

Adrienne Larsen responses
Candidate for Grande Prairie Public School Trustee

Curriculum:

Curriculum experts, educators, parents, and many of the current school boards have pointed out the flaws in the draft k-6 curriculum.

1. Do you agree with calls to scrap the draft curriculum and start over to develop a curriculum Is that accurate in capturing Alberta's colonial history, diverse present, and modernized to reflect the world we live in?

Response: After reviewing the draft and responses from Teachers, experts and parents (I myself am a parent) I believe that there is great importance in teaching current, relevant and more localized education. I believe strongly that we need to implement teaching of life skills that will also allow for our children to thrive in our changing world as to set them up for the future. I believe it to be of great importance to allow them to learn the skills and tools needed to be able to have the best quality of life throughout school and beyond. I feel that in our current situation it's going to be very difficult to create an entire new curriculum, or even change what is currently being taught, I feel as we undergo these unprecedented times, we need to find ways to support our children educationally, mentally and socially, I believe it's of great importance to focus on the long term effects on our children and find ways to support their current needs that can be easily implemented into our education system while being transferable to their home lives, thus setting them up for the best chance to succeed.

Funding:

Alberta continues to be a growing province, with more students entering the system. While we're told funding is tight for public education, Alberta continues to subsidize private education with millions in public dollars.

2. Do you believe the current education funding formula is sufficient for your district? If not, how will you work to convince the province to provide sustainable and adequate funding?

Response: I will be transparent that there is much more I need to educate myself on in this area in private schooling, from what I do know I feel that there is many ways the province could look at to allow for more funding into public schooling districts.

I feel that allowing the parents to have more involvement in discussions as to what areas of education they feel need to be prioritized would allow space to move funding around. I believe that we need to be focused on the long term success of our children and implement programs within our schools that will allow them to have the best quality of education possible well implement important life skills.

Privatization including P3s:

AUPE members know very well that privatization regularly fails to find “efficiencies” and any cost savings are often off the backs of workers who become de-unionized, with lower pay and benefits.

They also work on the front lines of service delivery and see the problems caused by high-turnover low wage private providers, and the bureaucratic burden caused by having to deal with a third party instead of an in-house provider.

3. Will you oppose privatization of school services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

Schools as Employers:

As our economies recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, good jobs are an important factor. Public sector workers spend in their communities, and many households impacted by private sector recessions have been able to keep the bills paid thanks to a stable public sector job.

4. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the school board employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

5. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against school staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

Response: I feel in a position as a teacher it is extremely important to be paid a respectable amount, I am friends with some local teachers and I have heard first hand the dedication, hours and energy that goes into creating and implementing class room lessons and education to fit into the current curriculum expectations and guidelines. I feel it is of high value to show the respect with fair pay that takes into account the increase of inflation in cost of living, as well by creating an environment that encourages and supports all the hard work the teachers do. I feel it of value to create an environment that encourages and creates a positive impact in the lives of our teachers. I feel that by creating a system that pays them fairly to show appreciation will create drive for the teachers to continue to work at the best of their abilities.

I know that not everyone is always going to agree and not all decisions will be taken with the same response... I believe that allowing the teachers to voice their concerns in a safe and respectful manner would reduce the desire to strike, I believe that if a person is feeling validated

and heard that will reduce the amount of conflict. Again I understand that pleasing everyone is unrealistic, but allowing people to communicate their needs and thoughts has a massive impact on the way they respond. By creating a safe space to openly communicate will allow for the teachers to share their concerns and thus creates the ability to better create solutions.

COVID Safety:

With the negligent provincial response to now three preventable waves of COVID-19, school boards have been put in an awkward position of needing to take measures to protect their students and staff throughout the pandemic. Many are introducing measures of their own, but not all have.

6. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your schools?

At this time I believe keeping our children, staff and community safe is key and essential, I believe that all children and families should have the right to educate their children within the local school district as well know that they are supported in the decisions they feel are best for them and their families. I feel we need to have safe measures put into place to keep the school community as safe as possible while still respecting people's rights and freedoms. I think it is important to look at the information being shared to the public objectively, with care and caution. As the board representing parents and children , I believe it is of great value that we take into account their concerns, deciding what will best serve them as a whole, keeping safety a top priority.