



INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

2024 SCHOOL BOARD CANDIDATE

Name: Shanda DeLeon

Occupation: Owner/Instructor - Dripping Springs ISR

Years in DSISD: 8

Spouse: David

Children: Harper, Hollis, Quinn

Education: I am Texas born and raised, and attended Kindergarten through 12th grade in Crowley Independent School District. I majored in Public Administration at Texas State University in San Marcos, graduating Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Public Administration in 2004. Shortly after, I enrolled in their Post-Baccalaureate program and received a Texas Teaching Certification (certified in 8-12 Social Studies). I spent several years in the classroom teaching Pre-AP World Geography, World History, and Government. I left the classroom setting to spend more time focused on being a mom to our three beautiful daughters, but I missed teaching, so I found my next passion for being an educator in a swimming pool. In 2019, I was trained and certified as an instructor for Infant Swimming Resource. I have taught hundreds of Dripping Springs babies, toddlers, and young kids life-saving swimming skills for the last five years. Drowning remains the number one cause of death in kids under five, and I am a passionate advocate for awareness and prevention.

Why are you interested in serving as a member of the DSISD Board of Trustees?

Representation across the district is essential. We elect our trustees at large instead of in "places", allowing for a concentration of board members living and attending schools in one area of town. Currently, four Trustees live in Highpointe alone, with the remaining two also on the east side of our district in Belterra and Reunion Ranch. I am the only candidate with children in the elementary and middle schools on the west side of DSISD, and I love being actively involved on the campuses my kids attend. With daughters ages 13, 10, and 7, I have four more years as an elementary parent, seven more years as a middle school parent, and nine years as a high school parent in the district.

Dripping Springs ISD is doing some amazing things that shouldn't go unrecognized, but we also have some ongoing and upcoming challenges - building schools, retaining teachers, and limited funding. With our second high school and sixth elementary on the horizon, I know I can offer a unique perspective with my background

as a teacher. I think building a stronger sense of community connection in the next few years is important as we split into a two high school town. I believe that even with rapid growth, we can maintain the small-town feel of Dripping Springs that many of us moved here for.

Describe your involvement in DSISD?

Since my oldest daughter started Kindergarten at Dripping Springs Elementary in 2016, I have been an active and engaged volunteer at the campus level. I have spent my time in the following areas:

- Being a room mom for eight years (often for two classrooms).
- Stuffing Thursday folders.
- Coordinating and grading Math Stars.
- Teaching Art Appreciation.
- Organizing Talent Shows.
- Chaperoning numerous field trips.
- Helping with Outdoor Classroom.
- Making copies and laminating for teachers.
- Designing yearbooks.
- Sorting and distributing school supplies and class t-shirts.

My oldest daughter moved on to Dripping Springs Middle School in 2022, and while I continue to serve at DSE with my 1st and 4th graders, I am finishing my first year as the Vice President of Hospitality for DSMS PTA. Each month, I have the honor of coordinating and executing ways to celebrate our teachers with birthday cakes, lunches, snacks, and treats.

I have served at the district level as a member of the Elementary 6 Design Committee, the DSMS Campus Advisory Council, and a DSISD Strategic Planning Focus Group.

What community organizations are you actively involved in?

Adhering to the motto "family first," we spend much of our free time in activities with and for our kids. I have volunteer coached several youth sports teams through DSYSA, including volleyball and cheerleading. In the fall of 2023, I proudly served with seven other incredible women as a volunteer coach for Dripping Springs Youth Cheer, where our team of 4th and 5th-grade girls placed 2nd at the Pop Warner National Championships.

My family actively supports the Willpower Community Foundation. Local parents Tim and Shara Allen formed the organization after their son, Will, was in a car accident that left him with a spinal cord injury. The outpouring of love and support after the accident prompted the Allens to start the foundation to support other families with children who have sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury. We are also proud supporters of ATX Wheelchair Basketball, an adaptive sports organization that Will has gone on to excel in.

Other organizations my family volunteers time and financial contributions include: Foster Village, Dripping Springs Education Foundation, Dripping Springs Rotary Club, Women's Storybook Project (an amazing organization where volunteers travel to women's prisons to record incarcerated mothers reading books to their children), Feed My Starving Children (a Christian non-profit where volunteers pack sustainable meals that are donated around the world to feed kids and save lives), and the American Heart Association.

How has education impacted your life?

As a 6th generation Texan and a proud product of Texas public schools, I had the privilege of learning lessons from my parents and from incredible teachers who inspired me to pursue higher education and become a teacher myself.

Though not as affluent, my hometown was a lot like the Dripping Springs of 2015 - a handful of elementary schools, one middle, and one high school. It was, what most would consider, "small town" with a blinking yellow light, a Winn-Dixie, and a Dairy Queen. For many of us, higher education wasn't expected nor financially feasible. No one in my family had gone to college - my dad has a high school diploma, and my mom dropped out and later earned a GED. But, even as young parents, they modeled a strong sense of work ethic for me and my sister, building a floral design business from the ground up. And I had amazing teachers who inspired a love for learning and personal growth. I knew early on that I wanted to go to college, and I am thankful for my parents and my teachers, who not only cheered on my successes but held me accountable when I faltered.

My pursuit of higher education led me to Texas State University where I met my husband, who was pursuing a degree in Finance. We have been together now for over 22 years. He owns a local property tax consulting firm and is an active volunteer, currently serving on the DSISD Long Range Facilities Planning Committee.