

NDTA Questionnaire

1. What motivates you to become a school board member?

I firmly believe that public education plays a crucial role in our society. How well we educate our youth has an impact on every aspect of our shared future- employment, community health, social responsibility, the environment, our global economy and beyond.

A robust public education system is vital for the future health of all humanity. Our youth must be prepared to face the escalating global challenges ahead, climate change, population growth, racial inequity, economic inequity, and global unrest.

My passion is to ensure every student is fostered to reach their greatest potential.

2. What is your view of the purpose of public education?

The primary mission of public education is to enable all learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to have meaningful lives, enjoy success in their own unique capacity and contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

A robust public education system prepares students for citizenship in a democratic society. It empowers them to become economically self-sufficient, to contribute to improved social conditions, and unify our diverse population.

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

Education calls to action (#62 - #65)

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524504501233/1557513602139>

The Board of Education has been in support of the recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for several years. This includes a number of initiatives that focus on both educating all folks in our district and a comprehensive approach to indigenizing the curriculum – details can be found at <https://www.sd8.bc.ca/FESL/2020-2021>.

For myself I recognize and have committed to my own ongoing education to the history, the present and the vision that our indigenous communities are sharing. I recognize I will be learning and undoing the systemic racism that resides within me for a long time to come.

I actively continue in my own education and support and promote ongoing Indigenous learning for all trustees and staff. Through work as your trustee, I have supported the financial investments for Indigenous teachings in all our schools and I will continue to support the development and delivery of local indigenous informed courses that are now part of the new BC graduation requirements.

I believe this work will continue growing equitable academic support in literacy and numeracy through land-based learning.

It will continue opportunities for students to share their individual stories: "The truth about stories, is that is all we are." T. King

It will reflect that Truth comes before Reconciliation and the ongoing deepening of relationships with Traditional Territories and the Metis Nation.

And ultimately, our work in this area will continue to focus on celebration of Indigenous resilience and brilliance and a holistic way of educating our students.

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

Adequate funding, staffing, maintenance, morale, mental health.

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

I have always been a strong public education supporter as a parent leader and as a trustee. I am a proactive trustee advocate voice from and to the local (SD8 Kootenay Lake,) regional (BCSTA Kootenay Boundary Branch) and provincial (BCSTA) board tables and likewise previously, I was as a parent advocate voice at the PAC, DPAC and BCCPAC board tables.

Throughout my 17 trustee years I have put forward motions in advocacy for better supports to public education to the BCSTA that are taken to government ministries.

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

I was catalyst for the inclusion of student trustees on our Board of Education.

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

I have the greatest respect and empathy for the educators, support, and operational staff of our school system, who attend daily to endless taxing demands.

I fully understand that in order for our students to achieve, it is crucial that we take care of the people who take care of our students. To do so we must make mindful decisions, especially with constant funding constraints.

As a trustee I have often shown my support making and gifting hundreds upon hundreds of decorated cookies to every school and worksite in the district.

As chair of the Board, I have often publicly acknowledged and thanked our educators and support staff from the board table, and I have sent out many letters of appreciation to schools and work sites and I have also sent letters expressing deep gratitude during the pandemic.

8. 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?

Trustees hear from teachers through their representatives on every district committee and are responsible for bringing forward the concerns and ideas of their members. This board has given much time and consideration to potential structures for meeting with teachers and support staff throughout the year. Being mindful of human resources and collective agreement processes, these discussions included meetings with governance, parliamentary and trustee consultants. I anticipate the next board will continue in these discussions.

I am always willing to explore improved avenues of communication between teachers and the board.

9. Explain the importance of class size and composition from your perspective. Smaller classes provide more opportunities for teachers to respond to individual student needs? Taken into account in the class size limits.

From being a parent with a child going through the public education system, to a parent with a daughter who is a teacher in the public education system, I believe I am well aware of the challenges and the impacts for both educators and students.

Working environments and learning environments come in the same package.

We do our best within our limited financial resources to ensure SD8 classes never exceed and are below the size and composition limits, but ideally, we would prefer resourcing for lower student educator and support ratios.

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

As an active trustee I can share with you my calendar and my commitment to remaining current with our schools and classrooms. For example, a typical month will see me in attendance numerous meetings including the following:

- Closed and Public Board
- Superintendent Trustee Update
- Agenda setting
- Working session
- Education

- Finance and Operations
- Budget
- Policy
- Aboriginal Committee of Education
- Parent Advisory Councils
- District Parent Advisory Council
- Joint Safety Advisory

11. If elected, what are your top three priorities?

- I. Building relationship with the new board.
- II. Establishing stronger communications, awareness and understanding of the Board's governance, policies and processes throughout our school and public communities.
- III. Establishing the next 5 year Strategic plan through a robust and broadly inclusive consultation process

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

I was born and raised in Creston and I have lived in Balfour since 1985. I have been proactively involved in the K-12 public education system since our daughter, now a teacher, entered kindergarten in 1998.

When my daughter became of school-age, I wanted every resource, every service and every program for her. It wasn't long before I realized that every child deserved what I wanted for mine. My interest and advocacy expanded to encompass all students and so I sought after and held many leadership roles with Parent Advisory Councils (PAC), the District PAC (DPAC) and the BC Confederation of PACs (BCCPAC). In 2005 I was elected as the Trustee representing the Crawford Bay, East and North Shore, and in 2014 I was elected Board Chair by my fellow Trustees, a position I have held continuously since then.

Our district has faced many significant challenges in the last two decades. Although recent years have been some of the most challenging, they have afforded me considerable growth as your trustee. Weathering these challenges has enabled me to grow my skills, abilities, and understanding of how to be as effective as possible in my role.

My experience as Board Chair for 8 years encompasses navigating with the Superintendent, Co-Presidents of KLTF, and CUPE Presidents through unprecedented provincial changes affecting school district budgets that impact every aspect of the delivery of education in our communities.

In turn, I have the greatest respect and empathy for the educators, support and operational staff at every level of our school system, who attend daily to endless taxing

demands. I fully understand that in order for our students to achieve, it is crucial that we take care of the people who take care of our students.

I have also listened carefully to the many parent, community member and educator voices that are committed to improving our K-12 public education system and understand that they are not in competition – each voice brings forward its unique perspective and it is the work of a trustee to listen, respect and work with every one of them.

Running this election campaign has caused me to reflect on the last 24 years of my involvement with the Kootenay Lake School District. My foundational beliefs, commitment and passion remain solid. I now feel invigorated, stronger, inspired, and ready to continue the fight for what is right and in the best interest of our students and our staff.

Through all these years my unwavering commitment has always been for providing quality public education for all children, supporting those that support our students learning journey and encouraging community participation and support of public education.

I encourage you to re-elect me on October 15, so that I can continue the fight for what is right and in the best interest of all our students and our staff.