

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

Lesley Anne Garlow, Cayuga, Turtle Clan, Six Nations Of the Grand River

Area you are seeking election

City of Nelson

What motivates you to become a school board member?

First of all I would like to thank you for your questions, I am grateful, I would like to offer a few words of thanksgiving, It is a blessing to be here in Nelson, On the unceded territory of the Sinixt, the Ktunaxa peoples, I also would like to acknowledge the local Metis community and the many Indigenous people who contribute to this areas ,contemporary community. I also like to acknowledge all the relations and all the ancestors of every one who will read these words. Gratitude to Mother earth and all of our Relations. My motivation for running for a board member position runs deep, I attended this School district as a financially impoverished but a Traditional Haudenosaunee Culturally rich Indigenous person. Something that I think is important but that maybe wasn't apparent to teachers and other students. As I didn't feel safe to talk about or share it. This is why I didn't participate in much Indigenous "stuff" at school as a kid. (what there was) My children, the first of which I had at 17, grew up in this school district for a total of 14/15 years; at a time my family and my self were struggling with the affects and legacy of poverty and the Residential school systems. Some highly dedicated Teachers and support staff really tried their hardest with the tools they had. Not something I really understood at the time. In a lot of ways you could say their considerate interventions possibly saved the lives of my struggling children. This wasn't clear to me at the time and I was often angry and frustrated. Then I started attending Selkirk College. Not for cooking like I had planned but for Social Work. I am currently finishing my degree at the University of Victoria with the Faculty of Human and Social Development. Education helps to put things into perspective and that is a huge responsibility. With the new UNDRIP and TRC legislations I deeply feel that I have a unique perspective on not only what its like to be a daughter of Sky Woman in this place, but my specified education in Social Work with and Indigenous governance specialization would help me to learn how thigs are working now and to ensure that teachers get the support they need to answer the new demands of the BC Curriculum and ethical Indigenous relationship building. I might not have had much faith in the public school system most of my life but I have since developed relationships with some incredible people who are deeply invested in our children and community health and well being. I believe that there are

people like me, that can envision the future of public education that students and families not only need and deserve, that with a holistic approach to education for all, is possible.

What is your view of the purpose of public education?

This is a loaded question. If we consider the roots of the public school system and how it was developed historically based on prison and factory systems I would say it was designed to produce a dependable well controlled labor force that contributed to capitalism and in some ways I suspect it still might be . However, I speak from personal experience that the responsibilities have shifted, now not only must students be able to perform equations, and read, public education now demands that students learn how to ask questions and prepare them to adapt to rapidly changing local and global concerns. Public education is now asked to assist in building a foundation that will propel our youth into the future... no pressure...

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

I can assist with sharing information and discussing Indigenous and Canadian law, academic articles relevant to nation to nation relationship development, mental health and truth and reconciliation, Anti oppressive theory and Indigenous perspectives of helping and healing, family dynamic theory and human and social development . I am not afraid to ask hard question or to have respectful critical conversations rooted in dignity for all. I frequently rely on the guidance of Indigenous academics and community leaders and teachings of elders.

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

supports for board members to educate themselves on TRC, UNDRIP and other important legal legislation and holistic theories of human development. and discerning how that knowledge can support teachers and families Nation to Nation relationships with regional nations. Mental Health supports for students and families but also teachers

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

I see it being a lot about listening and lifelong learning while making decisions based on my own cultural teachings of the Seven Generations Teachings and The Great Law of Peace, while taking into account the recommendations of regional Indigenous Nations and all student and youth.

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

I asked for an Indigenous elder to be present and for an Indigenous talking circle when involved in a restorative justice opportunity involving my family and the city of nelson. They had never had this request before. They now have a new relationship with and elder and are aware of the possibility of that request in the future. I also took a moment to share some information around culturally relevant interventions when supporting Indigenous families. My son and myself and the

elder are less afraid of police which I think is a positive change for the community. there was learning for all sides.

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

I work at the Nelson Museum Archives and gallery, where my position is the Museum Educator, where I contribute, collaborate and consult on exhibitions, research policy, repatriation, truth and reconciliation and systemic decolonization of our Museum. I have endeavored over the past 3 years to work with other museum staff to create interesting and dynamic educational opportunities at a reasonable price, in the forms of art exhibitions, historical exhibitions and social justice oriented content with critical conversations. We have in the past and in the future, will continue to offer teacher Industry nights where educators can come and see new exhibitions while brainstorming their application to their classroom experience.

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?

Absolutly!

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

this is critical. My holistic approach to education leads me to understand the interconnected and intersections of class size and composition on over all community health. too many kids in a class leads to over worked and burnt out teachers and support staff and neglected learners that can fall through the cracks.

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

I'm gonna be around.... I will answer emails, and return phone calls and listen to students, teachers and families alike.

If elected, what are your top three priorities?

listening and learning from teachers, staff and families. ensuring the SD8 board is aware of policy and legislations demanded by the TRC, UNDRIP and other legal documents in context with regional history, politics, and climate change. Develop ethical Nation to Nation Relationships with regional Nations at a collaborative board level.

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

Relationships are critical on a molecular level, a social level, a legal level, a community level, and a spiritual level...NDTA are supporting our communities through the teaching of our children, our

children are our future. A respectful and authentic relationship with teachers is critical and something I commit to nurturing through respect and reciprocity. Thank you for these thoughtful questions. All My Relations