

Patricia Bolger responses

Candidate for Calgary Board of Education Wards 6 & 7

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?

Absolutely. Although, we could save thousands of hours of work and use the draft that was almost ready to be piloted four years ago. That draft had been developed, as curriculums have been for years, with a wide range of Albertans involved in the process including teachers, business leaders, academics, and subject area specialists.

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?

Large school divisions like the CBE serve the needs of all students with incredibly diverse needs. One of the biggest challenges facing a large school board like the CBE is meeting the needs of all students. Children come to school with a wide range of abilities and personal circumstances. In a system and a province that promotes Inclusive Education, providing the necessary supports and resources to students and teachers is critical for success. Delivering small class sizes, assistants in the classrooms, appropriate resources, and professional supports are all crucial to meeting this goal. Assessing and providing services to students with exceptional needs, and programs to improve the health and wellness of all students is essential. All of this requires significant and critical funding. Working with Alberta Education to advocate for, and ensure student needs, are met is paramount. We shouldn't be funding programs that can be selective in their enrolment and choose not to provide programming for all students. Public money belongs in public schools.

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? *I need to learn more about this topic to have a better understanding of what is being referred to and the impact in 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. If full-time staffing is required and is in the best interests of students, this helps to provide consistency of personnel and builds a positive climate within our schools.*
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.*

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? *Yes I do.*

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