

Murray Hollman responses

Candidate for Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools 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 do not believe that the entire draft curriculum needs to be scrapped, however I do agree that there are serious areas of concern that must be addressed. I have heard from some teachers that there are parts of this draft curriculum that are good, and worth saving. I have also heard that there are many parts that require a revision. I believe it would be best to review the entire curriculum as a whole, keeping in mind Alberta (and Canada's) history and present, and creating an exciting and vibrant curriculum that will reflect the needs of our students in this present age.

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?

I believe that if the funding formula calculated only the educational needs of our staff/students, then it would be adequate. However, the reality is that we use our funding towards the needs of the whole child -- which includes many other facets other than simply books/teachers/supplies. Areas like mental health, physical wellness, and family school enhancement workers (to name a few) are services that should be funded through other ministries, but unfortunately end up on our plate. This creates a delicate balance and a thin line between what we can afford to support, and what we can not. I would like to continue to lobby for better cross ministry cooperation and wrap-around services to better serve our school communities.

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, I oppose P3s. In my experience, I find that the long-term costs are higher for maintenance. This model also brings a lot of management and coordination issues which leads to many inefficiencies.

If de-privatizing services is what is best for our school communities, I would be open to hearing both sides to make a good and informed decision.

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?

I believe that we must do what is best for our school communities. Supporting our employees with living wages, full time hours, job security and collective bargaining rights are certainly beneficial and important to the success of our communities.

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?

I 100% agree with the right to strike. If teachers disagree with their contract, they are not able to simply go across the street and find another job that will meet their contractual needs. It is not that easy. This industry relies on cooperation between staff and government and if either side is dissatisfied, there must be actions available to demonstrate this disagreement.

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?

There is a fine line between balancing the rights of all people with the common good of the population. I am in support of measures that are intended to protect the most vulnerable populations in our school communities. I am also in support of re-evaluating these measures as required as the situation unfolds.