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Candidate for Edmonton Public School Trustee Ward C

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 that is accurate in capturing Alberta's colonial history, diverse present, and modernized to reflect the world we live in?

Yes! I **do not** support the draft curriculum that has been put forward by Minister Adrianna LaGrange. In-fact, this was a large motivating factor for me when deciding to run as a School Board Trustee. I think the draft (as it stands today) is flawed, problematic, and potentially harmful for students and the success of our province in the future. We need a curriculum that reflects Alberta's diversity and prepares children for success, the proposed draft does not do this. We know that school curriculum's can last a long time before any revisions take place (decades in-fact), so this needs to be done right.

As a School Board Trustee I will stand firm (as the current EPSB has done) and vote against piloting the proposed curriculum. I will continue to push for a re-engagement with teachers and curriculum experts so that we can create a new curriculum that works for our children.

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?

The current finding model is not sufficient for the Edmonton Public School Board (EPSB). Public education in Alberta has seen huge budget cuts in the last few years, particularly in 2020. These cuts saw many families, students, schools, teachers, and staff scrambling to make due with less. This is unacceptable. As a EPSB Trustee I will work with the provincial government (and all levels of gov't) to advocate for funding required to support students, especially students with complex learning needs. This includes advocating for a sustainable funding model that supports different stages of learning and options for that education (online, outreach programs, technology, etc.). When I refer to "sustainability" I mean sustained (and committed) dollars year over year so schools, EPSB, teachers, and staff can plan, not the freeze and cutting of funds ad-hoc that has been happening. The current funding model put forward by the provincial government is confusing and unfair, especially to schools and divisions that are growing fast. This model needs to be reviewed and amended so that more money is kept in classrooms and boards understand how their funding is allocated; more transparency and accountability is needed with our funding.

I will bring this knowledge and understanding of the current model and its ramifications to my discussions with the government officials, the media, and my decision making at the board

table. I will build relationships with policy and decision makers on the provincial level to influence their decisions. I will advocate publicly and work with all levels of government (particularly the provincial government) to ensure the stories, data, and outcomes of an inadequate funding model are known. I will utilize my background in policy development and work hard to support the work that teachers and staff do with students in our schools through policies and decisions on the board level. I will continue to advocate and push for changes that promote equity, accessibility, and accountability.

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?

Yes! A vast amount of evidence has proven that P3's are not what is best for taxpayer dollars and our schools. I do not agree with this current government's direction of contracting out the management of public infrastructure projects to private interests. Not only are P3's irresponsible when it comes to schools, but they are also more expensive for everyone. Additionally, the ongoing maintenance and repairs that are needed at schools are best handled in-house; privatization of these services often results in long wait times for completed work and modifications to buildings require approval, creating obstacles and increased wait times for development of learning and community spaces. Privatization of school services like maintenance and construction also means that there is less public accountability and oversight, as responsibility is handed off to profit-driven private industry rather than publicly elected and accountable school boards.

If I am elected as an EPSB Trustee I will oppose P3's and the privatization of services at our schools.

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?

Yes, 100%! These are the basics for attracting and retaining qualified and caring staff. Schools all across the province, more than ever, are relying on staff to do more with less. If these expectations are not met with “living wages” and job security, the demands on staff and the requirement for them to “go the extra mile” without compensation should not be expected.

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! These are inheritance rights and employees should be able to exercise these rights if/when needed.

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 measure 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?

Masks in Schools - One of the top priorities in schools right now needs to be our staff and children's safety. The constant shifting from at-home and on-line learning is not good for learning outcomes or the well-being of our staff and children. Preventing outbreaks is essential to keeping schools open. Masking is one way we can prevent closures and keep staff, teachers, and students safe. Pediatric experts have proven that masks significantly protect both the person who's wearing them and the people around them. I support masking in our schools.

Vaccines in Schools - Given the rising COVID-19 numbers, the Delta variant and the fact our hospitals and medical professionals are at capacity, I think vaccines are a scientifically proven way to protect our schools, children, staff, and communities. Wherever possible, I feel that double vaccines should be required of school staff, teachers, and students. With that said, I know that some individuals cannot be vaccinated based on medical or other protected grounds outlined in the Alberta Human Rights Act.