

From: Linda Wellman, Trustee Candidate, Calgary Catholic School Board
Wards 3, 5 & Airdrie
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Thank you for participating in this survey from AUPE's Committee On Political Action. The Committee is asking for all surveys to be completed by Tuesday, September 28. Please send your responses or any questions of your own to AUPE via email at t.zimmerman@aupe.org The committee intends to publish the responses (or lack thereof) during the week of October 4.

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

Answer:

The Ministry of Education has indicated that a new K-6 curriculum will be implemented in September 2022. There are many aspects of the draft curriculum that cause concern and for this reason I supported the district's administration to not pilot the draft in front of students; trustees will need to ensure that input provided by curriculum specialists, parents, teachers and school boards is valued and used to improve the proposed new curriculum. I am committed to advocating for a well balanced curriculum and the resources that need to be in place for teachers to successfully launch the new curriculum in front of our students.

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?

Answer:

It is imperative that we share our story and ensure that citizens value the benefits of a strong publicly funded Education System that provides choice to parents for their children within the three facets of public education. As an elected trustee I have and will continue to educate elected officials at the local and provincial level on the need for a well supported and funded public education system. The impacts of the new funding modeling using the Weighted Moving Average has not yet been realized and it appears that it will be more beneficial to school jurisdictions that have a stable or reduced student population. While the government claims that education funding has increased year over year, this has been a direct result of student enrolment growth, the actual spending on a per student basis has not kept pace with inflation and the increasing costs of providing specialized services to the growing diverse needs of

students. Knowledge and experience in advocating effectively bringing about change is crucial. I have effectively advocated for better supports for English Language Learners, the return to kindergarten funding when it was reduced by 50%, to have student growth funded and to build new schools where needed.

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 deunionized, 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?

Answer:

I am not a proponent of P3s as the government has not effectively demonstrated that there is a real cost benefit to taxpayers over the long term. All of the schools in our district that were built using the P3 model have their daily operational maintenance provided by district staff hired as prescribed by our collective agreement.

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?

Answer:

I can attest that administration conducts market research and labour analysis to ensure that the district is a fair employer and has the ability to attract and retain qualified staff at all levels of the organization. Calgary Catholic is one of Alberta's Top 70 Employers.

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?

Answer:

I strongly support the Collective Bargaining Process and the rights of employees to a fair process. I would not be supportive of the government making cuts to the LAPP.

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?

Answer:

I strongly support the measures our district has put in place in the District's School Resumption Handbook to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. I believe that CCSD has taken on a leadership role to provide the safest possible teaching, learning and working environments in all district facilities. I do believe that that School Boards should not have to make health decisions nor spend educational dollars on health measures; this belongs with the Ministry of Health and Alberta Health Services. Trustees need to continue advocating to elected government officials individually and collectively with their boards and trustee associations to effect the change needed to eliminate the health threats and the financial burden of COVID-19 and the off-loading of this responsibility from government to school boards.