

# **CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Office: Los Alamos Public Schools, School Board*

**CANDIDATE NAME:** Stephanie Galvez

**LAPS SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT NUMBER:** District 1

**1. Do (Did) your children attend public schools? Which schools do (did) they attend?**

Yes, my son [REDACTED] attended Aspen for Kindergarten, then Barranca for grades 1–6, followed by LAMS and LAHS. He graduated in 2015, earned his Bachelor’s degree from NMSU, and is now working at LANL.

My daughter [REDACTED] attended Barranca, LAMS, and LAHS, graduating in 2022. She is currently pursuing her BSN in nursing and will graduate in May 2026.

My youngest is a Kindergartner at Pinon. This is her second year there, as she began in Pre-K at age four.

**2. Do you or have you ever been part of a labor union? Spouse/Family? If so, when and which union?**

My husband was a member of UA Local 597 Pipe Fitters Union in Chicago IL for just under 6 years. He left the Local 597 to hire on with the United Steel Workers Local 7-1 at the BP Whiting Refinery where he served for 5 years.

## **Overview on Education in Los Alamos**

**1. What is the estimated student population in the District?**

Total population: According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) District Directory, LAPS has 3,729 total students (PK-12)

- K-12: 3,429
- Pre-K: 300

**2. What can you do as a Board Member to ensure a quality education to all school-aged students in Los Alamos from early education through Secondary Ed.?**

As a board member, my responsibility is to make sure every child in Los Alamos—whether in Pre-K, elementary, middle, or high school—receives a quality education that prepares them for success. I will focus on three priorities:

1. Academic Excellence – Support rigorous standards in reading, writing, math, science, and critical thinking, while ensuring teachers have the resources and training they need to reach all learners.
2. Student Safety & Well-Being – Create safe, supportive environments where students feel secure and able to focus on learning, including strong facilities, mental health support, and effective emergency plans.
3. Fiscal Responsibility & Equity – Use my experience managing multimillion-dollar budgets to ensure funding is spent wisely, targeted to classrooms, and distributed fairly so every student—regardless of background—has access to the tools they need to succeed.

My goal is to strengthen the foundation at every stage of learning, from early childhood through graduation, so that every student in Los Alamos has strong roots, strong schools, and a strong future.

### **Student Education, Policies, Support, and Safety**

#### **1. How do you plan to support the education and safety of students, of any background, gender, ethnicity, social group, or identity?**

I believe every child deserves a safe, supportive, and academically strong environment—no matter their background, gender, ethnicity, or identity. For me, safety and education go hand in hand.

- Safety: I will work with administrators, staff, and community partners to ensure our schools remain safe through clear policies, strong communication, and collaboration with law enforcement and mental-health professionals. Every student should feel protected and cared for the moment they walk through the doors.
- Education: I will support high academic standards in reading, writing, math, science, and critical thinking, while ensuring teachers have the resources and training they need to reach all learners. Each student should be challenged to achieve their personal best.
- Belonging: Finally, I will listen to students, parents, and staff to ensure all voices are heard. A sense of belonging strengthens learning, and when students feel respected, they are better prepared to succeed.

With my roots in this community, my commitment as a parent, and my leadership experience at LANL, I will work to give every child in Los Alamos the strong schools and strong future they deserve.

**2. Federal Laws, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Free Appropriate Public Education, are designed to protect students.**

**a. How familiar are you with these laws and how they are implemented?**

I am very familiar with the importance of federal protections such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). These laws are essential to ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, have equal access to education and the support they need to succeed.

In my professional career at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I've worked extensively with policies, compliance requirements, and oversight of large, complex programs. I understand how critical it is not only to meet regulations but to implement them in a way that truly serves people. As a school board member, I would bring that same focus—making sure our district provides appropriate resources, supports our teachers and special education staff, and partners with parents to deliver the best possible outcomes for students.

Ultimately, I see these laws not just as requirements, but as commitments to our children and to our community's future.

**b. Are you familiar with their funding?**

Yes, I am also familiar with how funding connects to these laws. While IDEA and related mandates ensure students with disabilities receive the services they deserve, the federal government often does not fully fund these requirements. This leaves states and districts to bridge the gap.

As someone with decades of experience managing multimillion-dollar budgets at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I understand how to balance compliance, resources, and outcomes. On the school board, I will advocate for responsible use of local and state funds to meet these obligations, while also seeking opportunities to maximize grants and federal support. My goal is to ensure we are both compliant with the law and fully serving our students.

**c. How do you plan to ensure these laws are being followed and their funding is being implemented properly?**

Ensuring IDEA, ADA, and FAPE are followed requires both accountability and transparency. As a board member, I would focus on three areas:

1. Oversight & Compliance – I will review reports, budgets, and program outcomes to confirm that services required under these laws are being provided. This includes

monitoring Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and making sure students receive the support they are entitled to.

2. **Funding & Resources** – With my background managing multimillion-dollar budgets at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I understand how to track funding streams and hold systems accountable. I will ensure federal, state, and local dollars earmarked for special education are used as intended, and advocate for additional resources where gaps exist.
3. **Partnership & Advocacy** – Compliance isn't just paperwork—it's about people. I will listen to parents, teachers, and special education staff to make sure programs are meeting student needs. Their voices will guide how funding is prioritized and implemented.

My goal is to make sure these laws are not just followed on paper but fully lived out in classrooms so every child has the strong foundation they deserve.

**3. Recently, Los Alamos Public Schools implemented the program Safe and Civil Schools. How familiar are you with this program? What is your view on this approach?**

I am familiar with the Safe and Civil Schools program and its focus on creating safe, respectful, and predictable learning environments. I believe programs like this can be valuable when they give teachers consistent tools for classroom management, reduce disruptions, and keep the focus on academics.

That said, the success of any program depends on how well it is supported and implemented. Teachers and staff need training, resources, and the flexibility to adapt strategies to the unique needs of their students. As a board member, I would listen closely to feedback from teachers, parents, and students to ensure the program is truly working for our schools.

Ultimately, my priority is making sure safety and learning go hand in hand so that every student can thrive. Programs like Safe and Civil Schools can be one piece of that larger commitment to strong schools and a strong future.

**4. The safety of students is not only a priority for the District but also for the Union. What, in your opinion, defines student safety? How do you plan to support safety in our schools?**

To me student safety means more than just preventing physical harm it's about creating an environment where every child feels secure, respected, and able to focus on learning. Safety includes well-maintained facilities, strong emergency protocols, partnerships with law enforcement, and access to mental health resources. It also means fostering a culture where bullying, harassment, or threats are not tolerated.

As a board member, I will:

- Prioritize Physical Safety by supporting clear policies, emergency preparedness, and safe, well-maintained schools.
- Support Mental & Emotional Well-Being by collaborating with counselors, staff, and families to ensure students have the resources they need.
- Listen & Partner with teachers, staff, and the Union, who are on the front lines every day, to make sure policies are practical and effective.

My goal is to ensure that every child, of any background, walks into our schools knowing they are safe and cared for—because only then can they truly learn and thrive.

**5. New positions are created almost every year.**

**a. How will you ensure these new positions truly support students and their educational needs?**

If elected, I will ensure any new position created within our schools directly supports students and their educational needs by focusing on three priorities:

1. Student-Centered Justification – Every new role must have a clear connection to improving student outcomes—whether that’s academic achievement, safety, or emotional well-being.
2. Accountability & Oversight – With my experience managing multimillion-dollar budgets at LANL, I will carefully review funding sources, job descriptions, and performance measures to make sure positions are aligned with educational goals and not just adding layers of administration.
3. Community & Staff Input – I will listen to teachers, parents, and staff to understand where the greatest needs are. If a new role is created, it should be because it helps those on the front lines better serve our students.

My goal is to ensure that every resource, including staffing, is invested wisely so that it strengthens our schools and builds a strong future for every child.

**b. How will you ensure these positions do not strain the budget?**

I will ensure new positions do not strain the budget by applying the same fiscal discipline I use in my professional work at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where I manage multimillion-dollar budgets. Any new role must be justified by clear benefits to students, funded within our means, and regularly reviewed for impact. I will advocate for smart use of

federal, state, and local funding, while avoiding unnecessary administrative growth. Every dollar should be tied back to strengthening classrooms and student success.

### **Educator Support, Wellness, and Recognition**

- 1. Over the years, Certified Educators have been required to take on additional duties. From increased paperwork to more committees, the workload has overwhelmed many of our educators. What plans do you have to address the extra demands that have been placed on our educators?**

I recognize that our certified educators are carrying more and more responsibilities beyond teaching—paperwork, committees, and administrative tasks that often take away from time with students. If elected, I will work to:

1. Listen & Streamline – Meet with teachers and staff to identify where requirements can be reduced or simplified, so their focus stays on teaching.
2. Support & Resources – Advocate for support staff or tools that ease administrative burdens, allowing educators to spend more time in the classroom.
3. Collaboration – Partner with administrators and the Union to ensure policies balance accountability with realistic workloads.

Strong schools depend on strong teachers, and the best way to support our students is by making sure educators have the time and resources to do what they do best—teach.

- 2. Educational Assistants are a crucial part of the education system. They support the educator through basic clerical needs, supporting the curriculum given to students, delivering enrichment to students, and ensuring the safety of our students in and out of the classroom.**

#### **a. How do you plan to support our Educational Assistants?**

Educational Assistants are the backbone of our classrooms. They provide critical support to teachers, help deliver curriculum, enrich learning, and keep our students safe. If elected, I will support EAs by:

1. Advocating for Fair Compensation & Training – Ensuring they have the pay, professional development, and resources needed to succeed.
2. Recognizing Their Impact – Valuing EAs as essential members of the education team, not just support staff, and including their voices in decision-making.
3. Reducing Overload – Working with administrators to make sure duties are balanced so they can focus on students first.

Strong schools depend on strong teams—and that means uplifting and supporting our Educational Assistants so they can continue helping every child thrive.

**b. How do you plan to work with Administrators to make sure they are being used effectively?**

Educational Assistants are essential to strong schools, and I believe their effectiveness depends on how well they are supported and guided by administrators. If elected, I will:

1. Collaborate with Administrators – Work closely with principals and leadership to ensure EAs are placed where student needs are greatest, and their skills are fully utilized.
2. Clear Roles & Expectations – Encourage administrators to set clear priorities so EAs can focus on supporting instruction, enrichment, and student safety rather than being overloaded with unrelated duties.
3. Open Communication – Promote regular feedback between administrators, teachers, and EAs to make sure resources are being used effectively and student outcomes remain the focus.

Strong schools come from strong teams, and that requires both administrators and Educational Assistants working in alignment to serve our students' needs.

**3. Professional Development is critical for all Educators, in the classroom and out of the classroom. Professional Development comes in many forms from training, conferences, classes, etc. How do you plan to work with Administrators to make sure they are being used effectively?**

Professional development is only effective when it truly supports educators in the classroom. If elected, I will work with administrators to ensure training is purposeful, aligned with student needs, and respectful of teachers' time.

- Relevance: I will advocate that professional development directly connects to classroom instruction, curriculum support, and student success.
- Balance: Teachers should have access to meaningful training without being overloaded with sessions that take away from preparation or family time.
- Feedback: I will encourage administrators to gather teacher input on what training is most valuable and adjust accordingly.

With my experience leading teams and providing training at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I know that professional development works best when it is practical, targeted, and empowers people to do their jobs better. Strong schools depend on strong educators, and that means giving them the right tools to succeed.

**4. District Office, Maintenance, Transportation, and Custodial staff often feel overlooked in the district because they are not utilized in the classroom.**

**a. What role do you feel they play in Student Education?**

District Office, Maintenance, Transportation, and Custodial staff are essential to student education, even if they're not in the classroom. They create the safe, reliable, and supportive environment that makes learning possible.

- Transportation staff ensure students arrive safely and on time each day.
- Maintenance and custodial teams keep our schools clean, safe, and welcoming.
- District office staff provide the structure and resources that allow teachers to focus on teaching.

When these roles are valued and supported, students benefit. Strong schools depend on strong teams—and every member, from the classroom to the bus to the front office, plays a part in helping our children thrive.

**b. How do you plan to recognize them and their contributions?**

I believe recognition goes beyond words, it's about showing respect and making sure every staff member feels valued. If elected, I will:

- Celebrate Contributions – Publicly highlight the impact of transportation, maintenance, custodial, and district staff at board meetings, newsletters, and school events.
- Seek Input – Include their voices in discussions about school safety, facilities, and operations, recognizing their firsthand knowledge.
- Support Growth – Advocate for fair pay, professional development, and opportunities that reflect their importance to the district.

Strong schools require strong teams, and recognizing every contribution builds pride, respect, and a stronger future for our students.

**5. Certified Educators are required to teach to standards set forth by the State and Federal Governments. How much teacher autonomy do you feel is appropriate for our educators to have when teaching to these standards?**

Standards provide an important foundation to ensure consistency and accountability across our schools—but I believe teachers must also have the professional autonomy to decide *how* best to teach those standards. Every class is unique, and educators know their students' needs better than anyone.



As a board member, I will support giving teachers the flexibility to use their expertise, creativity, and professional judgment while staying aligned with state and federal expectations. By trusting our educators to adapt lessons and methods, we strengthen both accountability and innovation, helping every student reach their full potential.

Strong schools depend on strong teachers, and that means respecting both the standards they must follow and the professional skills they bring to the classroom.

### **Board Duties and Responsibilities**

#### **1. Los Alamos Public Schools receives funds from the Local, State, and National levels. How familiar are you with the funds we receive?**

I am familiar with the fact that Los Alamos Public Schools receives funding from local property taxes, state allocations, and federal programs. Each stream has its own rules, requirements, and limitations, which makes oversight critical.

In my professional career at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I have managed multimillion-dollar budgets and ensured funds were allocated responsibly, in compliance with strict regulations. I will bring that same discipline to the school board—reviewing budgets carefully, asking the right questions, and making sure every dollar is directed toward supporting students, teachers, and classrooms.

Strong schools depend on strong financial stewardship, and I am committed to ensuring funding at every level is used effectively for the benefit of our students.

#### **2. Do you have any background with a multi-million dollar budget?**

Yes. In my 25+ year career at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I have overseen multimillion-dollar budgets and managed large, complex projects. This includes ensuring compliance with federal requirements, balancing resources, and delivering results on time and within budget.

That experience has prepared me to bring strong fiscal stewardship to the school board. I know how to evaluate funding priorities, ask tough questions, and make sure every dollar is used wisely. Just as I've done at LANL, I will ensure our school district budgets are managed responsibly and always with students' needs at the center.

#### **3. What priorities or values do you think the budget should reflect?**

The budget is more than numbers—it reflects our community's values and priorities. For me, the budget should first and foremost support students and classrooms:

- Academic Excellence – Funding core subjects like reading, writing, math, science, and critical thinking to prepare students for the future.

- Student Safety & Well-Being – Investing in safe facilities, mental health support, and strong emergency preparedness.
- Supporting Educators & Staff – Ensuring teachers and support staff have the tools, training, and fair compensation they need to focus on students.
- Fiscal Responsibility – Managing funds with transparency and discipline so every dollar strengthens our schools.

A strong budget builds strong schools—and that leads to a strong future for every child in Los Alamos.

**4. 2020 showed us that disasters can come at any time. It showed how unprepared we were as a country and as a district. How will you help ensure we as a district are prepared for issues or disasters that could take place?**

2020 was a reminder that disasters, whether a pandemic, wildfire, or other crisis—can strike at any time. If elected, I will work to ensure our district is prepared by focusing on:

- Strong Emergency Plans – Making sure we have clear, updated protocols for health, safety, and continuity of learning.
- Training & Communication – Supporting regular training for staff and open communication with parents so everyone knows what to expect in a crisis.
- Partnerships – Working with county officials, law enforcement, and health experts to align school plans with broader community preparedness.
- Flexibility – Ensuring resources, technology, and staffing can adapt quickly so student learning continues safely under any circumstance.

With my experience managing complex projects and compliance at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I know the importance of planning ahead and being ready for the unexpected. Strong schools are resilient schools, and preparedness is key to a strong future for our children.

**5. The School Board creates policies that the district must follow. How familiar are you with the creation of policies?**

I am very familiar with the process of creating and implementing policies. In my 25+ years at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I have worked extensively with policies and procedures—both developing them and ensuring compliance with federal regulations. This experience has taught me how to evaluate needs, gather input from stakeholders, and create policies that are clear, effective, and sustainable.

As a school board member, I will bring that same approach: listening to educators, parents, and staff; reviewing legal and state requirements; and ensuring policies always put students first. Strong, well-crafted policies are the foundation of strong schools, and I am committed to making sure they reflect our community's values and support student success.

**6. How familiar are you with the implications they have at the classroom and site levels?**

I understand that policies made at the board level directly shape what happens in classrooms and at school sites. A policy isn't just words on paper—it determines how teachers teach, how administrators lead, and how students experience their education every day.

Through my professional experience at Los Alamos National Laboratory, I've seen how high-level policies affect daily operations, budgets, and staff responsibilities. That perspective has taught me the importance of considering practical impacts before approving any policy.

As a board member, I will ensure policies are developed with input from teachers, staff, and parents so they are realistic, supportive, and truly beneficial at the classroom and site levels. Strong schools require policies that work not only in theory, but in practice for those on the front lines of education.

**7. What policies do you hope to create, remove, or change while you serve on the board?**

Before creating, removing, or changing any policies, I believe it's important to listen to educators, parents, staff, and students about what's working and what isn't. That said, my priorities would be:

- Strengthening Academic Focus – Supporting policies that raise achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and critical thinking.
- Student Safety & Well-Being – Reviewing safety protocols and mental health resources to ensure they meet today's challenges.
- Supporting Educators & Staff – Reducing unnecessary burdens and creating policies that give teachers more time to teach and staff more support in their roles.
- Fiscal Responsibility & Transparency – Ensuring policies around budgets and spending direct resources to classrooms and student success.

My goal is not to add policies for the sake of paperwork, but to ensure every policy strengthens our schools and reflects the values of our community.