

Name: Patricia McSherry

District: Deming

Position: 1

Please answer the following to the best of your ability within 150 words or less.

1. What is motivating you to run for the school board?

I was appointed to fill an unexpired term in June 2018. I have learned that there are many positive things happening in our schools but there remains much work to be done. I feel that my experience as a sitting Board member gives me the insight to help our Superintendent and teachers improve so that our students have every opportunity to succeed.

2. What will your priorities be as a school board member?

I would like to see increased community attendance at the School Board meetings. During the various forums that I have attended it has been made clear to me that the outreach that the Board has done to inform the public of our meetings is not adequate. Even though the announcements of the Board meetings are posted on the windows of the office, in the newspaper, on the radio, and on social media, the public still is generally unaware of the place, time or date of the meetings. I would like to have the room full of community members so that they could see all the positive things that are being done and could offer their ideas.

I want to ensure that we do not lose the ability to reach the students that do not conform to standard school day and structure. Currently the Caesar Chavez Charter High School and the Mimbres Valley High School offer alternative classroom experiences for these students.

However, with the recent cut in funding for small schools CCCHS has had to reduce the number of students that it can support. This reduction will continue for the next few years to the point that the school is no longer sustainable. We have a committee that is working with both of these schools to come up with a resolution. I would like to be on the Board to see this to completion.

3. What have you done in the past to help your community thrive?

I was born and raised in Deming. During my school days here I actively participated in 4-H and school clubs that did community service. As an adult I am the Director of Pharmacy at Mimbres Memorial Hospital. I am president of BorderBelles, a civic group that promotes the agriculture way of life and beef in general. BorderBelles provides at least one, sometimes two, thousand dollar scholarships to outstanding students from Deming High School. I am an active member of Holy Family Roman Catholic Church.

4. How have you previously advocated for students and educators in your community?

Did not answer

5. How did your educational experiences shape you, and what lessons will you take with you from those experiences?

I enjoyed my 12 years in the Deming Public Schools and feel that I was well prepared for college. Our teachers were dedicated to their profession and it was obvious to us as students that they were truly interested in our education and success. I would like for every student in the Deming Public schools to have the same fond memories and good preparation that I had. I did learn that I had to work hard to be successful; that it was not enough to sit in the classroom and listen to the teacher.

6. Have you ever worked as an employee in public education? If so, how did your school board affect you? What lessons will you take from your experience into this position?

I have not worked in public education.

7. New Mexico has the lowest high school graduation rate in the nation. What specific steps will you take to address this problem?

I will refer back to my answer on Question 2-b. We need to acknowledge that not all students thrive in the traditional high school environment. Deming High School has a robust offering of what was once called "vocational" or "trade" classes which prepare the student to step into the workforce upon graduation. I will support more of that. I really support the Early College High School where students gain college credit as well as credit toward their high school graduation. And I will continue to support and fight for the CCCHS and Mimbres Valley High Schools.

8. New Mexico ranks 49th in 4th-grade reading and math scores. What specific steps will you take to address this problem?

I strongly support the K-5Plus concept that includes extending the time in school for students in those grades. We have seen success from the extra time in school and I will continue to support that.

9. How will you advocate for both the students and the employees of the public education system in your role?

In my opinion it is the business of the school district to provide the opportunity for a quality education to all students. As with any business the most efficient and effective employee is one who enjoys their job, has and appropriate work environment and has the equipment to do their job. Given that, I see my "job" as a school board member to ensure that we have sufficient staff in the classrooms, appropriately trained and licensed educators, and appropriate equipment for them to do their work.

10. Think New Mexico, a non-partisan think tank, released a study in 2017 which suggests that the percentage of a state's education budget that makes it to the classroom, as opposed to administrative costs, is related to student performance. Do you agree? Will you advocate for an increased percentage of the budget going to the classroom? Why or why not? If so, how will you address the issue?

I will grant that it is important to spend as much of the budget as possible in the classroom. We need to have salaries that are attractive to good educators, that are competitive with the surrounding districts and states, and that will ensure that there stability in the staff from year to year. If we do this I believe that student performance will improve. However, it is important to have good, experienced administrative personnel to support the classroom staff. It is also important to have well maintained facilities for our students and faculty to learn and work in. It is necessary to have staff that maintains the buildings and ground. All of these fall in to the administrative category. I will work to ensure that there is no unnecessary staff that does not contribute directly to the classroom and the education of the students.

11. New Mexico is combating a “teacher shortage.” A recent study by NMSU said New Mexico’s “teacher attractiveness score”* is 2.18 on a scale of one to five. What will you do to increase this score and make sure these vacancies are filled by qualified individuals as quickly as possible?

My goal is to ensure that Deming Public Schools is competitive in teacher salaries, working conditions, class size, and teacher support with the surrounding school districts. I also want to see all classrooms staffed with appropriately educated and licensed staff.

12. How can you make your school board an example of excellence for the other boards in the state?

I believe that our Board will be an example if we stay true to the mission of the District “Learning Today for Living Tomorrow”.

**According to [NMSU](#) “Teacher Attractiveness Score” takes into consideration compensation, working conditions, teacher qualifications, and teacher turnover.*