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For Immediate Release:

4 out of 9 Board of Education candidates do not see education as a top priority.

Survey shows a deepening divide between what incumbent board members and some candidates prioritize and what many community members from across Denver want from their school district.

September 21, 2023 - Denver, CO A survey conducted by [Resign DPS Board](#) shows that community members across Denver want DPS to focus on two things: Ensuring staff and students are safe and improving academic outcomes for all students.

In contrast, **4 of 9 candidates running for the DPS Board of Education did NOT list academic outcomes as a top priority for the district, including incumbents Scott Baldermann and Charmaine Lindsay.** Moreover, neither incumbent, nor many of the other candidates running for the Board's three contested seats, offered goals around safety that respondents found sufficient.

The survey was taken by all nine current Board candidates and 530 parents and community members across Denver. [The candidates were asked](#) to identify their top three priorities for the district and to then suggest three specific goals and related metrics that they would push to implement if elected or re-elected to the School Board.

[Community members were then surveyed](#) to identify their top three priorities for the district and rank the ideas offered by the candidates themselves around specific goals and accountability metrics. To avoid inherent bias, the goals were listed **without** naming the specific candidate who offered the idea.

On priorities, the community response was very clear: 85% of respondents stated **safety and academic outcomes** should be the top priorities for DPS.

- Contrary to what their constituents want, neither incumbent Scott Baldermann nor incumbent Charmaine Lindsay identified academic outcomes as a top priority. Additionally, neither District 5 challenger Adam Slutzker nor At-Large candidate Brittni Johnson listed academic outcomes as a priority.
- Safety was a top priority for all candidates except Adam Slutzker, but the goals to achieve safety and the metrics for accountability are **vastly different** between candidates, and **significantly insufficient** according to many community members.
- Specifically, community members stated that of the goals offered by candidates around safety, **none of them addressed the current expulsion policy**, which allows students charged with violent crimes to remain in comprehensive school settings.

The goals and accountability metrics offered by candidates that **resonated the most** with community respondents came from three of the At-Large candidates including the following:

1. Improve safety as measured by 100% of staff/students reporting they feel safer (offered by At Large candidate Kwame Spearman)
2. Create safer schools as measured by weekly safety data dashboard that captures # of reported incidents, # of disciplinary actions by tier, # of violent events and # confiscated weapons (offered by At Large candidate Paul Bellanger. District 1 incumbent Scott Baldermann offered a similar but more limited idea around tracking confiscated weapons)
3. Improve academic outcomes for ALL student demographics, as measured by all sub groups receiving Median Growth Percentile of 55 or higher on identified accountability level assessments. (offered by At-Large candidate John Youngquist)

The goals and accountability metrics offered by candidates that **resonated the least** with community respondents including the following:

1. Desegregate schools so every DPS school is within 20% of the district average for race and socio-economic class within five years. (offered by District 1 incumbent Scott Baldermann)
2. Establish restorative justice training for schools, and a rubric for educators to follow, as an alternative to punishment. (offered by District 5 incumbent Charmaine Lindsay)
3. Reduce school-to-prison pipeline, as measured by a reduction in # of students ticketed and suspended vs. diverted to restorative justice programs. (offered by At-Large candidate Brittini Johnson)

Full results from the survey can be found at [Resign DPS Board.org](https://ResignDPS.org)

In a statement to the thousands of Denver residents who signed the Resign DPS Board petition earlier this year, Steering Committee members shared these survey results and offered the following guidance as the election draws near:

“We urge everyone to read these responses, do their homework and make informed decisions when you cast your ballot in November. While ResignDPS.org has decided at this juncture to not endorse any At-large candidate, we believe that based upon the candidates’ responses we simply cannot support, and must soundly defeat, the following candidates: **At-Large: Brittini Johnson (NO), District 1: Scott Baldermann (NO), District 5: Charmaine Lindsey (NO) and Adam Slutzker (NO)**. These candidates will further create division on the DPS Board and ignore the priorities that our community thinks are critical. In the coming weeks [we hope to get more detailed responses](#) on safety and academic success strategies from the 5 candidates that we believe are entitled to a more thorough review.”

The overarching themes from the survey are clear: the community demands DPS prioritize educational outcomes and meaningful safety measures - nothing else matters if we can’t do these things well. The community then prioritized **teacher retention** and **preparing our children for the future**. Echoing earlier polls of likely voters, these same community members do not believe that current DPS Board members or the Superintendent can be trusted with **anything** - including the financial management of the district, the safety of our schools or the educational future of our kids.

Resign DPS Board was founded in large part because of the enormous disconnect between what Denver residents want in their education system and how the Board behaves and makes decisions. Resign DPS Board offered this survey to elevate where there are similarities and where there are differences in how a candidate views their job and what a voter wants in a Board member. We hope the results of this survey will bring some clarity to voters about the choices they have this November and also some understanding of the tradeoffs implicit in the job.