



## 2024 SURVEY FOR COLONIAL HEIGHTS SCHOOL BOARD

Candidate: Debbie Mayes Walwer

### 1. Please tell us a bit about your background and involvement in the community.

I've lived in Colonial Heights since 1968. I graduated from CHHS, attended Longwood College, and taught in Dinwiddie Public Schools. In 1979 I transferred to Colonial Heights Public Schools and taught at Lakeview Elementary School for 28 years. I returned to college to earn my master's degree in Curriculum & Instruction, with a focus on Instructional Technology. From 2005 until my retirement in 2021, I served as the Educational Technology Coach for elementary schools in Colonial Heights Public Schools. I was the administrator for Summer School PreK-12th in 2003 and interned at the School Administration Office for two summers. I worked for Virginia Commonwealth University as a Clinical Teacher Educator supervising student teachers. I currently work in the Transportation Department for CHPS. I am a past president of Alpha Delta Kappa, teachers' honorary sorority. My daughter graduated from CHHS in 2014. During her years in high school I volunteered for the Band Boosters. I am a member of Grace Lutheran Church and was honored to serve on the Leadership Council for several years. I received the Division I Teacher of the Year Award in 2003.

### 2. Do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or Independent? If Republican, are you in accord with [The Republican Creed](#)?

I consider myself an Independent.

### 3. Please tell us why you are running for School Board.

My experience in public education provides insight in how schools operate and how policies inform the instructional process. I want to use my knowledge and experience to serve the school system and the community. Since I retired in 2021 I've missed the involvement in Colonial Heights Public Schools. I'd like to use my experience to collaborate with other School Board members to maintain and improve quality education for our students, and provide a great workplace for teachers and staff.

**4. What are two or three things that the Colonial Heights Public School is doing well?**

- Rigorous academic programs are in place that challenge students.
- Educators have the resources and technology they need to plan instruction and integrate 21st century skills into the curriculum.
- We employ highly qualified teachers and administrators.

**5. What are two or three things that the Colonial Heights Public Schools need to improve on?**

- More opportunities for students in Vocational Education need to be offered for students who excel outside of the academic environment. Our community needs more skilled trades professionals.
- Teacher retention needs improvement. During the past few years, many of our teachers have left our school district. The school system invests funds to provide staff development, tuition reimbursement and opportunities for professional growth. We need to retain teachers that have gained experience, been provided training, and earned advanced degrees while employed in our division.
- Our school population has increased. Efforts are needed to ensure all students attending Colonial Heights Public Schools reside within the city. Our resources should support families who contribute to the city's revenue.

**6. How will you seek to be responsive to city residents if elected to the School Board?**

I will be available to discuss concerns with parents, teachers, and community members. I believe discussions and written communication between board members and those that they serve should be kept confidential.

**7. What is the proper role of parents in their child(ren)'s public school education?**

I believe in participatory decision making. Parents should have open access to information on instructional materials and input on their adoption. Processes need to be in place to address concerns of parents in a timely manner. I believe parents should have input in the process of adopting policy changes.

**8. Does critical race theory (CRT) have a place in public schools?**

CRT should not be included in our curriculum. These concepts are inherently divisive, we need to teach concepts that ensure that all students are taught to respect individuals regardless of their race, sex, or faith.

**9. Is there anything else you would like to share that was not already asked?**

My experience gives me the knowledge to understand how curriculum and school policy informs education. I believe I can work collaboratively with other board members, to make the best decisions for our district. I will be an advocate for students, teachers and staff. I'd be honored to serve our community with a seat on the CHPS School Board.