

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—BIOGRAPHIES *(in alphabetical order)*

Please review the candidate biographies and their responses to key questions about Colorado PERA so you can make an informed decision (candidates were limited to 100-150 words for their responses). The candidates' responses have not been edited by PERA. The deadline to vote is May 31, 2024.

DREW ADAMS | ADAMS 14 SCHOOL DISTRICT

Drew Adams is the Human Resources Director for Adams 14 School District.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

BA, CU-Boulder, Latin American Studies and Anthropology

MA, CU-Denver, Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership at CU-Denver

Edd, CU-Denver, Spring 2024

Employment History

Human Resources Director, Adams 14 School District, 2021–Present

Bus Driver, Boulder Valley School District, 2020–2021

Assistant Principal and Principal, Boulder Valley School District, Roaring Fork School District, Colegio Colombo Britanico-Cali, Colombia, Adams 12 School District, 2006–2020

Social Studies and ELD teacher, St. Vrain Valley School District, Brighton 27J, Boulder Valley School District, 1995–2006

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Member, Colorado Association of School Personnel Administrators

Member, Boulder County Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee

Former Association Representative, BVSD Teacher Union

ANGELA KINGSTON CONNELLY | MAPLETON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Angela Kingston Connelly is a Teacher in Mapleton Public Schools.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

BA, Humanities, K-6 Elementary Education, University of Colorado Boulder, 1999

MA, Curriculum & Instruction: Literacy, University of Colorado Boulder, 2002

MA, Early Childhood Special Education, University of Northern Colorado, 2012

CLDE Certificate, University of Colorado Denver, 2021

Employment History

Mapleton Public Schools, 1999–Present:

President, MEA, 2023–Present

Bilingual Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Trailside Academy, 2018–Present

Bilingual Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Monterey Community School, 2015–2018

K-8 Intervention/RTI Coordinator, Monterey Community School, 2013–2015

Bilingual Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Mapleton Early Learning Center & Adventure Elementary, 2007–2013

2nd grade Teacher, Monterey Community School, 2006–2007

Bilingual Kindergarten Teacher, Monterey Community School, 1999–2006

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Member, Mapleton Education Association:

President, 2023–Present

AR, Secretary, Vice President, 2010–2022

Representative for Sick Bank Board, Benefits Committee, Negotiations Team, Educator Effectiveness Committee, 2014–Present

Member, Colorado Education Association:

Adams County Working Together Task Force, 2023–Present

School Choice Task Force, 2023–Present

Taking the Lead in Legislation Task Force Member, 2023–Present

NEA Year-Round Organizer, 2023–Present

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—BIOGRAPHIES *(continued)*

DR. LOUIS L. FLETCHER | FALCON SCHOOL DISTRICT 49

Dr. Louis L. Fletcher is Executive Director for Facilities & Operations for Falcon School District 49.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

B.A., University of Maryland

MDR, Pepperdine University's Caruso School of Law

M.Ed., Montana State University

Ph.D., Northcentral University

Postdoctoral Fellowship—Student Affairs, Colorado State University

Senior Professional Human Resources (SPHR)

Graduate—AASA Aspiring Superintendents' Academy

Employment History

Executive Director, Facilities & Operations, School District 49, Peyton, CO, August 2022–Present

Director, Culture and Services, School District 49, Peyton, CO, July 2015–July 2022

Coordinator, Cultural Capacity, School District 49, Peyton, CO, July 2014–July 2015

Director, Denver Metro Campus, Webster University, Denver, CO, September 2013–June 2014

Director, Western Region, Troy University, Colorado Springs, CO, August 2009–May 2013

Commissioned Officer, U.S. Air Force (Retired, Honorably Discharged), February 1990–October 2009

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Member, American Bar Association (ABA) Dispute Resolution Section

Member, AASA (The School Superintendents Association)

Member, American Association for Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Member, National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME)

Member, Association of Title IX Administrators (aTIXa)

Member, Mediation Association of Colorado (MAC)

NATHAN GEROCHE | BOULDER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Nathan Geroche is a Science Teacher in the Boulder Valley School District.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

B.A., Chemistry, University of Colorado Boulder

M.A., Curriculum and Instruction, University of Colorado Denver

Graduate Certificate, Cybersecurity, Metropolitan State University of Denver

Employment History

Boulder Valley School District:

Broomfield High School, 2021–Present

Jefferson County School District:

Golden High School, 2018–2021

Ralston Valley High School, 2015–2018

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Member, American Association of Chemistry Teachers

Member, Boulder Valley Education Association

Member, Colorado Education Association

Member, Colorado PERA Board of Trustees

Award Recipient, Broomfield High School My Jersey, Your Impact Award

Award Recipient, Colorado Preservice Teacher of the Year, Colorado Association of Science Teachers

Award Recipient, Golden High School Graduation Faculty Speaker

Award Recipient, Golden High School Demon's Choice Award

Award Recipient, Ralston Valley High School Valuing People Award—Jeffco Value Awards

Biographies continued on next page

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—BIOGRAPHIES *(continued)*

ZOE TESSIER | DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE 1

Zoe Tessier is Dean of Students K-12 in the Douglas County School District Re 1.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

BFA, Santa Reparata International School of Art and Design, 2007

Licensure, Art Education K-12, Metropolitan State University of Denver, 2013

M.Ed., Administration and Leadership, Regis University, 2022

Doctorate, Education, Vanderbilt University, 2027

Employment History

Dean and Professional Learning Specialist Supervisor, 2023–2024

Emergenetics Youth Associate, 2023–2024

Aspiring Leadership Member, 2023–2024

Art Educator, RCHS, 2017–2023

Artist Residency, Children's Hospital, CO, 2021

Educator, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2017

Educator, Cherry Creek School District, 2013

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Member, American Association For Teaching and Curriculum, 2023–2024

Member, American Educational Research Association, 2023–2024

Member, Colorado Association of School Executives, 2023–2024

Member, American Educational Research Association, 2023–2024

Member, District CITE Evaluation Committee, DSCSD Re 1, 2021–2022

Board Member, District Accountability Committee, DCSD Re 1, 2021–2022

Advisory Council, DCSD Re 1, 2024

McNair Scholars Mentor, UNC, 2023–2024

Hutchinson-Lahman Award Candidate, UNC, 2024

Presenter, Learning and The Brain, NY, 2024

Presenter, Digital Learning Conference, TX, 2024

Speaker, ISTE, 2024

DCF, 2021–2024

CRAIG WITTGROVE | CHERRY CREEK SCHOOL DISTRICT 5

Craig Wittgrove is a School Counselor/Post Grad Coordinator at Cherry Creek High School in Cherry Creek School District 5.

Education/Special Courses/Certifications

B.S., Education, University of Missouri-Columbia

M.A., Counseling Psychology, University of San Diego

Employment History

School Counselor and Post Grad Coordinator, Cherry Creek High School, 2007–Present

School Counselor, Ponderosa High School, 2006–2007

Varsity Assistant Girls' Tennis Coach, Cherry Creek High School, 2008–Present

Co-Director, AP Summer Institute, Cherry Creek APSI, 2012–Present

College Admissions Outside Reader, University of California-Davis, 2013–2014

Science Teacher, Liberty Junior High School (MO), 1998–2002

Organizational Affiliations/Achievements

Executive Board, Presidential Cycle, RMACAC, 2016–2019

Executive Board Member, Treasurer, RMACAC, April 2013–April 2016

Co-Chair, NACAC College Fair, January 2012–January 2015

High Five Award Recipient, RMACAC, May 2015

NACAC National Conference Denver Local Advisory Committee, May 2011–October 2012

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS *(in alphabetical order)*

Colorado PERA's primary purpose is to provide benefits and programs as specified by state law, and the Board of Trustees oversees the administration of these benefits and programs. State law also gives the Board the responsibility for the investment of PERA's funds and to establish policy guidelines for the operations of PERA. Under this framework, the PERA Board of Trustees oversees the administration of the more than \$58 billion retirement fund for Colorado's public employees. Although the Board can and does make recommendations related to the employee and employer contribution levels and retirement benefit formulas, both are ultimately determined by the Colorado General Assembly and established by state law.

DREW ADAMS

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

As a lifetime educator, my role in school communities gave me insight into understanding barriers to success. Throughout my career I worked to provide pathways for students to meet their overall post secondary goals. Similarly, as a building and district leader I promote the importance of employee investments in PERA, and advocate for their retirement plans. I want to serve on the PERA Board to provide insight and balance to the current Board so that the voice of school district employees can be heard. We must be excellent stewards for our members and their financial security.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

Of course the most important concern is the financial stability of the PERA fund. In the School District Division, we are witnessing a shrinking employee pool which can have significant adverse effects on the overall retirement fund. We must continue to promote and incentivize new employees to join a PERA employer and develop additional marketing strategies to increase motivation levels for new employees to enter and remain employed by a PERA employer.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

As a teacher, building leader, HR director and community activist, I understand the importance of finding a common ground in meaningful conversations. Board members must listen to understand and provide guidance to advance the overall goals of the organization. My role will be to contribute to the balance of these meaningful conversations by studying the complexity of the issues, providing thoughtful dialogue and advocating for the School Division members.

ANGELA KINGSTON CONNELLY

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

As a PERA trustee, I plan to preserve and strengthen PERA for all public employee participants, specifically education providers from the school section. I will collaborate with elected officials and fellow PERA trustees to provide a sustainable, fiscally responsible, and comprehensive program that honors the work and dedication that public employees give during their career. I believe having an active teacher present at the table in this role is critical to the success of PERA for current members as well as future members. I would be honored to represent the school division employees on the PERA Board of Trustees.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

I have observed the Colorado Legislature, CEA, Secure PERA and PERA officials grapple with how to sustain and maximize the PERA program to best meet the needs of current and future beneficiaries despite and due to varying economic and legislative hurdles. It is imperative that PERA trustees are actively involved in learning what has worked well for PERA beneficiaries, what areas of PERA still need refinement and seize the opportunity to best meet these needs through conversations, town halls and roundtables with all stakeholders. I believe actively educating PERA participants on how and why to plan effectively for their future retirement is critical. Trustees are perfect advocates and can maximize their impact by learning directly from PERA participants. Because there are multiple stakeholders that PERA answers to, finding a balance and system that honors most interests is key to the Board's success.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

I consider the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board to be an objective listener, collaborator, educator, and champion who is dedicated to preserving, refining, and expanding PERA on behalf of all public employees. The Trustee must be prepared to face tough decisions, celebrate successes, actively engage with the challenges, and remain solution oriented. They must also be transparent and humble and accept feedback from all stakeholders and be ready to pivot based on current and potential factors as they arise. It might not be the most glamorous role but is an essential role!

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS *(continued)*

DR. LOUIS L. FLETCHER

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

I will serve on the PERA Board of Trustees to protect the PERA retirement fund for current and retired members of the school division. I will exercise my fiduciary responsibility and elevate the voice of my constituents. I will faithfully exercise my duties of loyalty, care, and prudence with integrity on behalf of all PERA members. I have worked in PK-12 education for 10 years, so I have a vested interest in ensuring that the PK-12 workforce has a secure retirement trust fund to support a dignified retirement following years of selfless service.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

The PERA Board of Trustees provides policy governance and outlines expectations for PERA staff. This means that trustees have the combined challenge and opportunity to ensure that the state legislative agenda does not degrade the PERA retirement benefits. Furthermore, as a trustee, I will collaborate with other trustees to find opportunities to align the PERA trust fund with investments that support the solvency of PERA members' retirement benefit. I will also work with the PERA Board of Trustees and the PERA Executive Director to ensure that the state legislature funds the PERA trust fund in accordance with state law. My greatest opportunity is evaluating the concerns of PERA members to authentically capture, elevate, and amplify their voices to ensure they are provided honest feedback.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

As a Trustee, I will provide investment, benefit, and program oversight. My major concern is the performance of investments, which ensures the trust fund's solvency and yields sufficient funds to support retirees' defined benefit. I will provide oversight for the defined contribution program and PERACare to ensure those retirement supplements remain viable. Moreover, I will diligently review and deliver fair outcomes to member appeals. Furthermore, I will appoint, evaluate, or terminate service providers with care to maintain a high-quality of service for PERA retirees. Finally, I will engage with PERA-relevant issues intelligently by completing the trustee education program immediately.

NATHAN GEROCHE

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

I am seeking reelection to the PERA Board of Trustees because I believe in honoring the service and sacrifice of public employees with a quality, sustainable retirement benefit. I am confident in the mission and vision of PERA and I aspire to use my lived experiences, knowledge, empathy, and voice to support moving the organization forward to the best of my ability.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

One of the most important and impactful decisions for the PERA Board is the opportunity to hire PERA's next executive director. The person whom the Board selects as PERA's next leader will play a pivotal role in addressing the multitude of challenges facing PERA, continuing to guide the fund to a strong funded status, and ensuring high-quality service for PERA's members and beneficiaries. Across all the divisions, throughout a multitude of careers, public servants face special and demanding challenges not present in the private sector. PERA has a unique opportunity to champion public service as a career and the Board's strategic vision for the future can direct and support PERA to do just that.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

Trustees on the PERA Board are empowered by their fiduciary duty to act in the sole interest of the members and beneficiaries of the fund. Under this fiduciary framework, Trustees perform an oversight role in ensuring PERA's governance, investments, actuarial and accounting principles, and benefits administration are enacted to the highest standard possible. As a Trustee, I hope to continue accomplishing this by working hard to learn the many aspects and stakeholders of the pension system, contributing to Board discussions by asking questions and listening empathetically, and serving to the best of my ability on my committees.

Responses to Key Questions continued on next page

SCHOOL DIVISION CANDIDATES—RESPONSES TO KEY QUESTIONS *(continued)*

ZOE TESSIER

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

Being in education for over fourteen years, I have had first-hand experience watching my fantastic fellow educators retire to find out that they are not given the dignified retirement as promised to them. I also have first-hand experience talking with hundreds of educators who benefit from learning more about where their retirement funds are going. This includes contribution levels, retirement formulas, and laws that dictate the benefit programs. My passion for ensuring the admirable hard work of our teachers to help educate our future generation of students drives my love and commitment to serve as a PERA trustee.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

Ensuring that PERA's pension fund is fully funded by the 2048 deadline is crucial for the financial health of the retirement system. To help educators feel supported in their contributions to the funds, there needs to be reassurance in securing retirees' current and future pension obligations. To address this, there needs to be a collective responsibility for funding where there is a shared contribution obligation involving all parties. Currently, the education division is being targeted to help fund PERA by asking that third-party substitutes pay into PERA when other sectors of PERA are not obliged to do the same.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

As a trustee, advocating for policies that recognize and support educators is crucial. This includes collaborating with the General Assembly to address future funding challenges of the retirement fund and ensure the stability of PERA. Ways that I would support and contribute as a trustee would be bringing my unique experience and perspective as an educator and administrator to advocating policies that recognize and support educators. Transparency and communication is key to being an active trustee member of PERA.

CRAIG WITTGROVE

INTEREST IN SERVING AS A PERA TRUSTEE

Please briefly describe why you are interested in being elected to the PERA Board of Trustees.

As a lifelong educator with the privilege of working in Colorado for the last 18 years, I have seen how education has shifted with fewer people choosing to become educators. PERA and its board have the ability to support and influence the trajectories of our future educators by making recommendations to ensure that our retirement system is providing the maximum benefit for our members in a way that entices new educators to enter and remain in this important field.

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES FACING PERA

Please describe what you consider as areas of challenge/opportunity facing PERA and the Board's role in addressing these issues.

PERA has an opportunity to help support and change the education landscape by rethinking the retirement tables. It is challenging for educators to stay in this field when they know their retirement may take 40 years to earn. The challenge is to ensure that PERA is fiscally responsible for its members and assembled as a tool that encourages people to join the education field. The Board must thoughtfully and creatively recommend how to invest the fund so that it benefits members who plan to retire soon, and provides a growth mechanism so that it benefits members yet to join the field.

THE ROLE OF A TRUSTEE

What do you see as the role of a Trustee on the PERA Board?

A trustee of the PERA Board is a person who considers and values the best interests of the members they represent while upholding the mission of PERA and overseeing its assets. A trustee takes this responsibility seriously, knowing that it has the ability to impact many members, their lives, and their futures.