

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON VOTERS GUIDE[©]

MUNICIPAL AND SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION - MAY 9, 2009

This **VOTERS GUIDE**[©] is published by the League of Women Voters of Denton, with partial funding from the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund. *An electronic version of this guide is available at www.lwvdenton.org.* The purpose of the guide is to help eligible voters make an informed decision about candidates in contested races. Candidates are listed by City Council District and DISD School Board Place, then in alphabetical order by the last name. Candidates who do not have an opponent on the ballot are listed in the guide for your information. Candidates were asked to reply within specific word limits. (Answers exceeding the word limit are abbreviated at that limit.) The League has not edited any responses for grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

This guide lists responses from candidates in contested races whose constituency covers City of Denton Council positions for Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4, as well as Denton Independent School District Places 1 and 2.

EARLY VOTING will be available at City Hall at 215 East McKinney on the following dates:

April 27 – May 1 : 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

May 2: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

May 4 and 5: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

POLLING PLACES on Election Day will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Contact the City of Denton 940-349-8309 for a list of polling places by precinct.

The **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON** is a nonpartisan organization that works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. The League publishes and distributes factual information to help prepare citizens to cast an informed vote. The League takes action on selected governmental issues that it has studied.

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The League is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our community. Visit www.lwvdenton.org for information and a membership application, or send your name, address, phone number and email address, plus \$50 membership fee to: PO Box 424945 TWU Station, Denton, TX 76204.

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VOTERS GUIDE

Questions for candidates for Denton City Council:

1. What is the role of a City Council member in a council-manager form of government? (75 word limit)
2. What do you believe are the most important issues facing the City Council? (75 word limit)
3. What is the role of the council in addressing global climate change? (75 word limit)
4. What changes would you recommend be made in the City Charter? (75 word limit)

City Council, District 1

Eliborio “Eli Gemini” Beltran – No response

Bob Clifton – No Response

Charlye Heggins

1. The City-Manager form of government is the system of local government that unites the strong leadership of elected officials to establish policy, pass local ordinances, vote appropriations and develop an overall vision for the city. As a City Council member I help to hire the manager to oversee the daily operations of city and implement its policies established by the council. I make major decisions and give representative power on behalf of the citizens.

2. I feel that some of the issues that face the council are: transparency, homelessness, code enforcement, highest quality of life sustainable, financial challenges, encouraging new businesses, tax freeze for seniors 65 plus and keeping the police department and fire service as a top priority for our citizens and repairing streets as quickly as possible as we are financially able.

3. We must work to protect wildlife and to make sure that a healthy environment is present for all life. The earth is getting hotter because of the release of carbon dioxide through fossil fuels like gas and coal when burned for energy. I must lobby for cleaner cars and power plants, drive smart by keeping my engine tuned up, tires inflated helping to fuel efficiency, drive less, buy energy-efficient appliances and replace bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.

4. Term limits for Councilors, form youth councils, take the council meetings into the community at Denia. King Center and North Lakes, good election laws that will attract younger citizens, making sure that we represent the citizens who elected us to office and consider paying salaries to elected official.

Denton City Council, District 2

Dalton Gregory

1. Council members are elected to represent the citizens. The Council should ensure that services are provided to protect the health, safety, and general welfare for all citizens; ensure effective and efficient use of tax dollars; and proactively plan for high quality sustainable growth and economic development. Council members should make decisions thoughtfully and fairly while considering the concerns of all stakeholders. The Council's responsibilities and limits are stated in Article II the city charter.
2. The most daunting job of the Council is to ensure that city services are provided efficiently to get the most out of every tax dollar. We need quality sustainable economic development to relieve the burden on current taxpayers. Growth is inevitable, so we must ensure that our city's growth enhances its quality and livability. Codes and ordinances should be fair to all and developed through a collaborative process that involves all stakeholders.
3. It is important to think globally but act locally. We can do our part by monitoring and decreasing our carbon footprint. As we replace our current fleet of vehicles we need to buy ones with lower emission levels. We need to enhance our urban forest to help clean the air. We need to continue our efforts to purchase electricity from clean energy sources and increase promotion of energy conservation.
4. Clearly we need to have less ambiguous wording in Article II on Council term limits. But as we review the Charter, property codes, and ordinances we must do so in a way that is open and collaborative. The needs of all stakeholders must be considered as we work to find common ground and improve the overall quality, safety, livability, and sustainability of Denton.

Michael Roby

1. The role of council members is to set direction and policies for the City as a whole. An individual council member should be a strong advocate for the residents in their district, taking concerns and issues back to the council for resolution. A council member should not micro manage the city, but should be accessible to their citizens to help resolve issues that do come up. By building strong relationships with both the city staff and the citizens, the council member can be a strong voice for their district.
2. Given the current economic situation, the top priority should be fiscal responsibility. The Council should direct the City Manager to work with the various departments and develop an efficiency plan for the city. This plan should include money saving targets for each department. The city needs to re-focus its efforts into basic services, police, fire and roads, just like so many residents are being forced to refocus their spending. The city must lead by example.
3. If the City can't keep up with road repairs and other basic infrastructure needs, how can they ever 'change the world'? The current recycling programs are adequate for now and the city should re-focus its efforts and taxpayers monies to addressing local infrastructure issues.
4. I think that term limits should be better defined to remove any ambiguities and loopholes. The recent controversy has created frustration and mistrust with the citizens. The city has taken the right step in the creation of the 21 member committee that will make the charter recommendations to the voters.

Roger Strahan

1. The City Council sets the goals and direction for the city. Further, it sets the boundaries on the city manager's actions, as well as the expectations on the City Manager in terms of the management of the City. The Council

must be responsive to the citizens, insuring that any actions of the city are positive in nature and do not impose an unacceptable hardship, especially on the disabled, the elderly, and the low-income citizens.

2. The City is facing unprecedented fiscal issues. Sales and property tax revenues are down and will stay down; we are under-funded in primary areas, such as fire protection; and proposed legislation in D.C. will cause our operating costs (utilities, fuel, etc) to skyrocket. We are going to have to make some painful financial decisions, as we cannot count on increasing tax rates or fees at this time.
3. Any actions must be thought-out and not be knee-jerk reactions. Increased recycling, encouraging energy efficiency in our homes, better traffic flow through the city, a better use of city vehicles, all provides a high return for the costs. Actions which have little return for high costs are counter-productive. Long-term, examining the landfill for electric generation possibilities, requiring buildings to have white roofs to reflect sunlight heat, catching roof rainwater for sprinkler systems are all possibilities.
4. Clarify that there are only three terms, period, for City Council and three terms for Mayor, period. We need turnover on the City Council, different viewpoints. This has been the most contentious issue. At the same time, we need to look at the DME operations and if they are being properly managed under the City Charter requirements.

Denton City Council, District 3

Sam Casey – No response

Jim Engelbrecht

1. The role of a City Council member in a council-manager form is to be a conduit for the voice of the citizens to the entire council. I believe each member should strive to maintain a positive working relationship with every other council member to efficiently facilitate the workload. The Council has the responsibility to establish policy and supervise those personnel (city manager, city attorney, municipal judge, & city auditor) under its direct supervision.
2. The budget looms even larger than usual due to the economic downturn. Serious doubt about underlying assumptions of revenue projections requires cautious review and stewardship. Interpretation of the charter regarding term limits is an issue of immediate importance. The credibility of the council is questioned by a sufficient portion of the public so as to cast a shadow over other council activity. Deferred infrastructure maintenance, particularly streets.
3. City Council policy formulation and ordinance enactment must address the protection of both the natural and the man-made environments within the borders of the city and beyond. While the Council is immediately accountable to the city residents, it also has an obligation to manage/monitor our impact on the larger community for both legal and humanitarian reasons. We must be mindful to leave future generations a sustainable and livable global environment.
4. I have received considerable public comment regarding the need for clarification of the term limits provision of the City Charter (Article II, Section 201). The ability to serve on the City Council for more than 6 years consecutively by election to a different place must be addressed. Any Charter amendment offered to the voters must provide a clear choice and protect the legal rights of all qualified citizens to seek public office.

Amy Manuel

1. The role of a city council member is to represent her/his district and the community at-large. A council member works for a healthy, productive, and sustainable community, preserving the past with an eye toward the future. The council hires or appoints the best and brightest to serve the city, and guides them without micromanaging the details.
2. The most important issues facing the City Council are transportation, sustainability, infrastructure, and job growth. As a member of the DCTA Citizen Action Team, I am proud that commuter rail will reach Denton by December 2010. As your council member I will work to get bike trails and stands throughout the city, repair our infrastructure in a timely manner, and bring green jobs to the city that will help with sustainability and job growth.
3. The Council must take a leading role in the effort toward a cleaner and greener city. We all benefit from cleaner air and water. The Council has made great strides with the GreenSense program, recycling, Keep Denton Beautiful and other programs like green cement. Further efforts to make Denton a cleaner, greener city will have my full support because our health, our children’s health, and the health of our city and planet depend on it.
4. The City Charter should be revised to be more specific with regard to term limits and consecutive terms.

Hatice Salih

1. Paramount goal and duties are to represent constituents and policy-setting and oversight for the city.
2. I think they are the same issues the City has been dealing with for the last 10 years--which is to maintain the finest Fire and Police personnel; maintain our roads, libraries and parks; and coming to an agreement on the Master Plan of the City and constantly improve the quality of life of the citizens to keep Denton a great place to live, work, and play.
3. The Council is responsible for promoting clean air and water, and for setting policy for enacting and enforcing ordinances that affect our community. In addition, the Council sets policy for land use that furthers the quality of life of the citizens.
4. I think the Charter needs to be constantly evaluated to be sure it is allowing the Council to set policy for the City Manager. I think there are many issues to review after the 2007 Charter Committee work and when the Courts make a decision on the evolving term limits issue.

Andrew “Teets” Teeter

1. To ensure the manager fulfills the desires of constituents.
2. Most importantly, to represent the unrepresented constituency of Denton. They have had little to no voice in the city government. This could include college students, poor people, minorities.
3. The Council can take many steps in stopping climate change. They did so with green cement last year. The Rayzor Ranch/Wal-Mart developments should be monitored for pollution levels and green supplies. UNT has already worked in that direction. The tax breaks for environmentally friendly home ownership is great.
4. The charter on term limits should be concisely clarified. Take away any room for interpretation and loopholes

Denton City Council, District 4

Phil Kregel – No response

Chris Watts

1. I believe the role of a City Council member in a council-manager form of government is first and foremost to create public policy that guides the city manager and staff in developing specific ordinances to promote said policy. The city manager is the CEO if you will of the organization and is charged with running the day to day operations of the city and implementing the policies of the City Council.
2. I believe the greatest issue facing the City Council is managing the growth of our community from a small town with two major universities to a burgeoning suburb strategically located in one of the fastest growing regions in the country. Such a transition requires policies that will maintain our unique quality of life while embracing the future. Neighborhood perseveration, fiscally sound economic development policies, and commitment to basic city services must be the priority.
3. The Council can promote policies encouraging recycling, energy efficient development and utilization of environmentally friendly services and products in municipal construction projects. Being an older community with a large supply of older homes, the Council can encourage energy efficient upgrades through rebates and financial assistance through various city programs. The Council continues to encourage mass transit as an alternative to vehicular traffic. Development of bicycle lanes and a trail system will allow our large student population and the community at large increased mobility without the use of motorized vehicles.
4. I do not recommend any changes at this time other than clarifying the term limit issue raised during the last mayoral election.

<p>Questions for Candidates for the Denton Independent School District Board of Trustees</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are your qualifications and why are you running for this office? (100 word limit) 2. What is the role of the DISD Board of Trustees in assessing the value of educational programs? (75 word limit) 3. What would you do to address the issue of drop-outs? (75 word limit)

<p>Denton I.S.D Board of Trustees, Place 1</p>

Sheryl English

1. I am running for office because I see a need in the district and have a desire to serve. Currently, there are no trustee's on the board who have children in the district schools. I have 3 at 3 different campus. My being a school board trustee would bring a different perspective to the challenges that are faced everyday in the schools, it would be a Parents Perspective. I am currently on 3 PTA's, EIC Rep (Education Improvement Committee) for the District Council of PTA, Campus Leadership Team, this service has given me insight and information that is crucial we need to have some changes on our school board.
2. The school board should always be looking for ways to implement the newest and best programs that benefit the children of Denton ISD. It is imperative that we keep up with the changes and challenges education faces in the 21st Century. We must have educational programs that equip children for college as well as a trade upon leaving the district, especially in Technology, Science and Math. That is a top priority.

3. First, I would find out the reason first. Second, dropouts have 4 classifications and that needs to be addressed. Third, more importantly I would work to implement a system that would not let them get to senior level and find out they don't have enough credits to graduate. And lastly, I would like to hear from those who did actually drop out, and find out why and see what can be done to get them back in school.

Curtis Paul Ramsey

1. A career spanning 50+ years shows my devotion to teaching, training prospective teachers, and administration of Teacher Education programs at Peabody/Vanderbilt, Kent State, Connecticut, and in the Middle East. My career has allowed me to observe best practices of teachers, direct student teachers, and translate those experiences into effective teachers. This allows me to place my experiences as a DISD Trustee in policy establishment, criteria for hiring teachers, enabling their retention, and subsequently continuing their high quality professional development. I insist upon high quality teaching/learning experiences for all DISD children and youth of great diversity, needs, and capabilities.

2. Ultimate authority resides with DISD Board for policy formulation, with delegation of management authority to Superintendent for implementation and subsequent operations. Frequently staff research and reported findings are required for continued assessment. On many occasions, outside authorities are contracted for independent analyses, monitoring, and report in specific expertise areas. Educational programs are reviewed frequently and exhaustively in terms of policy applicability/ performance, focused on "What is best for the child?" No need is ignored.

3. Many definitions, contributory factors. Complex cultural-economic circumstances force many to family sustenance; many don't graduate with their cohort-peergroup; students simply "vanish" with their parents from school rolls-- all are "dropouts." I propose addressing these issues through early, close identification of potential drop-outs; engage extensive counseling-mentoring programs with students and parents; and arrange a massive array of support mechanisms to keep students aware of larger, life-changing aspects of successful education.

Denton I.S.D. Board of Trustees, Place 2

Tony Puente

1. I possess a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and a Master of Public Administration. I am a Certified Government Finance Officer and have over 8 years of government finance work experience. I am a former United States Marine and currently serve as the PTA President of my child's elementary school. I am running for this office to improve the district's financial accountability and transparency, address the issue of historically under performing campuses, and bring innovative programs to our children. I also want to build relationships with parent, student, teacher and community groups and advocate for safe campuses.

2. Trustees should not be a rubber stamp for ineffective and inefficient programs. Trustees should visit campuses, meet with stakeholder groups, and mandate independent assessments of campuses, especially those with a track record of under performance. Trustees should mandate a performance measurement system that is tied to financial resources and that rewards good performance. In the case of poorly performing campuses, non-traditional or private sector programs should be explored.

3. As a member of a newly formed district taskforce, Partnering for Success, I hope to encourage the creation of a summer job program for at risk students. In the 1980's, I participated in a similar program that involved a part-time summer job at the local public library and life skills courses at the local university. As a result of this exposure, I became interested in public service and later graduated from that same university.

Jeanetta Smith

1. I am an advocate for children. I bring experience as a parent, grandparent, citizen, and retired educator with 39 years of experience, with twenty-six in Denton ISD. During my career I have been an elementary school teacher, Gifted /Talented specialist, assistant principal, and college instructor. I have pursued my own love of learning and earned two bachelor’s degrees, two master’s degrees and a Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education. I believe in the value of public education for all children and have worked diligently with my fellow board members to establish a vision and set twenty-first century goals for our district.

2. The Denton trustees work diligently to provide the best programs and facilities for our fast-growth district. It is the board’s role to consider and act on policies for school programs, to review and evaluate the program reports and to keep the curriculum up-to-date. Throughout the year the board hears progress reports from various educational programs. At each school board meeting the board has the privilege of acknowledging and honoring outstanding student and school performance.

3. The number of Denton ISD dropouts has been steadily decreasing. Because our district believes in meeting the needs of all students, it provides a variety of opportunities for its at-risk students: Fred Moore Alternative School; Advanced Technology Complex; Community in Schools; Science, Technology, Arts, Engineering and Math (STEAM); ninth grade transition; and early childhood programs. These opportunities will help prepare our students for 21st century jobs and careers.

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