

Kids can't vote...  
**BUT YOU CAN**



## **2011 District 8 School Board Voter Guide**

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



**Schools**  
Pittsburgh's Community Alliance for Public Education

*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 8 School Board Candidates

On May 17, voters will choose School Board directors from a field of candidates. A+ Schools 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?**



### Mark Brentley, Sr.

- School Board Director since 1999
- Laborer, City of Pittsburgh
- Resides in Allegheny Center
- Cross-filed as both Democrat and Republican

My most important personal characteristics are honesty, dedication, and commitment.

Conduct, would be one of my greatest strengths. For the last 5 years I have been under attack and often criticized for my opinion on certain issues. Despite the issues and positions that I have taken, I have continued to maintain professionalism during all school board meetings and school district functions.

Presently, I do not believe the board operates correctly. Most major decisions are made based on race, politics, or classism. It seems as though the wealthier communities issues are addressed immediately while issues in poor communities go unaddressed and rarely are they resolved in a timely fashion. I believe the role of the School Board is to direct the Superintendent, and the Superintendent and staff are to execute policies and procedures of the board.

[www.markbrentley.com](http://www.markbrentley.com)



### Lisa Freeman

- Community Mobilizer, TCV MH/MR, Inc.
- Resides in Manchester
- Democrat

It took me seven and a half years to successfully complete the requirements of dual Masters Degrees in Social Work and Public Administration. During those long 7 and ½ years, the most important skill I learned was how to delay self-gratification. I learned that “slow and steady” wins the race. As School Board Director, I would have the determination needed to stay the course and keep my eye on long-term goals.

Role clarity – As President of Manchester Elementary School PTA ([PTA]- a nationally affiliated group) I pledged to advocate for ALL children, not the interest of one school. This position has given me several opportunities this past year to speak for ALL of our children of the greater North Side area. As board director I would transfer the experience I have of assessing, monitoring, evaluating and would be accountable to the communities the results gained.

I agree with the School District's principle of “Shared Responsibilities”. “We know that education is the key to our future. All of us -- students, teachers, administrators, families, community, board members and other civic leaders – will take an active role in helping our students succeed”. I’m concerned with the number of discouraged and/or uninvolved parents. Parents; our children’s “first teacher” will be encouraged and empowered to take an active role in our “shared responsibilities”.

Website not provided.

### Deloris Lewis

Candidate did not participate.

- Resides in Central Northside
- Democrat



### Arita Gilliam Rue

- Program Director, School Health Partnership, UPMC
- Resides in Manchester
- Democrat

My important personal characteristics which will make me an asset to the Board are my passion for what is fair and equitable for children, and my ability to work collaboratively to achieve that goal. I am a competent decision maker-systematic, methodical and logical in my thinking and a team player who takes pride in group accomplishment. I am an excellent listener, patient and respectful of others.

Competence and role clarity are my strengths. As a youth development specialist, I stay informed of trends and best practices so that I can practice proven methods based on how well they will contribute to the outcomes we seek to accomplish. As a Board member, I will strive to insure that programs and projects are consistent with the Board's mission and goals to insure that quality education is provided to every child in every school.

The School Board is the school district's policy-making arm and has been granted the public's trust to create policy that provides the best education possible for every student. That means that all decisions relating to policy, facilities, and personnel must be viewed through the lens of how they will best contribute to quality education for every student. I will use that lens in my decision making to insure equity and quality in public education.

[www.electarita.com](http://www.electarita.com)

# 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?**

**Mark Brentley, Sr.**  
*(continued)*

When re-elected I will continue to fight for equity for ALL children, advocate for increased male/parent involvement throughout the district, and increase business opportunities for women, minority, and small businesses throughout the district.

I believe the most critical issue facing the PPS district is the mounting debt accumulated within the past 5 years. The change must come from the entire board. My specific actions will be to continue to be the voice of reason, to advocate for the poor, and to be watchdog over public dollars.

My course of action to address the funding cuts would be to develop a PPS Retired Employee Council (putting out a call to retired employees asking them to serve on an adhoc committee to make recommendations to the governors budget cuts). This committee would measure the governors budget impact on the PPS. Second, the committee would put a plan of action together to make recommendations to the district for cuts and/or consolidations of services.

**Lisa Freeman**  
*(continued)*

Title 1 - Most people don't have a full understanding of what Title 1 schools are. The funding formula used for Title 1 schools is not equitable and further restricts schools that have varying needs. Unfortunately almost all schools in the District are Title 1. It's a problem that reaches higher than the School District but a very important issue that needs strong attention. An issue that correlates to pittsburgh's increasing high school drop-out rate.

The increasing high school drop-out rate. Honestly, I don't know how to reverse this trend. It goes back to my statement of "shared responsibility". I can only say that it will take the "village to raise a child". All minds have to be open and at the table to tackle this problem.

I apologize for not sugar coating this answer. The reality is that jobs will be lost and cost savings have to be found. Cutting early education funding is something I would not consider. Funding preschool education as a preventive measure far outweighs the high cost of funding special education classrooms. Instead I would sell-off district's assets such as the high-cost administration building in Oakland and relocate offices to one of the district's low enrollment schools.

**Arita Gilliam Rue**  
*(continued)*

My personal and professional experience prepares me to contribute and provide leadership to the School Board's Education Committee. I have spent the past 17 years developing programs that contribute to the academic and personal success of Pittsburgh public school students. I regularly spend time researching best practices and seek professional development and peer review. I commit to apply the same persistent standards to the work that I will do for the school district.

Pittsburgh Public Schools faces many critical issues at this time. The especially vexing issue of low academic achievement must be addressed. We must commit to eliminating educational disparities and fostering the maximum potential in every child. Preparing students to achieve academic excellence will position them for personal success after high school and reflect positively on our region. I will work to insure that we employ the best methods to motivate our children to learn.

Fundamental services like transportation and special education must be provided and values like equity and academic achievement must not be compromised. I believe that proactive measures must be taken to insure the maintenance of services and values which will require an informed community and collective action. The process must be reflective, deliberate and student-centered. I will consistently advocate for responsible stewardship and smart cuts that do not compromise student achievement.

# 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.

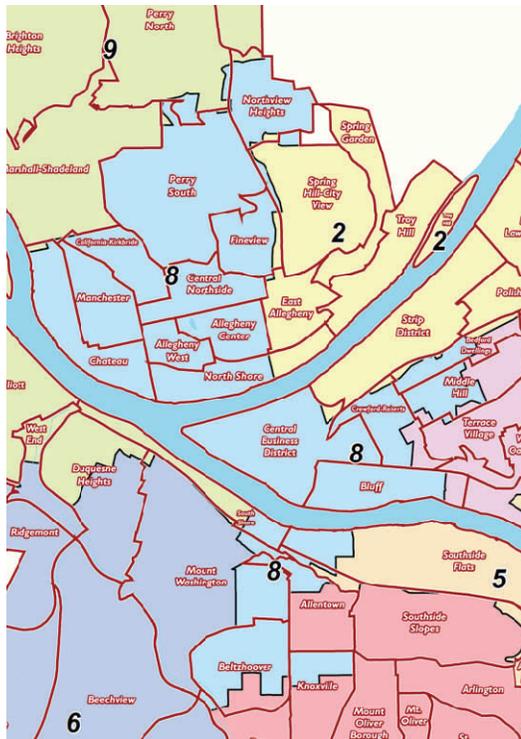
## What does the School Board do?

- 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](http://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 8?



### Area(s) of the City:

North Side

Central Pittsburgh/Hill District

South Pittsburgh

### Neighborhoods:

#### Whole Neighborhoods:

Allegheny Center  
Allegheny West  
California-Kirkbride  
Central Northside  
Fineview  
Manchester

#### Partial Neighborhood:

North Shore

#### Whole Neighborhoods:

Central Business District

#### Partial Neighborhoods:

Crawford Roberts  
Middle Hill  
Bedford Dwellings  
Bluff

#### Partial Neighborhoods:

Southshore  
Southside Flats  
Beltzhoover  
Allentown  
Knoxville  
Mount Washington

### Schools:

#### Schools:

Northview Pk-8  
Manchester Pk-8  
Allegheny K-8  
Allegheny 6-8  
King Pk-8

Early Childhood  
Centers @  
Children's  
Museum and  
Conroy

#### Schools:

Miller Pk-5  
Weil Pk-5  
CAPA 6-12

## 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!**

