

Aimee Boots

How long have you lived in Prosper?

My husband's family and a few of our lifelong friends have lived within Prosper/Prosper ISD since 2019. After their many years of positive praise and hearing about the academic standards of Prosper ISD, we decided it was the right place for our family. Thus, we moved to Prosper in 2021 because we wanted our amazing daughter to be in Prosper ISD for her education, starting in Kindergarten.

Do you currently have children attending Prosper ISD schools?

Until late February 2023, our daughter had been attending Prosper ISD. It is my hope that she can return to Prosper ISD schools once certain issues have been resolved.

Do you have children who graduated from Prosper ISD?

My only daughter is 6 years old and in first grade. It was our intention that she would be a future graduate of Prosper ISD, however, positive change is needed in the school district for that to be a continued aspiration.

What is your history of involvement in the district/community?

Upon moving to Prosper in 2021, we stepped into the school community as soon as we could, attending all of the wonderful events and participating in fundraisers. As a new family to our neighborhood and school, I quickly made proactive efforts to reach out to teachers, staff, and other parents to get to know our community members and volunteer to help with school projects and support my daughter's education and relationships. As many mamas experience, it was hard for me to let her go each day, but I was very comforted by the support and connection I received with her teacher and other parents.

I always had a dream to join the PTO, and so I reached out to some of our leaders I had met during the school fundraisers and inquired about signing up to volunteer in a more significant way. Soon thereafter, I was voted into the PTO Fundraising co-chair role and began serving on the amazing team of passionate parents for the 2022-23 school year. My favorite part about that volunteer role was co-planning and leading our Raise Craze fundraiser. I thoroughly enjoyed being "Captain Kindness", a space-themed astronaut character that exhorted all of our students each day during lunches throughout the multi-week event. It was such a privilege to encourage them to "spread kindness around the world" for weeks and see their tremendous efforts raise over \$37,000 for our school (which helps fund items like teacher supplies, student scholarships, the principal's wish list, etc.). I was also very honored to be invited to distribute the top awards to our students during the next all-school assembly as Captain Kindness, which became the name the students called me from there on. To close out Raise Craze, our PTO team planned the school-wide celebration day where the winning team of students got a special prize and slimed the principals. Talk about fun!

Beyond that phenomenal event, I have volunteered as a class chaperone for field trips and my whole family manned one of the indoor trunk-or-treat booths for the Fall Festival. I have helped assemble class projects, caroled songs in the hallways during our holiday party, served as a Watch Mom, put out a "matching grant challenge" to our school team for the Stuff the Bus fundraiser, and volunteered at

almost all of the events put on by our school. My goal always was to serve our school in every possible way. I give my all in everything I do, especially when children are involved.

Why are you running for school board?

First and foremost, I am running for the kids – your kids, your grandkids, your neighbor's kids... and my own daughter. A trustee is defined as someone who is entrusted with the responsibility to benefit those who are their beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of a school board trustee are the students. I have served children and communities around the globe for over two decades in Africa, Mexico and Central America. Today, I am passionate about using my one-of-a-kind experience to serve my Prosper ISD community. I believe it is my lifelong calling to be a servant leader who provides meaningful impact to the community and specifically to children.

Through my family's own experiences with our kindergarten and first grade years in PISD, and hearing and seeing the experiences of other families, I felt led to step into this opportunity when it was presented to me. I am running to be your voice, in particular for those across our community who are looking for representation on our school board they feel is lacking today. I stand for truth and our children receiving the best that Prosper has to offer. Student safety and academic excellence must be of the highest priority in our district.

I still believe that Prosper ISD has the potential to be the best, but we cannot shy away from addressing the challenge areas in order to promote a status quo that is simply no longer working for everyone. All of our students and families deserve to be represented and served by the elected local body that governs and oversees the vision and performance of our school district.

With my extensive experience in the non-profit and corporate philanthropy sectors, coupled with my Texas university degree in Public Service and Administration and Texas Senate internship, I am exceptionally equipped and ready to serve our Prosper ISD community as a school board trustee. As someone with many family members and friends who are educators, I understand the importance of supporting teachers and working with them as parent partners and volunteering to serve through organizations like the PTO. For years, I've watched my family members use their own funds for classroom supplies and always wanted a better solution for them. As a trustee, I will have a vote on how Prosper ISD compensates and supports our teachers within the budget.

Our PISD teachers must have an inflationary raise to keep up with the rising costs of the economy. The most recently adopted budget reflects total revenue sources and expenditures (including debt service) to be approximately \$340 million annually. Within that budget, I am confident that PISD can work to investigate areas where we can optimize costs and better prioritize teacher pay. Additionally, we can all support the legislation filed this session that addresses teacher salaries increasing during a time when Texas has a tremendous state budget surplus. I have heard from many teachers that they need help in managing the amount of workload that seems to continue to increase year over year (without an equivalent increase in pay). Pay is, of course, not why our dedicated teachers serve our students, but it is extremely important that we attract and retain the best teachers while providing them market competitive salaries.

I am a firm believer that no Chromebook can or should replace the invaluable personal interaction that a teacher can provide to our students, especially in the critical developmental years of K-5. Like many of

you, I am very concerned about the overuse of technology within our schools. I wholeheartedly advocate for a restoration to pre-covid classroom learning fundamentals with a greater emphasis on pencil and paper. Our students need our teachers far more than a device. We must work towards supporting our teachers more (classroom size, workload, compensation, leadership) so that they can invest in our students completely.

Last but not least, I am worried about the age-inappropriate content our children are sometimes unknowingly exposed to through media tools and apps on their school device. I have first-hand experience working with the school and district as a parent partner to address and resolve these concerns for the sake of our students. I will continue to champion these causes to help our kids whether or not I am elected to the school board.

In your opinion, what is the most important decision facing the district today? How would you address it?

Some might respond that we need to better address our exponential student population growth that continues to rise, and I would agree – that is a major decision facing our district today. However, given the year that Prosper ISD has experienced, with multiple spotlights on some themed challenges, I believe our greatest decision as a district is how to truly unite the community with effective solutions in a way that breeds trust for all families. I have personally spoken with a multitude of parents regarding challenges that they have experienced with administration, schools and the treatment of their children that was not satisfactory and not resolved in a manner that aided the student. These issues, along with concerns about waning core academic standards, are real matters that parents in our district are contemplating right now.

The first step to Positive Change is admitting that change is needed. As defined in the seven principles of my PROSPER campaign, we must recognize the current reality, drive ownership, be servant leaders to the community and put our kids FIRST.

Prosper is one of the fastest-growing districts in the state and nation. What is the best way to address that growth and how do we fund the needed buildings to accommodate students?

The way we fund buildings and infrastructure for our growing student population is by approving and passing bonds, which do not increase the ISD's tax rate. Prosper ISD has a strategic plan for 2019-2025 that begins with "We BELIEVE students are first in all decisions," and states that it has purchased all of the sites on the current growth map or have an agreement with neighborhoods to legally obtain sites when the time comes to build and will continue to evaluate sites and the possibility of purchasing more. It is important to note that building costs cannot be planned without considering the necessary staffing costs for new schools. Therefore, PISD must attract, retain and support exceptional teachers and leaders who will remain in the district. Failure to do so could result in high attrition rates, leading to larger class sizes and reducing learning opportunities for students.