

Anna Campos

She is a new school board member and is ready to make change.

Story/L. Thomas



Photo/ C. Anthony

On April 28, 2022, Ema Cardenas, a 14-year-old East High student was walking home from school on the 1600 block of E. University Avenue. She was a victim of a hit and run and died from her injuries. This was a turning point for Anna Campos, Cardenas's mom, it led her to seek change in the district and run for the school board, which she won on November 6 with 59 percent of the votes.

Campos has a couple reasons she decided to campaign. After the East High shooting that left one dead and two seriously injured on March 7, 2022, then following that, a hit and run that killed her daughter, she decided to take charge.

"After the shooting at East and Ema's hit and run death, I found myself in a spot where my mental health was declining. I did not want another parent to go through what we went through with these two major tragedies. I had two choices. One, to fight for change or two, to be in a dark place. The East High community is why I ran. We are a great community, and we are overlooked," Campos said.

Campos is from the Eastside of Des Moines, she is an East High alumni, class of 1999. She lived on the south side for a couple of years but moved back to the East side so that her kids could go to Hiatt and East.

"Mom of three high school graduates, mother of late Ema Cardenas who would've been a junior this year at East High and an adopted mother to two little ones, they are at Phillips

Elementary, I currently work full time for the major U.S. airline in Des Moines," Campos said. Campos has goals she wants to accomplish, as she is now on the school board.

My major goals right now are to be present and be involved with all my district's schools, working on uniting our district, school safety, and advocating for high public-school funding.

Campos wants to help and see various changes in the district. She believes that everyone needs to work better as a community. Being able to support students no matter who they are. One that is super important to her is teacher and staff support. "DMPS has been notorious for not being transparent with the community, teachers, or staff. We have teachers leaving the district because they feel that they have no support from the board, nor the superintendent. This is from the previous administration. COVID being one example, another being when the board conducted those family forums after our shooting at East, nothing came out of it. Things need to change. With a new superinten-

dent and two new board members, I feel that we can work together and find ways to keep great teachers and staff," Campos said.

Campos plans to make these changes by working with others and being transparent.

"Working with the other members on the board, advocating at the state house. I want to make sure that there is transparency between the board and our stakeholders," Campos said.

Campos is here to make and change. She is here to stand up for what is right and what is needed to make a better district and community.

Manuel Adame is a junior at East high school. He was close with Campos's daughter that was the victim of the hit in run. He is happy with the outcome of the school board election.

How do you feel about Anna Campos winning the election?

"I'm glad, she definitely deserves it, trusting she has good changes coming," Adame said.

What are the changes you hope to see?

"I hope she keeps her word as in being a voice for the actual student body seeing what we need and not just what the adults want to see, seeing the necessities of our community's future," Adame said.

How do you know Campos?

"I met Anna after my best friend passed away last year in late April 2022 and I personally got closer to Anna after, wish I would've met her sooner she is a great person," Adame said.