportunities to help boost student achievement, particularly among African Americans and high school students.

PPS has already begun to deal with the pending proposed cuts to education in Governor Corbett's budget. First, the 2011 approved PPS budget proactively plans for a loss of \$17M in stimulus funding not being restored. Secondly, Dr. Lane required all central office administrators to cut their budgets by 10%. Going forward, I would authorize cuts that start the farthest away from the classroom as possible to minimize the impact on student achievement.

Celina Basant
(continued)

My focus will be on program implementation and assessments of current Initiatives, as well as the reform effort of the district.

Restructuring/reform (school closing), budgeting and staff quality (head office)

No response given.

Regina Holley
(continued)

I will strive to be a leader who focuses on student achievement in a laser like manner. I will accomplish this focus by developing policy that holds all role groups accountable for student achievement -- across all grade levels. This accountability will not be limited to teachers and principals, but central office staff, support staff and contracted services - with success being measured through student outcomes. I will serve as an "instructional based" board member.

I believe the most critical issue facing PPS is the threat of the voucher system. It is critical that we improve our academic standing in the county. Without dramatic improvement, I fear that we will lose many of our talented students in numbers that we have not yet realized. Closer communication and deeper transparency with parents and community must be established. Academic success for the entire district has to be a major focus.

I would suggest a retreat with key cabinet staff to examine deeply where cuts could be made without impacting the school sites. I would research comparable school districts to review central office configurations and fiscal characteristics. This would be followed with the development of an appeal to the Governor's office on behalf of our students and families. I would gather parental/community/student input to assist in problem solving strategies.

More Information

What is a School Board?

- The Pittsburgh Board of Education (School Board) is an elected body made up of nine directors who represent different areas within the City of Pittsburgh.
- Your School Board Director is the person elected to represent your district on the School Board.

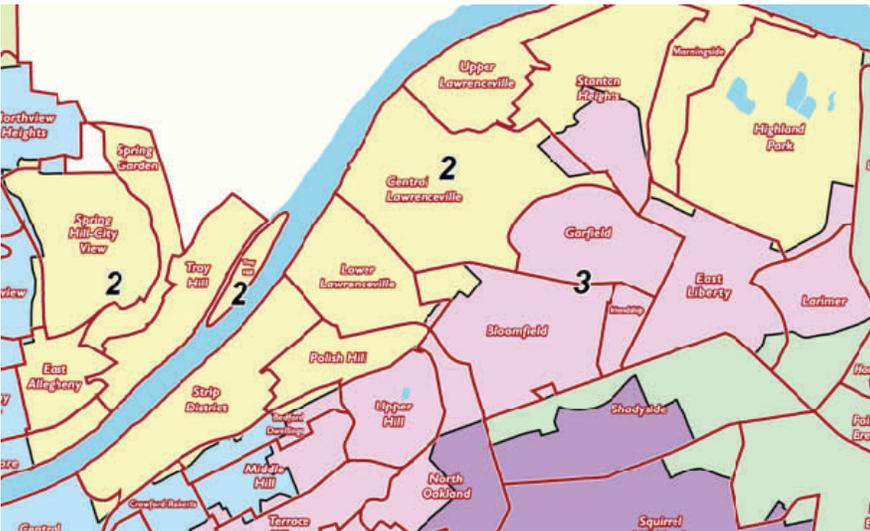
What Does the School Board Do?

- School Board directors make decisions that impact every aspect of a child's education. They hire and evaluate the superintendent, decide which programs stay or go, which schools stay open or closed, how students will get to school and what they are taught.
- The School Board oversees the spending of your tax dollars. Currently, two-thirds of your wage taxes and over half of your local real estate taxes support the school district.

When and Where do I Vote?

- The primary election is May 17.
- Confirm you're registered or find your polling place by visiting www.votespa.com or calling the Allegheny Department of Elections at 412-350-4150.
- On Election Day, you can also call 1-877-OUR-VOTE (1-877-687-8683) to find your polling place.

Where is District 2?



Area(s) of the City:	Neighborhoods:	Schools:
North Side	<u>Whole Neighborhoods:</u> East Allegheny Spring Hill Spring Garden Troy Hill	<u>Schools:</u> Schiller 6-8 Spring Hill K-5 Early Childhood Center @ Troy Hill
	<u>Partial Neighborhood:</u> North Shore	
	<u>Whole Neighborhoods:</u> Highland Park Morningside Lawrenceville Polish Hill Strip District	<u>Schools:</u> Dilworth Pk-5 Fulton Pk-5 Sunnyside K-8 Arsenal Pk-5 Arsenal 6-8 Woolslair K-5
East End	<u>Partial Neighborhoods:</u> Stanton Heights Bloomfield	Early Childhood Center @ McCleary

About A+ Schools

A+ Schools is an independent community advocate for improvement in public education. Our purpose is to be a community force advancing the highest educational achievement and character development for every public school student. One of the ways we can make sure that happens is by having a well informed public that votes in EVERY school board election. Our work is nonpartisan. We do not endorse or support any specific candidate.

26,000 PITTSBURGH STUDENTS ARE DEPENDING ON YOUR VOTE!

