

Dave Gurr responses

Candidate for Lethbrige Public School Trustee

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

I think there is a lot of pretty words in this draft curriculum but at the end of the day it sucks. Belief systems associated with Islam, Judaism and Christianity and how they helped shape the current world in grade two or understanding and creating a business plan in grade four or fractions in grade one are just some examples of how we are asking a lot from our children too early. I feel there are some good topics that are poorly placed in the draft curriculum and should be moved around but more so, we need to bring this curriculum into 2021 and modernize it to where we are as a society today. With the amount of work I feel that is needed to be done to address the large gaps in this current draft curriculum I think it would be easier to scrap it and start again then to rework what is already there.

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?

More money is never a bad thing! First, I think we should revert back to the previous funding model instead of the 3 year weighted average funding model that was introduced earlier this year. Second, I believe the government should cut private school funding to 50% instead of the 70ish% currently being funded as those private schools would have a far easier time recouping funds through other means and divert funds towards the public school system.

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?

The more we can do in house the better. You have more control and more say when it's your own people doing the work and I would always look to support our own first. In terms of privatization of school services along with bringing back previously privatized services, I would have to look at each situation case by case. I am currently not familiar with specific details of some services that have been privatized in the school system.

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?

I will always stand up for my employees and I am well documented on that front. Your employees are the backbone of a business (or in this case the schools) and I believe whole heartedly in supporting the employees where we can. As a union collective bargaining rights are a big thing and should be exercised when necessary.

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?

Yes I would oppose cuts and I think it's wrong to restrict someone's right to strike, it is in the collective bargaining agreement and although I think calling a strike should be the absolute last resort and meaningful talks should shine through the right to strike is real and should not be taken away.

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?

I think the government of Alberta on the Covid measures, rules or guidelines (and lack thereof) really let down not only school boards and teachers but parents too. Making school boards come up with their own health measures really should not be the role of a school board, however that is the spot we are currently in.

Especially during our current situation, I support masks in schools to help stop the spread and keep not only our children but our teachers safe and thus also keeping families at home safe. I also would support a vaccine mandate or other appropriate measures such as weekly rapid testing for staff.