

Trustee candidate answers from Cindy Nachtigall

- 1. It is acknowledged that poverty has a serious impact on student learning outcomes. As a Trustee, please list some of the ways in which you would advocate for the Division to support students in need on this issue?**

I am a strong advocate for breakfast programs, clothing drives, and waiving fees where participants cannot afford them. One of my goals is to have lunch program fees dissolved (at the very least from January-March) so all kids could stay for lunch for free. I also love the opportunities that organizations like Can U, Boys and Girls Club, the Peaceful Village, Family Centre programs, Mosaic, Family Dynamics, to name a few can bring to students at no cost and actively promote them to families.

- 2. In previous years, the Division has experienced a shortage of Substitute Teachers and as a result, positions have gone unfilled during a teacher absence. Which ideas do you have to address this problem?**

I believe that we need to reach out and invite retired teachers in creative ways, or possibly allow student teachers to fill the placement when the other avenue is not possible. Also, maybe we could allow a more central co-op sharing with other metro divisions.

- 3. What are some practical ways in which you as a Trustee will foster and build relationships between the Division and the Teaching Staff?**

I believe in rolling up my sleeves to help teachers and schools whether it's in local initiatives, celebrations and activities or being on hand to listen and support their needs and help address their challenges. We all want the same things for our students. Relationships are built on putting in the effort, being visible and approachable, showing sincere appreciation and gratitude, and being a supportive, respectful listener. There is a lot of untapped wisdom and possible creative solutions or new approaches that could be put into practice within our division. Tapping into that takes time and commitment. It has been very important to me to get to know all the staff in all the schools in my ward when time allowed. Everyone contributes and I appreciate how hard everyone works. I also believe strongly in mutual respect for all roles. Inclusion truly must begin in the staff room. I love the opportunity to hear the happenings in each school and I love to help celebrate the milestones and success of each school.

- 4. The Manitoba government has released its Education review which raised issues around Division amalgamation, public education funding and improving learning outcomes. What are your concerns with the Education review? What is your hope?**

I think the review reminded everyone of the important work a board does. Boards would be the first to say change and growth is healthy and as lifelong learners we adhere to that vision; however, it must be thoughtful. Boards look at the needs of their community and the students within that community. We know needs are different from one ward to another in our division and we meet those needs. Amalgamation would take away that specialized approach, it would dissolve community needs being affirmed and addressed, and it would mute any sensitivity towards student need.

5. **First Nations students are amongst the most vulnerable learners in the Division. What steps will you take as a Trustee to strengthen supports for First Nation Students? How will you advance and implement the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action 62 and 63?**

The path of Truth and Reconciliation will be ever evolving. There is much work to be done to re-write our history with the truth, to teach understanding to our students, and to teach and show the respect, admiration and gratitude for the indigenous nations for sharing their beautiful land. We have begun the journey to have educators, resources, teacher training in place. This has included hiring indigenous scholars such as Kevin Lamoureux and Dr. Niigaanwewidam Sinclair. Additional actions also include the renaming of Prairie Sunrise (formerly Ryerson) School. These steps have begun but there are many, many steps ahead. We will continue to self-educate, educate our student and their families. We have just begun!

6. **Some school divisions have chosen to deal with inadequate funding levels from government by increasing class sizes, cutting access to clinicians and intervention specialists, etc. These decisions impact student learning. How will you ensure services are preserved? What will you do as a Trustee to ensure education funding levels are stable, predictable, and adequate?**

It is a priority to make budget decisions that are student driven. I have worked to establish strong communication channels with the community so that I can bring their needs effectively to the Board. I think it is also important to be good communicators as a Board with the province regarding needs that are data driven.

7. **Recent shifts in social attitudes have led to conversations about systemic biases and racism. As a Trustee, how would you help ensure that the Division explores potential systemic biases within the Division? In your view, how should plans for examining and rectifying such matters be developed?**

I think we must ensure that all staff are educated on how to identify systemic and unconscious biases and how we need to address issues that may arise. I think we need to also focus on initiatives that bring us all together. I believe if an issue would arise sensitivity training and education courses should be mandatory as policy for any divisional employee in breach. My first preference is to be pro-active to provide every employee with a PD opportunity surrounding this topic. We have tremendous diversity in our division and that I view as a gift and strength for all.

8. **How will you ensure that the Division studies closely the idea of full-day kindergarten and other programs related to early childhood education to ensure a successful start for early learners?**

I have been working in the field of early childhood education with families for over 25 years and it is near and dear to my heart. Early childhood education is a pro-active approach to education. Based on the present provincial budgeting restrictions, full-day kindergarten was sadly eliminated from our Division. In looking at the whole child, I personally see social, emotional and economical benefits to full-day kindergarten. We must get creative with other stakeholders and community partners to ensure that as many resources as possible are available not just for the children themselves but for their parents as well as they are not only a child's first teacher but their lifelong teacher and play a pivotal role in a child's educational journey.