

Trustee candidate answers from Todd McDougall

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 experienced a lot of this in my 13 years in childcare. There are many great ways that parents and caregivers can get assistance for their children's schooling. From clothes to school supplies. These kinds of programs and fundraisers need to be promoted as best as possible by schools, daycares, and other community members/businesses. Coming up with new ideas to fundraise or pool resources together, again, whether that be money, clothes, food, or school supplies to assist members of the community should always be encouraged.

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?**

In my experience I have often noticed many EA's and other assistants around the schools that may be under tasked from time to time, I wonder if there cannot be something set in place where other educational assistants can step into more of a teaching role for a day or half a day to ease any kind of last minute strain on a school that has a teacher that can't make it in that day.

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

If it were to seem as though more communication between the Division and teaching staff was needed, then it should be a top priority to see to it that gets worked on. If more meetings are necessary, then they should be scheduled. If more direct one on one communication is needed, it should start happening. If teachers were to come to me needing more communication with the Division, I would love to hear their ideas on how to make sure everyone can have their voices heard.

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?**

My concerns are that there is not enough public education/promotion into understanding the importance of community involvement in the school boards and Divisions. This is why the province has decided these bodies are in need of retooling in the way of less opportunities for public involvement. Therefore, the first thing that needs to be addressed is the public's awareness into the ongoings of school board meetings and more importantly, the importance of their involvement.

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?**

When I was growing up in the 1990's there were plenty of Indigenous students and plenty of moments in the curriculum that focused on their culture. I grew up loving Pow Wows and loving the culture.

In my 13 years in childcare, as an adult, I experienced even more of this.

I believe that the current curriculum already deals with Indigenous culture and other cultures very well. I see concerts and other cultural events being held at public school all the time.

I encourage all of that.

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?**

I am a firm believer in that finding the cause is more important than finding the cure.

Taxation, inflation and why so many parents have to work too long and too hard to make ends meet are probably not problems a School Trustee can tackle. Regardless, the Government needs a strong, honest, open voice from the community to voice the concerns of those who are having their services cut and their tax dollars misused.

I would like to call upon more City Councillors and MLAs to come speak to their constituents about these issues if the community deems such actions necessary.

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?**

It would seem that most of what teaching children about racism is based on is teaching children not to be racist.

I do not believe children have the capacity to be racist.

It is a learned, adult behaviour.

I believe that much of the perspectives on "racism" being presented in public education currently are very adult in nature and that if we are to focus on the necessity of basic curriculum, community, equality and equity, we would see far less need for any attention on teaching children about racism.

Children don't seem to see different skin colors until it is endlessly pointed out to them.

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?**

Even with having worked 13 years in child care, I still do not like the idea of 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds being in day care or school all day long. If parents could spend more time and home with their children, I believe they would without question.

If parents really need full day Kindergarten, I am sure there will be enough of a need to ensure that its possible in their community. If not, a day care option that includes very Kindergarten like early childhood learning could be arranged quite easily.