

1. MOTIVATION

Why have you decided to put your name forward for this work and what are your top three priorities as a School Trustee? Explain how these priorities will improve public education.

If you had asked me four years ago whether I thought I would be putting my name forward for School Trustee, I probably would not have believed you. My decision to run has grown naturally out of many years of involvement in public education and more specifically SD62.

Over the past 10+ years on PAC executives, including three terms as SPEAC President, I have spent countless hours listening to families, working with educators, district staff and trustees, and advocating for students. Those experiences have shown me both the strengths of our public education system and the pressures being placed on it.

My three priorities are:

Student and staff mental health and well-being. Increasing classroom complexity, workload pressures and growing student needs affect both learning and working conditions. We need to continue advocating for sufficient supports so that students can succeed and employees can do their jobs safely and effectively.

Capital funding and infrastructure. SD62 is one of the fastest-growing districts in the province. At the same time, we have significant deferred maintenance needs. Trustees need to advocate strongly and consistently with the province for both new schools and adequate funding to maintain the schools we already have.

Greater flexibility and adequate funding for student supports. Targeted funding can be valuable, but districts also need enough flexibility to respond to the actual needs of their students. Whether we are discussing EAs, ECEs, counselling, inclusive education or other supports, decisions should be driven by what will best serve students rather than by trying to fit local needs into overly restrictive funding envelopes.

Ultimately, these priorities come back to the same principle behind my campaign: *Today's Youth Are Our Future*. Strong public education requires us to invest not only in students, but also in the people and infrastructure that support them.

2. EXPERIENCE

When was the last time you spent time in a public school in British Columbia? What direct experience do you have in advocating for improvements to public education in British Columbia?

Very recently. Public schools have been a regular part of my life for many years, both as a parent of two students currently attending SD62 schools and through my involvement in PAC, SPEAC and district activities.

I have served on PAC executives for 10+ years and spent four years on the SPEAC executive, including three terms as President. During that time, I have advocated on issues ranging from student supports and district budgets to transportation, facilities and capital funding.

I have also served as the SPEAC representative on the district's Resources Committee and have regularly attended Board meetings. Those experiences have given me a strong understanding of both governance and the practical consequences that Board decisions have in schools.

Provincially, I have also been involved in advocacy relating to school facilities and capital needs. One lesson I have learned through all of this work is that effective advocacy depends on relationships. It means listening to families, educators, support staff and students, understanding the issue, and then being willing to carry those concerns forward respectfully and persistently.

I am not running because I believe I have all the answers. I am running because I know how important it is to ask questions, listen carefully and bring people together to solve problems.

3. RELATIONSHIP

Are you working with any other Trustee and/or City Council candidates, either formally or informally? Based on the platforms of others running, are there any Trustee candidates you would like to work with around the table? How will you foster respectful and collaborative labour relations with the STA and other employee groups?

I am running an independent campaign and am not part of a formal slate.

I have positive working relationships with a number of current trustees, trustee candidates and municipal candidates. In some cases, we attend the same community events, exchange information about events, or have canvassed together. I believe being able to work respectfully with people who may not agree on every issue is an important part of public service.

If elected, I will work collaboratively with whoever the voters choose to put around the Board table. A functional Board cannot depend on trustees agreeing with each other all the time. It depends on trustees being willing to listen, debate issues respectfully and ultimately work together once decisions are made.

That same principle applies to labour relations.

I believe trustees and teachers should be partners, not opponents. Trustees make decisions about policy, budgets and district priorities, but teachers and other employees experience the effects of those decisions every day.

Respectful labour relations require more than meeting when there is a problem. They require ongoing communication, genuine consultation, transparency and a willingness to listen before decisions are made.

I am also a union member myself, and my experience in organized labour has reinforced my belief that strong public services depend on respecting the workers who deliver them.

There will inevitably be occasions when the Board and an employee group disagree. When that happens, my commitment would be to listen carefully, explain the reasoning behind my position honestly, and maintain the relationship even through disagreement.

4. AUTONOMY

What degree of autonomy do you think teachers should have over their instruction and their professional development?

Teachers are trained professionals and should have substantial professional autonomy within the curriculum, professional standards, collective agreement and applicable district and provincial requirements.

One of the themes I emphasized throughout my campaign, was the importance of listening to the people closest to the work. In the classroom, that is the teacher.

Teachers know their students, understand their classrooms and possess professional expertise that trustees do not. The role of a trustee should not be to micromanage instructional practice.

I take a similar view toward professional development. Meaningful professional development is most effective when educators have meaningful input into identifying the learning that will strengthen their practice and meet the needs they see in their classrooms.

There will always be district-wide priorities and responsibilities, but those should complement rather than replace professional judgment.

5. BUDGET

While BC's public schools are suffering the impact of chronic underfunding, public tax dollars are provided to private schools. What are your thoughts about public funds being used for private schools? How would you approach the budget process to make sure you are casting an informed vote?

I believe this is an issue that deserves serious provincial review.

When public school districts are struggling to maintain staffing, student supports and facilities, I believe it is reasonable to ask whether the current level and structure of public funding for independent schools continues to be appropriate. My priority is ensuring that public education is adequately funded and that public dollars are first meeting the needs of the public system.

On the district budget, I would approach decisions from the top down rather than immediately looking to schools and classrooms for reductions.

I would want to understand the district's financial position, staffing projections, enrolment, vacancies, contractual obligations, restricted funding and administrative costs before considering reductions that directly affect students.

I also believe employee groups need meaningful opportunities to provide input. Teachers, support staff and administrators often see consequences that may not be obvious when looking only at a spreadsheet.

There will be difficult budgets where no option is painless. If reductions become necessary, I would want the Board to be transparent about why decisions are being made, what alternatives were considered and what impact each option is expected to have.

My starting point would always be protecting classrooms and student services as much as possible.

6. VOICE

How do you plan to ensure the voices of vulnerable staff and students are represented in board decisions?

Representation cannot simply mean providing people with an opportunity to speak after most of the decision-making has already occurred.

I believe good governance requires deliberately seeking out perspectives that may otherwise be missed.

For students, that means continuing to strengthen meaningful student voice in district decision-making and ensuring we hear from more than just the students who are already comfortable participating in formal leadership structures.

For employees, it means maintaining relationships with the STA, CUPE, SPVPA and other staff groups, and ensuring consultation occurs early enough to actually influence decisions.

Trustees also need to recognize that some people may not feel safe or comfortable speaking publicly. Boards need mechanisms that allow those perspectives to reach decision-makers without requiring an individual to place themselves in a vulnerable position.

Listening is only useful if people can see that their input was genuinely considered, even when the final decision is not the one they advocated for.

7. VIOLENCE

What is your understanding of violence in schools and what would you do to ensure workplaces are safe for staff and students?

Violence in schools is both a student-safety issue and a workplace-safety issue.

Increasing classroom complexity means educators and support staff may encounter behaviours that can result in physical or psychological harm. We cannot normalize employees being injured at work simply because they work in education.

Trustees have a governance responsibility to ensure the district has effective policies, sufficient resources, appropriate reporting systems and a culture in which incidents are taken seriously.

I would want to hear directly from employees and their representatives about where current systems are working and where gaps remain. Incident reporting should provide useful information that allows the district to identify patterns and address underlying causes rather than simply documenting individual events.

Prevention is also important. Appropriate staffing, student supports, training, early intervention and appropriate learning environments can all contribute to safer schools.

Every student deserves a safe place to learn, and every employee deserves a safe place to work.

8. SOGI

What does SOGI mean? What is your position on SOGI education in schools? What would you do to address the rise in transphobia and queerphobia?

SOGI refers to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity.

I support creating schools where every student feels safe, respected and included. SOGI-inclusive education is part of ensuring that LGBTQ2S+ students and families see themselves respected within their school community and that all students learn to treat others with dignity.

I also think it is important to distinguish between legitimate questions from families and misinformation. When concerns arise, my first response is to listen and understand what someone is actually asking. Often productive conversations begin by clarifying what is actually happening in schools.

At the same time, inclusion and safety are not negotiable. Students and employees should not face discrimination, harassment, transphobia or queerphobia at school.

Trustees have a responsibility to support district policies and practices that create safe and inclusive environments, while ensuring conversations with the broader community remain respectful and grounded in accurate information.

9. CLIMATE

What role do trustees play in addressing the climate crisis?

School trustees are responsible for governance of a significant public organization with buildings, transportation systems, purchasing decisions and long-term capital needs.

That means environmental considerations should be incorporated into long-term planning rather than treated as a separate issue.

For SD62, this includes advocating for new schools and major renovations that are energy efficient and resilient, looking for opportunities to reduce operating costs and emissions through facility upgrades, and considering sustainability when making transportation and procurement decisions.

There is also an educational dimension. Students will live with the long-term consequences of today's environmental decisions, and our schools should support students in developing the knowledge and critical-thinking skills necessary to understand those challenges.

Trustees cannot solve the climate crisis alone, but they can ensure the district takes responsible action within its mandate and advocates to senior governments for the capital resources required to do more.

10. RECONCILIATION

What steps have you taken toward Reconciliation?

For me, Reconciliation begins with listening, learning and recognizing that it is an ongoing responsibility rather than something that can be completed through a single initiative or statement.

During my years working within SD62, I have had opportunities to learn more about Indigenous education through district discussions, presentations and engagement with the people doing this work. I have tried to approach those opportunities with humility and an understanding that I still have more to learn.

As a trustee, I would continue building my understanding and would look to local Nations, Indigenous students and families, and the district's Indigenous Education team for guidance rather than assuming I know what Reconciliation should look like for them.

I believe trustees also have a responsibility to ensure commitments to Indigenous students are reflected in actual Board decisions, policies, resource allocation and district priorities.

Reconciliation requires both learning and action, and I see that work as continuing throughout my service if I am elected.

Is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Over the past several years I have had the privilege of developing relationships with many STA members through my work with SPEAC and SD62.

Those relationships matter to me.

I will not always agree with the STA, just as individual teachers will not always agree with every decision I make. What I can commit to is that disagreement will never prevent me from listening, asking questions and treating people with respect.

I want educators to know that if I am elected, my door will remain open.

I will continue to listen. I will continue to advocate. And I will continue to put students and public education at the centre of the work.