

Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

Thank you for putting your name forward to do the important work of School Board Trustee. The members of the Nelson and District Teachers Association appreciate you taking the time to complete the following questionnaire.

Your Name

Julie Bremner

Area you are seeking election

City of Nelson

What motivates you to become a school board member?

I have been connected to the school community in Nelson and SD8 since settling here in 2018. I want to leverage my relevant skills and experience to foster strong collaborative governance at the board level. My background is in experiential education. I have spent the last 15 years working with kids, youth and adults facilitating leadership learning in outdoor and cross-cultural settings. I am passionate about building inclusive teams and fostering open communication. A Master's degree in Global Leadership has helped to root my leadership practice in a stronger understanding of complex systems and strategic planning. My work has explored the centrality of equity, diversity and inclusion practices to education. I am a firm believer in the power of education to shape and strengthen individuals, communities and cultures

What is your view of the purpose of public education?

Public education should provide space and support for all learners to develop holistically. It should foster engaged and empowered individuals and serve communities and the environment.

How can you and the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?

As a starting place, I will work to support the BCSTA's resolution for advocacy on the TRC's calls to action # 7, 10, 11, 12 and 57. And, I will work hard to push our school district to go further to work to achieve Calls to Action within our district. Two important areas where our district board of trustees should work to set strategic goals: closing employment and educational gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and learners (#7) and providing ongoing, meaningful training and resources for educators related to (#57).

What are the critical issues facing our local schools right now?

1. Instability in staffing all roles in schools is a critical issue. Inconsistency in administration can be detrimental to fostering strong school leadership. The district seems to be struggling to value,

support and retain great people across all roles from teachers to bus drivers to EAs and custodians. Instability in regular positions also leads to communication barriers, making it harder to foster collaboration vertically within schools and between schools and the district office. 2. Climate change is a critical issue facing society and schools. Our district manages a number of large buildings and a fleet of buses, all infrastructure in need of adaptation to our changing climate and opportunities for emissions reductions. We need climate action and adaptation to make our school buildings more comfortable and safe for workers and learners into the future. We also need to lead by example to set a tone for students that those in positions of leadership take the climate crisis seriously. 3. Lack of confidence in the effectiveness of the board of trustees. I firmly believe the board of trustees should serve and be accountable to our school communities.

What role do you see trustees playing in speaking up for public education in BC?

Trustees are advocates for their districts and the needs of all learners. Ultimately, the work of trustees is to serve all learners by working hard to bring attention to local district needs, advocating for resources, and shaping strategic goals. In this way, trustees can contribute to province wide conversations about public education by giving voice to the needs of those working and learning in our schools.

Describe an action, initiated by you, that resulted in a positive change for your community.

In the fall of 2020, while the pandemic was still limiting society, I took on the role of making Nelson Nordic Ski Club's School Outreach Program run. To prepare for the first pandemic season hosting school groups at Nelson Nordic I worked hard behind the scenes with the ski club, SD8 administrators, teachers and parents to ensure we had a thorough plan and were prepared to deliver excellent ski programming while keeping all participants safe. There were moments when it seemed this program would not be able to run. I am really proud that during the 2020/21 winter season we hosted hundreds of kids from across Nelson and area schools. During a challenging time in the pandemic, the school outreach team and I provided a fun and safe outdoor field trip option to teachers and schools. I think this brought a little bit of happiness to our community during a stressful period and I am grateful to have been a part of it.

What specific action(s) have you taken in the past to show your support for Kootenay teachers?

I'm connected to the teaching community in SD8 through my partner who is a teacher in our district and our network of friends who work in schools. I have been happy to be an active listener and a sounding board for ideas around education in our district.

The NDTA and KLTF would like to have more regular communication with trustees. How would you improve the connection between trustees and the

NDTA? Will you commit to meeting with the NDTA, in order to discuss issues of importance and share information?

Yes, I think that it is really important to open more channels of communication between the board of trustees and all those connected to schools. I want to be an advocate on the board for more communication all around. The NDTA and KLTF represent key stakeholders in board of trustee work, I would happily commit to regular meetings.

Explain the importance of class size and composition from your perspective.

My background in experiential education has given me experience with small group sizes. Low teacher to student ratios permitted me to foster positive learning environments and build strong rapport with individual learners. I see class size and composition as key factors in how educators are able to meet the needs of all learners. Class sizes and compositions should provide safe learning environments and take into account all student needs. Appropriate sizes and compositions of classes support educators in fostering positive and inclusive learning environments.

How do you plan to ensure that you remain current with what is happening in schools and in classrooms?

I want to advocate for the board of trustees to actively solicit feedback from teachers and EAs. This is something other school districts in BC do. I also plan to attend PAC meetings to gain additional insight into our schools and classrooms. I will work hard with other trustees and the superintendent to find and open appropriate channels of communication.

If elected, what are your top three priorities?

1. Make our district a great employer. Value and support all those working hard to keep our schools running and serve our students. 2. Advocate for climate adaptation of district infrastructure. I want to make sure that as our local climate changes, our buildings remain safe and comfortable places to work and learn. 3. Be accountable to you and the Nelson community. Trustees are elected and should be accountable to the community and school stakeholders.

Anything else you would like to share with the members of the NDTA?

Thank you for taking the time to read this! Please, check out my campaign site for more information juliefortrustee.com