

Pembina Trails School Division Trustee Candidate Answers

---Answers from Ward **THREE** Candidates provided to PTTA by cut-off date---

When navigating this large document, consider:

- > Jumping to the questions that are highest on your list and/or
- > to candidates about whom you need more information

WARD 3 Candidate Answers

Question #1

1. Violence in Schools / School Safety

Ensuring safe learning and working environments in public education is a growing challenge.

- a. What is your approach to addressing violence in schools?
- b. How will you help protect the safety and well-being of students and staff?

Asim Nawaz

1a. My approach centers on clear communication, accountability, and prevention. This means investing in proactive education and training regarding violence prevention, ensuring clear and transparent awareness of policies, and establishing robust, easy-to-follow standard operating procedures (SOPs) for incident reporting. As leaders, we also need to model positive behaviors and set the right tone from the top down.

1b. True safety goes hand in hand with a welcoming environment. I will focus heavily on promoting inclusion, diversity, and multiculturalism within our schools, while actively strengthening anti-bullying and anti-racist initiatives so every student and staff member feels they truly belong.

Carrissa Reyes

1a. Ensuring schools have the support they need to handle violence. Having educators such as Winnipeg Police or other organizations come to give presentations to all students and staff on violence and the affects it has on everyone.

1b. I will advocate for presentations and trainings to all staff and students. Everyone should be

aware of the affects this would have. If parent's raise concerns about specific issues happening at schools, and they felt they weren't being taken serious this is where advocating for the family would come in.

Cindy Nachtigall

1a. As you know, our division and our province have a policy in place to address violence in schools. I believe it is imperative that we support that policy and monitor its effectiveness. When violence occurs, I believe that our schools must work in partnership with families to ensure the needed steps are understood and taken with appropriate follow-up, and we must also ensure our staff are supported with the resources they need. I believe also that proactive education and support is also important so staff are prepared should something like this arise. An approach with policy and action is imperative.

1b. I would ensure that staff are properly trained to handle such issues and that they have a plan in place should an issue arise. I also believe students and their families should be engaged and educated on what our policies are in advance as part of their back-to-school orientation with teachers taking the time to review the expectations. with students in school followed by a note to parents on the importance of keeping everyone safe and asking them to also discuss this with their child.

Eric Labaupa

1a. I am of the zero-tolerance mindset in regard to violence in schools. Involvement of parents/guardians in each instance no matter the severity ensures that inappropriate behaviour is addressed early, ideally preventing further issues or a pattern of behaviour in the future.

1b. As a School Trustee, I will commit to school safety being of utmost importance. I am in favour of initiatives, projects, and budget allotments that help ensure that our schools continue to be safe places of learning.

Heethy Maan

1a. Violence in schools is serious and should be addressed immediately, instead of waiting for the instance to escalate. I would like to see structured resources that students and teachers can follow ex. EAs, counsellors and other supports, and clear expectations, documentation and consequences when safety is compromised.

As a parent, I want my children to feel safe at school, and as a trustee, I would want staff to feel the same way.

1b. Communicating with the school staff and learning what is happening inside and outside the schools, including recess. I know as a child that is when I most experienced bullying. So I would want to ensure that there is enough supervision, especially at those times.

Noman Zaheer

1a. Violence in schools should be addressed through prevention, early intervention, clear expectations, and consistent support for students and staff. Pembina Trails School Division's Standard of Behaviour emphasizes creating safe, caring, and inclusive learning communities where emotional, mental, and physical safety are priorities. The division also recognizes the importance of teaching respectful behaviour, building positive relationships, and helping students learn from mistakes while being held accountable for their actions.

As a School Trustee, my role would be to support policies and resources that promote respectful school cultures, strengthen prevention strategies, and ensure concerns are addressed appropriately. I believe schools should have access to effective behavioural supports, mental health resources, and clear reporting processes so that incidents of violence can be addressed promptly and fairly. I would also support ongoing engagement with students, families, educators, and community partners to better understand emerging safety concerns and identify opportunities for improvement.

1b. Pembina Trails School Division is committed to providing safe and healthy environments for learning and work and recognizes that safety is a shared responsibility among staff, students, families, and the broader community. The division's policies emphasize violence prevention, reporting of incidents, workplace safety, and fostering respectful and inclusive school environments.

As a Trustee, I would:

- Support policies that promote safe, respectful, and inclusive schools for all students and staff.
- Advocate for strong mental health and well-being supports that help address challenges before they escalate.
- Encourage ongoing review of safety practices, emergency preparedness, and incident reporting processes.
- Support investments in technology and cybersecurity measures that help protect student and staff information.
- Listen to concerns raised by students, parents, educators, and school communities and bring those concerns forward at the board level.
- Support training and resources that help staff respond effectively to behavioural and safety challenges.

My goal is to help ensure that every student can learn and every staff member can work in an environment where they feel safe, respected, supported, and able to succeed. This approach is

consistent with Pembina Trails' commitment to creating safe, caring, and inclusive school communities.

Tasneem Vali

1a. My approach would begin with prevention where possible and early intervention.

As a candidate, I do not have access to the division's internal incident data, so I would not presume to identify the causes or extent of violence without first understanding and evaluating the evidence. If elected, I would ask administration for data on safety incidents, trends, and available supports, while respecting student and staff privacy. I would also listen directly to everyone involved about what they are experiencing.

Pembina Trails already has Standard of Behaviour (which all students and parents are required to sign), threat-assessment and safe-school procedures. My understanding of a trustee's role would be to ensure these systems are resourced and reviewed. My role as I understand from reading policies and talking to previous trustees is not to intervene in individual disciplinary or threat-assessment cases.

1b. To me safety is both physical safety and emotional well-being. I would support resources for prevention, mental-health services, staff training and early intervention.

Pembina Trails requires each school to maintain and annually update an Emergency Response Plan where the division identifies the safety and security of students and staff as a major priority. A trustee's responsibility is oversight. I would ask whether policies are working, whether resources are reaching schools where they are needed, and whether administration is identifying and addressing emerging safety concerns. My personal belief is when we have parents involved, the result is safe schools.

Tony Guan

1a. My approach is to address this issue by tiers. Level 1 is to educate the educators as we must bring attention to this issue that it's not just something we can gloss over; we must implement division-wide anti-bullying and anti-violence campaigns to promote a positive environment. Level 2 is to hold group interventions for at-risk students by holding after school sporting programs to give the youth another channel to re-direct their energy. Level 3 is to have our in-school councillors trained and equipped for early intervention.

1b. Implement high frequency audits directly with the superintendent to hold all parties involved responsible. With this data, we can determine at-risk students so we can intervene earlier than before things play out. Engage student and parent advisory bodies to establish regular feedback, whether a student is having issues at home or school we must find the root cause rather than implementing disciplinary action immediately, because that will deter the students furthermore.

-----end answers for questions #1-----

Question #2

2. Budget and Fiscal Responsibility

- a. From your perspective, are there long-term community economic benefits to early programming for young people through public education?
- b. How would you determine your budget priorities?
- c. As a trustee, where would you look to make budget enhancements in line with student needs?
- d. For the 2026 – 2027 Budget, the Pembina Trails School Board approved a mill rate increase of 9.61%. This decision was an important start to matching resources to the growing needs of our students in our classrooms and schools.

As Trustee, what will you do to uphold the momentum of matching resources to the needs of students?

Asim Nawaz

2a. Yes, absolutely. Giving young people early opportunities to build skills through technical and specialized programs pays massive dividends down the road. I am very pleased to see Pembina Trails already initiating programs like this, which ultimately empower our youth and strengthen our broader community.

2b. My priority will always be the students and the staff. Decisions must be made through a lens that ensures the daily education, support, and overall well-being of our students, and the people who care for them, always take precedence.

2c. We need to look closely at administrative efficiencies. Streamlining and optimizing administrative costs ensures more of our financial resources go directly into the classrooms where they are needed most.

2d. Every tax dollar puts real financial pressure on families, so we must be exceptionally responsible stewards of public money. By trimming excess administrative costs, we can sustainably fund classroom needs without needlessly overburdening taxpayers.

Carrissa Reyes

2a. Absolutely. My daughter has anxiety, and when she was 4 there was a program for getting ready for Kindergarten. She attended a 2 hour class once a week where she got to meet other kids and get to see what school would be like when she started kindergarten the following year. It helped ease her anxiety about school, while also getting her prepared with reading and writing

skills. I believe young children need tools and involvement with schools prior to kindergarten. It benefits the community as a whole.

2b. All financials will need to be dealt with on a scale of importance. While everything will be important in one way or another, not everything will require doing at this exact time. Without being in this role I can only assume what I've read in past board meeting minutes. Upgrading and maintaining facilities, while ensure all staff are being paid accordingly are major priorities. These things benefit the public school system as a whole

2c. Without fully knowing the entire budget and what to expect, I will say that all trustees need to know and understand the entire budget before making any decisions. We need to be able to truly see what money comes in and what money is going out, and to where. If there are ways to lower costs in some areas, without risking loss of programming or educational support then we should be looking to save money. I don't believe in spend spend spend, just because there is budget. We need to be doing all budget related things as best we can.

2d. Pembina Trails is a huge school division, that is rapidly growing. The division needs to be able to handle the growth by ensuring there are enough staff in schools, and enough funds coming in to cover the extra costs of hiring, expanding, etc. With more schools recently being announced, the division is responsible in planning ahead to ensure there will be no extra surprises in future budgets.

Cindy Nachtigall

2a. Absolutely! The earlier the better! Free programs for example like Healthy Start which has a pre-natal and a post natal component for the first year of life or the Fort Garry/St. Norbert Healthy Child literacy programs that support children and their caregiver focusing on ages one to five, to name a few, are proactive approaches to education that support families as they navigate their child's educational journey. We know the earlier supports and learning are in place for children and their parents, the greater the impact not only in helping children put their best foot forward when entering the school system but in long-term learning. Proactive education can reduce costs by addressing needs early, before they require more intensive interventions, additional staffing, or specialized resources.

2b. Budget priorities are to ensure that all children are receiving the highest quality of education obtainable. We advocate and strive for educational excellence at every age and stage inclusively.

2c. We look to student data as well as feedback from our Senior Administration Team.

2d. I feel that is always our goal in our planning and decision making. We evaluate the needs in our budget study, and as a trustee I keep a pulse on the needs of families, administration and teachers. Survey feedback from the community, data from our Senior Administration Team, and our financial resources are all things we consider to assess needs in the Division.

Eric Labaupa

2a. I believe that early programming through public education is entirely beneficial for the community. Early childhood education helps create jobs and I strongly believe that students who receive ECE grow up to be more productive members of society.

2b. My primary commitment is the best interests of the students of Pembina Trails. The process of determining my budget priorities includes striving for the highest possible quality of education, addressing identified systemic gaps, and ensuring safe learning environments.

2c. I am fully cognizant that staff salaries make up the bulk of the school division's budget considerations. Within this scope, however, I feel that there is still a need for additional funding of specialists and educational assistants.

2d. While I wholeheartedly agree that matching resources to growing student needs is a top priority, I would be cautious with resorting to continuous tax increases as the only way to achieve this. I am committed to being an advocate for exploring new avenues for funding, reclaiming funding sources that have been cut, and responsible allotment of our existing budget.

Heethy Maan

2a. I truly believe the younger years of education is what sets the foundation of a child's education journey. The earlier we address the struggle the better the long term outcome; if the foundation is strong, the education journey will be a positive one. Early programming will give children the confidence they need, so I do believe it would play an essential role in their education journey.

2b. Understanding the classroom, teacher and what the families are saying. I would also want to look at grades to see where improvements are needed.

2c. I would like to see more resources and classroom support for teachers and students. I have spoken to many teachers, EA's, school psychologists and social workers while door knocking, and it seems like those areas in the school need more funding. Every child has their own learning style and we can't expect teachers to do it all when there are students who may be struggling/thriving. I also think we need to make sure schools have enough resources to deal with our growing community and over capacity issues.

2d. Winnipeg is growing, which means we need to ensure that we are providing each classroom the resources they need. I've not held this role before, but I understand that this increase is a significant amount, and we do live in the south end of Winnipeg which is considered to be a good neighbourhood, so I would hope that the funding provided for resources in our end of the city would reflect that.

Furthermore, families that are out of the school system want to see how wisely the funding is distributed among schools.

Noman Zaheer

2a. Yes. Early learning and early intervention programs are among the most important investments we can make in children and our communities. When students receive strong supports early, they are more likely to succeed academically, build social and emotional skills, and become engaged members of the workforce and community later in life.

From my perspective, investing in young learners can help reduce future challenges, strengthen student achievement, and better prepare students for post-secondary education, trades, and employment opportunities. Strong public education helps build a skilled workforce, supports economic growth, and contributes to healthier and more connected communities.

2b. As a trustee, I would look to the division's strategic goals, student achievement data, enrolment trends, community feedback, and the recommendations of administration and educational professionals.

My priority would be to ensure that available resources are focused on areas that have the greatest impact on student learning, well-being, and success. This includes listening to parents, students, teachers, support staff, and community members while carefully balancing short-term needs with long-term sustainability.

I believe budget decisions should be transparent, evidence-informed, and focused on supporting students in classrooms while maintaining strong stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

2c. As enrolment continues to grow and student needs evolve, I would support examining opportunities for enhancements in areas such as:

- Student support services, including mental health and wellness supports.
- Early intervention and literacy initiatives.
- Special education and inclusive education supports.
- Technology and digital learning resources.
- School safety and cybersecurity measures that help protect student and staff information.
- Career, technical, trades, and skilled workforce pathways.
- French Immersion and additional opportunities for students seeking French-language learning pathways.
- Professional learning opportunities that help staff meet changing student needs.

Any budget enhancement decisions should be guided by evidence, identified needs, and input from the school community.

2d. The 2026-2027 budget recognized that student needs are growing and that schools require appropriate resources to support learning, well-being, inclusion, and success. As a Trustee, my role would be to ensure that budget decisions remain focused on students and are informed by evidence, community input, and long-term planning.

I would:

- Support ongoing reviews of student achievement, enrolment growth, and student well-being data when establishing budget priorities.
- Listen to students, parents, educators, and staff to better understand where resources are needed most.
- Advocate for investments that directly support classroom learning, early intervention, literacy, numeracy, and student success.
- Support enhancements to mental health, student support services, and inclusive education programs that help students reach their full potential.
- Encourage responsible investments in technology, cybersecurity, and digital learning tools to ensure students have access to safe and effective learning environments.
- Support long-term planning for schools experiencing enrolment growth, particularly in rapidly growing communities within Ward 3.
- Promote transparency and accountability so families can understand how budget decisions support student outcomes.

Pembina Trails has identified creating safe, caring, and inclusive learning environments and supporting student success as key priorities. As a Trustee, I would work collaboratively with fellow trustees and administration to ensure resources continue to align with those priorities and with the evolving needs of students.

My goal would be to help ensure that resources are directed where they can make the greatest positive impact on students while maintaining accountability, transparency, and responsible financial stewardship.

Ultimately, I believe every budget decision should be guided by a simple question: How does this investment help students learn, grow, and succeed? By keeping students at the centre of decision-making, we can continue building on the momentum of matching resources to student needs while maintaining responsible stewardship of public funds.

“As a Candidate I do not have access to internal reports and financial statements so I would base decisions on those things as well”

Tasneem Vali

2a. Early programming can strengthen literacy and social development and the early identification of learning needs. I worked in Pakistan as an educator for over 9 years and we discovered even 3 hours of early programming helped with learners’ logical thinking and patience. There is also broader evidence linking high-quality early learning with long-term educational and economic benefits. Canadian government reporting cites research estimating broader economic returns of approximately \$1.50 to \$2.80 for every dollar invested in early childhood education. (https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/reports/committe-binders/2026-fev-5-huma-hadju.html?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

For me supporting children earlier provides an opportunity to families to identify a need before their child must spend years struggling. I would want Pembina Trails to look at both educational outcomes and cost-effectiveness when deciding where early investment can have the greatest impact.

2b. I would start with student needs backed by evidence. I would have question about what enrolment data shows:

Where are class sizes and student needs changing? – I know class reduction in class sizes is a priority

What is literacy, numeracy and attendance data telling us?

What are teachers identifying?

What services are under pressure? Student support services from what parents tell me

What are families and students telling us?

I would also distinguish between what is desirable and what is sustainable. Trustees have a responsibility to students and staff while also managing public funds. As a candidate, I do not yet have the detailed operational information that trustees and administration use during the budget process. I cannot identify arbitrary cuts or spending increases without seeing that information. I would expect administration to provide evidence and projected outcomes so the board can make decisions.

2c. Before committing to specific increases, I would request current data demonstrating where the greatest needs exist. Areas I would examine closely include classroom supports and different learning needs (door knocking many parents have expressed distress with inadequate supports like EAL/newcomer supports), literacy and numeracy intervention (I have looked at the latest PISA report), student mental-health and clinical supports, school safety (this was also an issue not just for parents but also support staff) and staff professional learning.

Pembina Trails is a diverse and rapidly growing division. The division already provides EAL programming and newcomer supports, including assessment and referrals to community services. My priority would be to determine where evidence shows additional services will have the

greatest impact on student learning and well-being.

2d. The 2026 - 2027 budget illustrates the financial pressure facing the division. Pembina Trails reports a 1.1% increase in provincial base funding, while enrolment, salaries and fixed costs have increased. The approved budget totals \$270.6 million, with a 9.61% mill-rate increase. (https://www.pembinatrails.ca/our-board-of-trustees-approve-the-2026-2027-budget.45423?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

If elected, I would continue to advocate for provincial funding that reflects enrolment growth (as opposed to using the division tax base as the sole marker). At the Board level, I would expect budget decisions to be supported by data and would ask what impact proposed additions or reductions would have in classrooms.

Matching resources to needs does not automatically translate to a budget line increase. It means understanding where pressures exist and sometimes redistributing resources. Most importantly, being transparent with the community about both the needs and the results.

Tony Guan

2a. Countless studies have indicated early childhood, and early year education results in a high percentage of ROI to the economy as human capital development. It's imperative the students are taught early in their years to help establish cognitive learning for their future success in society.

2b. I would prioritize frontlines and direct classroom impact. I would direct funding towards lowering student-to-staff ratio, hiring more EAs and specialized support staff so the home room teachers are able to better focus on their jobs and not get distracted by other duties.

2c. Enhancements need to focus on high-yield frontline investments that create a direct impact. Hiring more EAs, specialize resource teachers such as speech pathologist, classroom ratio management, crisis de-escalation training, proactive youth programming such as peer mentorship, after school sporting programs and social-emotional learning initiatives.

2d. The board must engage the provincial government for multi-year commitments through a funding formula to establish long term collaboration. If we establish a formula then we can account for enrollment growth, inflation and collective bargaining adjustments so we won't force local property tax mills to make up for provincial shortfalls. And the other thing is we must maintain open engagement with the ward residents, most of us will grunt and complain about the increased mill rates because we never communicate this with the residents; we must hold open public meetings to let the locals be part of the cause.

-----end question 2-----

QUESTION 3

3. Equity, Inclusion, and Student Safety

Students and staff deserve to feel safe, welcomed, and respected at school.

What specific steps will you take to promote adequate funding to support equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for all students and staff?

Asim Nawaz

3. I will advocate for targeted budgetary allocations that directly support equity initiatives, multicultural programming, and mental health resources. Funding must be distributed equitably so schools serving diverse or higher-need populations have the tools needed to help every student and staff member feel secure and valued.

Carrissa Reyes

3. All staff should participate in regular training and courses on diversity, inclusion, anti-bullying, and more. This should be offered through the division with a budget in place. These trainings are SO important, to ensure staff and student wellbeing and a sense of security. I will also be an ally in the school system for those that may need my support or someone to talk to. I want to listen and learn what staff and student's need to feel safe, included and welcome.

Cindy Nachtigall

3. By being vigilant and continuing to check in on the pulse of the community we serve including students, staff and families and ensuring that we have funding in place to support ongoing education for all. Also, by upholding our policies as living documents to be reflected, reviewed and improved upon where we feel that change needs to happen.

Eric Labaupa

3. I commit to being an ardent advocate for all programs that support equity, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for all students and staff. If elected as school trustee, I will ensure to consider ways that we can continue to promote learning environments that are accepting and safe for students, staff, and community members.

Heethy Maan

3. Every child should feel safe, respected and accepted. This included different ethnicities, backgrounds, identities and abilities/disabilities. I think having programs for newcomers to Winnipeg is a great way for families to connect in the schools and friendships in the schools. I would also want to hear what families and school staff have to say to ensure we are providing the right resources.

Noman Zaheer

3. As a Trustee, I would support funding decisions that help remove barriers to learning and ensure all students have opportunities to succeed. Specifically, I would:

- Support evidence-based budgeting that considers the diverse academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs of students.
- Advocate for continued investment in student support services, including counselling, mental health resources, and early intervention programs.
- Support inclusive education initiatives that help students of all abilities fully participate in school life.
- Encourage resources that promote a welcoming school culture where every student feels a sense of belonging and respect.
- Support professional learning opportunities that help staff build inclusive classrooms and respond to the diverse needs of students.
- Listen to students, families, educators, and community members to better understand where inequities or barriers may exist and bring those perspectives into budget discussions.
- Support initiatives that foster cultural understanding, respect for diversity, and positive relationships across school communities.
- Ensure budget decisions are reviewed through the lens of student outcomes, well-being, and access to opportunities.

I believe equity is about ensuring students receive the support they need to reach their full potential, while inclusion and belonging help create school communities where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and empowered to succeed. As a Trustee, I would work collaboratively with fellow trustees, administration, staff, families, and community members to ensure resources continue to align with these goals and with the evolving needs of students and staff.

Ultimately, my approach would be to keep students at the centre of decision-making, use data and community input to guide priorities, and support responsible investments that strengthen equity, inclusion, and belonging across Pembina Trails School Division

Tasneem Vali

3. My belief is every student should be able to attend school without harassment or fear and should have access to education and the supports they require. As trustee I would ask administration for evidence about whether supports are reaching students rather than assuming that simply allocating money produces inclusion.

Pembina Trails' current Respect for Human Diversity policy commits the division to safe and inclusive environments free from discrimination, and its guidelines address religion, disability, anti-racism and gender identity. My faith is important to me, I believe it is possible to remain true to one's own faith while respecting the dignity, safety and legal rights of every student.

Tony Guan

3. If we don't have a safe environment to work in, then nothing else will be done. Therefore, funding to promote safety, equity, inclusion should be given top priority. We can employ a top-down approach where the superintendents, principals and teachers are all educated first on how to deal with these issues first, only then are they well equipped to handle the situations that will arise. Implement continuing education seminars as well as empowering an entire department within the school district to handle these specific issues but have each of the school district staffs rotate so they all get a chance for input.

-----end question 3-----

QUESTION 4

4. Support for Educators and Staff

Teachers and school staff are essential to building safe and caring learning environments.

- a. How will you support educators in creating optimal learning and growing classroom conditions?
- b. What actions will you take to ensure reasonable workloads, adequate resources, and staff well-being?

Asim Nawaz

4a. We need to invest in additional, diverse staffing so that educators are not left carrying an unsustainable load. Diverse support professionals in our schools ensure we meet both academic and specialized student needs effectively.

4b. I will advocate for manageable class sizes, focused educational support, and increased staffing overall. When we protect teacher well-being and lower workloads, we directly improve the quality of education our children receive.

Carrissa Reyes

4a. Communication is key, I want to know what our school staff need to ensure they can do their best teaching!

4b. If classroom sizes are larger than they should be, we need to ensure there are an appropriate amount of support staff to work alongside the teacher and give classroom support. If teachers are overloaded, they won't be able to give our kids the best education they deserve.

Cindy Nachtigall

4a and 4b combined

By ensuring they have the resources they need to be successful in the classroom. Also, by being cognizant of class size ratios and student needs. For example, student enrolment has increased 17% over five years in Pembina Trails, and we've responded by growing our teaching staff by 21% over that timeframe. Additionally, providing helpful PD opportunities that support their roles. Finally, reflecting on these observations and reviewing the data and needs shared by administration so we may proactively budget for the following year.

Eric Labaupa

4a. I am strongly in favour of educators having access to the most up-to-date technology, tools, and strategies to provide the highest quality of learning possible. Funding for more on-site

specialists and additional educator training are initiatives that I am in favour of to address identified systemic gaps in learning.

4b. I commit to maintaining smaller class sizes and/or the expansion of education assistants to manage optimal student-to-staff ratios.

Heethy Maan

4a. I believe the teacher to student ratio of 1 to 18.3 is insane, there should be one EA in every classroom, not just classrooms with children with special needs. I know EA's and teachers are exhausted, and I would do my best to ensure that school staff have the support they need. Classrooms are too large, and this means that not only are our teachers but our kids are also at a disadvantage.

I would advocate for what the teachers are telling us they need, including staffing and classroom support. I also think educators need to have a real voice in decisions that affect their classes.

4b. I would listen to educators and look at the actual workload they are dealing with, not just what it looks like on paper. If we expect teachers and staff to do more and more, we need to be honest about what that means and make sure they have the resources to do their jobs properly. Staff well being matters because it directly affects our kids as well.

Noman Zaheer

4a. Educators are at the heart of student success. As a Trustee, I would support creating learning environments where teachers and support staff have the resources, training, and support they need to help every student succeed. Pembina Trails emphasizes safe, caring, and inclusive learning communities where students and staff feel valued, respected, and supported. I believe that when educators are well-supported, students benefit through stronger engagement, improved learning outcomes, and a more positive school experience.

I would:

- Support budget decisions that prioritize classroom resources and student supports.
- Advocate for safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments where both students and staff can thrive.
- Support professional learning opportunities that help educators respond to evolving student needs.
- Listen to educators and school staff to better understand classroom challenges and opportunities.

- Encourage investments in technology, cybersecurity, and learning tools that enhance teaching and learning.
- Support early intervention and student support services so educators can focus more time on teaching and less time managing unmet needs.

4b. Trustees do not manage day-to-day operations or staffing assignments, but they do play an important role in setting priorities, approving budgets, and providing oversight. As a Trustee, I would work to ensure that decisions are informed by the experiences of educators, support staff, administrators, and students.

Specifically, I would:

- Support funding decisions that provide adequate classroom and student support resources.
- Listen to staff concerns regarding workload pressures and consider those perspectives during budget and policy discussions.
- Advocate for investments in student support services, mental health resources, and inclusion supports that can help reduce pressures on classroom staff.
- Support workplace safety initiatives and policies that promote safe and healthy working environments for all employees. Pembina Trails is committed to providing staff and students with safe and healthy environments and recognizes violence prevention and employee well-being as important priorities.
- Encourage transparent communication between the Board, administration, and staff groups so concerns can be understood and addressed effectively.
- Support long-term planning to ensure staffing, enrolment growth, and resource needs are considered responsibly.

As Trustee, my goal would be to help foster a culture where staff feel respected, supported, and valued. When educators have the tools, resources, and support they need, students are better positioned to learn, grow, and succeed.

Tasneem Vali

4a. This was an answer based on talking to my many friends who are educators in MB. I believe teachers and other school staffs' experience should inform Board decisions that affect teaching and learning. Pembina Trails already has policies addressing staff involvement in decision-making and a process that provides for consultation with employee groups affected by proposed policies.

As a trustee my role does not involve telling teachers how to teach but to establish priorities and policies, approve resources and monitor outcomes so the professionals can do their work effectively.

4b. As a candidate, I do not have sufficient internal information to state that staffing level, class size or workload is appropriate or inappropriate across the division. If elected, I would want to understand workload pressures through staffing and enrolment data, employee feedback, teacher absence and retention trends, collective-agreement obligations and any other relevant information.

Where evidence identifies unsustainable pressures, I would expect the Board and administration to examine staffing resources. Supporting staff well-being also means maintaining a respectful workplace and ensuring employees know where to access available supports.

Tony Guan

4a. Get the principals to do monthly surveys with the teaching staff on what is needed to support better classroom conditions as well as open communication with other school divisions such as borrowing resources if needed.

4b. We have on-site councillors for the students, but we need to implement the same level of care and service to our teaching staff. And to piggyback off my previous point, our leaders in the school system must hold open communication channels with the frontline staff to ensure they're not burning out.

QUESTION 5

5. Working with Unions and Collective Agreements

As a school trustee, you will help make decisions that affect unionized staff.

- a. How will you ensure that collective agreements are respected?
- b. How do you see your role in maintaining a collaborative, respectful and productive relationship with unions?

Asim Nawaz

5a. Collective agreements must be honored fully and fairly, ensuring they remain closely aligned with the practical, everyday needs and requirements of both staff and students.

5b. Unions play a vital role in protecting school staff's rights and well-being. As a trustee, I will actively listen to staff concerns, value their frontline perspective, and work collaboratively to ensure they have the resources they need to succeed.

Carrissa Reyes

5a. Understanding and knowing about the specific collective agreements is a must. Ensuring the employer is respecting the collective agreement, and working with the union to make sure everything is done appropriately.

5b. Being in a union myself with my day to day job, I see the importance of unions. I believe unions are there to make sure employees are being taken care of, and not taken advantage of. I will continue to build my relationships with union representatives and have an open line of communication to handle any issues that arise.

Cindy Nachtigall

5a. Through consistent communication with our Senior Administration Team and listening to feedback from union representatives.

5b. By having open communication and seeking to understand the ongoing needs in their roles and honouring the arrangements that have been agreed to.

Eric Labaupa

5a. I am in favour of clear oversight and communication in regard to all board decisions that affect unionized staff.

5b. I view the role of School Trustee as being a partner with unions working towards a collective goal in our duty to the students, taxpayers, and union members.

Heethy Maan

5a. Collective agreements need to be respected, they are there for a reason and we have a responsibility to follow them.

5b. I would be respectful and collaborative. It would be our job to listen to union concerns and suggestions and carry those discussions into our board to ensure we are providing the right support and solutions. From my understanding there would be a group of 9 trustees who make decisions collectively and majority rules, but I would do my best to always do the right thing.

Noman Zaheer

5a. Collective agreements play an important role in establishing clear expectations, rights, responsibilities, and working conditions for employees. As a Trustee, I recognize that respecting collective agreements is essential to maintaining trust, stability, and positive working relationships throughout the division.

I would support:

- Ensuring that Board decisions and policies are consistent with collective agreement obligations.
- Respecting the collective bargaining process and the roles of both management and employee representatives.
- Making informed decisions based on legal obligations, negotiated agreements, and advice from administration.
- Maintaining transparency, fairness, and accountability in governance decisions.
- Listening to concerns raised through appropriate channels and ensuring they are considered respectfully.

While trustees are responsible for governance rather than day-to-day administration, I believe it is important that the School Board demonstrates respect for negotiated agreements and the employees who help deliver quality education to students.

5b. I believe strong relationships between the School Board, administration, employees, and unions contribute to a positive learning and working environment for everyone. Trustees and unions may not always agree on every issue, but productive relationships are built on respect, communication, and a shared commitment to student success.

As a Trustee, I would:

- Foster open, respectful, and professional dialogue with union representatives.
- Listen carefully to the perspectives and experiences of teachers and support staff.

- Approach discussions with a spirit of collaboration and problem-solving.
- Support transparent decision-making and clear communication.
- Focus on shared goals, including student achievement, safe schools, staff well-being, and strong educational outcomes.
- Treat all education partners with dignity and respect.

I view the role of Trustee as bringing people together around common goals. When trustees, staff, administration, and unions work collaboratively, we are better positioned to create positive learning environments, support student success, and build a strong public education system for the entire Pembina Trails community.

Ultimately, my approach would be grounded in respect, collaboration, transparency, and a commitment to putting students first while valuing the important contributions of all employees who support their learning and well-being.

Tasneem Vali

5a. My research shows me Pembina Trails currently operates under multiple agreements covering teachers and other employee groups. Any agreements as a rule must be respected.

As trustee, I would expect the division to meet its legal and contractual obligations and address disputes through the processes established in the collective agreements. I would advocate the division rely on appropriate labour-relations and administrative expertise when needed.

5b. I believe respectful relationships require communication even when parties disagree. I would listen to employee representatives; understand the concerns they bring forward and communicate Board decisions honestly.

I would approach unions as important partners in public education while acknowledging that the Board and employee organizations have distinct roles and will not necessarily agree on every issue.

Tony Guan

5a. It is imperative we respect collective agreements to build a stable, high-performing school division. Protecting contractual rights requires proactive governance, transparent dispute resolution, and fiscal alignment.

5b. Our role is imperative to connecting the dots and arriving at a center of balance for both sides of the parties involved. During board meetings we must be proactive for early-stage resolutions to minimize disagreements. As well, as a trustee I will maintain impartiality in fully respecting labor law precedents and contractual provisions while serving my duties as school trustee.

QUESTION

6. Experience and Accountability

- a. What experiences or skills have prepared you to serve as a school trustee?
- b. Is there a particular issue that motivates you to serve on the school board?
- c. Have you received any donations or endorsements from any group(s)?
If so, which group(s)?

Asim Nawaz

6a. I bring 17 years of management experience, 3 years of classroom teaching experience, and 11 years of sports coaching. Currently, I serve as Soccer Director at the South Winnipeg Community Center, which has given me extensive experience in community leadership, budgeting, and collaborating with diverse groups.

6b. Yes, the noticeable lack of diverse representation at the board table, and a deep desire to ensure all voices from our multicultural community are genuinely heard.

6c. No.

Carrissa Reyes

6a. I work as an administrative assistant and handle annual budgets of millions of dollars. I ensure we don't overspend and help plan for future years. I have sat on numerous boards in various roles over the past 7 years. All roles have directly impacted youth. I am very approachable and understanding. I don't jump to conclusions and like to ensure all voices are being heard.

6b. I want to be more involved within my community, and school division I was apart of for majority of my own school years. I believe it's important to be involved and being a school trustee is something I would love to have an opportunity to be apart of.

6c. I have received an endorsement from the Winnipeg Labour Council. All my donations are from residents, and not from any specific group.

Cindy Nachtigall

6a. This is my 8th year as a school trustee in the division. I have served on every committee within the trustee portfolio. Presently, I am serving my 2nd year as the Board Chair of a two-year term and was the Vice-Chair for two years in a row prior. Within the south Winnipeg community, I have worked with families prior to their entering school as the Coordinator for the Fort Garry/St. Norbert Healthy Child Coalition for 24 years, providing literacy programs and family

resources in partnership with school divisions. This gave me a bird's-eye view of families prior to them entering the public school system. This lens has proven to be helpful at the Board table and unique. I recently retired from Healthy Child as of Jan 1, 2025 and I am still passionate about and well connected to those programs. I am also the past Chair of the Fort Garry Network, which is an incredible resource of all community nonprofits, schools and community resources who meet regularly to share information and create partnerships. I have lived in the area for more than 40 years and have 3 children who were the 2nd generation to attend schools in Ward 3. I have volunteered with community centers, outreach initiatives, transportation forums, and PAC. I am a passionate education excellence advocate. It is an honour to support students and their families in their educational journey.

6b. I want all children to thrive and have a rewarding, inspiring and enjoyable educational experience. I hope that students will look back on their school families with fond memories where they not only became the best version of themselves but that they felt safe, valued, supported and that they belonged! I love the saying "Belonging is the heartbeat of Inclusion"

I also have a mantra / personal tagline "For love of a child." Those words I believe bring it all home. Parents, educators, educational leaders and trustees. We will all be there!

6c. I am not sponsored by any organization. I am self-funded.

Eric Labaupa

6a. I am a long-time community volunteer in various capacities, working with student athletes and at-risk youth in particular. I am genuine in wanting to serve the best interests of the students of Pembina Trails. As a small-business owner and currently on a Board of Directors, I am well-versed in responsible allotment of budget, accountability, and collaboration to achieve budget goals.

6b. One of my priorities if elected to the School Board is the creation of a Water Safety and Learn-to-Swim program for Pembina Trails students. I strongly feel that this should be a standard in provincial curriculum. Several pro-active school divisions in Manitoba have implemented program-wise budget enhancements to fund similar initiatives to great success and relative efficiency.

6c. I have not received any donations or endorsements from any groups.

Heethy Maan

6a. I have always been involved in the community, and believe in giving back. I grew up in Air Cadets which is a great program for youth and taught me so much about discipline, leadership and resilience. I volunteered at Victoria General Hospital throughout my high school. years and

Sunshine Foundation. I graduated from Fort Richmond Collegiate, and I take pride in having gone to public school. Now, my kids are also in public schools, so I have a special importance for our education system.

I've also been involved in my community for many years through my neighbourhood association (Prairie Pointe Neighborhood Association board member) and volunteering with children and families. I've also spent years working with people in my career as a realtor, solving problems, managing difficult conversations and building relationships. I know how to listen.

Most importantly, I'm a parent. My children are in Pembina Trails schools, so I see the school system from a parent's eye every day. I know what it means to trust our schools with our kids.

6b. I honestly believe our public schools can be better. I see what's happening in our schools because my own children are in them. There are strengths, but also weaknesses, and we need to face them to ensure we are building a strong future. I want to be someone who brings that perspective to the board and actually works on the issues.

6c. Yes, I have received donations from family, friends and community members. In terms of endorsements, I did reach out to the Winnipeg Labour Council, but the President Melissa Dvorak emailed back to me saying they had already completed the endorsements for Pembina Trails School Division. However, I have received endorsements from educators, health care providers, my neighbourhood association, small business owners, community members and neighbours.

Noman Zaheer

6a. My professional background in information technology and technical support has given me experience in problem-solving, budgeting, planning, policy implementation, stakeholder communication, and responsible decision-making. In my career, I have worked closely with diverse groups of people, listened to concerns, and helped find practical solutions to complex challenges.

As a parent and active member of our community, I also understand how important public education is to families. Through volunteer work, community engagement, and ongoing conversations with parents, educators, and residents throughout Ward 3, I have gained valuable insight into the opportunities and challenges facing our schools today.

I believe the role of a trustee requires listening, collaboration, accountability, and a focus on student success. These are skills I have developed through my professional experience, community involvement, and commitment to serving others.

6b. What motivates me most is ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed in a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment.

As our communities continue to grow, I want to help ensure that schools have the resources they need to support student learning, well-being, and future success. I am particularly interested in supporting student achievement, strengthening parent engagement, promoting transparency and accountability in decision-making, and ensuring students are prepared for an increasingly digital and technology-driven world.

I am also passionate about helping create learning environments where every student feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential, regardless of their background or circumstances.

6c. At this time, I am committed to running a community-focused campaign that is centered on listening to residents, parents, students, and educators.

Any campaign donations received will be fully disclosed and reported in accordance with all applicable election rules and requirements. If I receive endorsements from organizations or groups, I will be transparent about those endorsements and ensure that voters have access to that information.

My commitment as a potential trustee is to represent the interests of all students and families in Ward 3 and to make decisions based on what is in the best interests of students and public education.

No. I have not received any formal endorsements from organizations or groups. My campaign is community-driven, and I am focused on earning the support of residents, parents, educators, and community members throughout Ward 3.

Tasneem Vali

6a. Much of my community work has involved education, children, families, public institutions and bringing people together.

Through my work with the Manitoba Islamic Association (MIA), I developed an outreach program and trained volunteers to work with schools, educators and the wider community. Our team organized mosque open houses, school and educator presentations, Ramadan iftars and educator events. I worked with the Winnipeg Public Library (WPL) to suggest materials that better represented Islam and Muslim communities. I helped families navigate concerns involving schools and helped newcomer families better understand Canada's public-school system. I have also served in community and advisory roles where collaboration and working respectfully with different perspectives were essential for example I was on the CBC's community advisory board and have had many conversations with people who have different opinions than I do.

These experiences have taught me that good governance requires listening, communicating clearly and understanding I am part of a team.

6b. My motivation centers on - strong communities result in strong public schools and vice

versa. My platform is Building Strong Public Schools, centred on three priorities: Every Student Matters, Meaningful Community Engagement and Student Achievement.

I am particularly interested in how a growing and diverse community plans, how families can engage with their child's school and how the Board can maintain a clear focus on literacy. I find many parents are currently disengaged from their child's education and this manifests in other issues teachers and children face. Pembina Trails' existing expectations include students meeting standards by the end of Grade 8 and graduating from high school. Those are outcomes I believe a Board should monitor and support.

6c. No, my campaign is independent.

Tony Guan

6a. I work in wealth management with over a decade of experience. I'm well equipped in communicating with people. I'm not shy at having tough conversations as I have them almost daily at my job. I'm a young enthusiastic professional looking to integrate change for the wellbeing for the school district to ensure the students' future success.

6b. There are 3 main issues that motivated me to put my name into the running. First, the number of teachers and EAs to student's ratio has become more than just a pinch point in prohibiting our students from learning and performing. Recent PISA scores have shown across Canada, math, reading and science scores are on a sharp decline over a 20-year period. Second, out of the 6 school districts in Winnipeg, only Seven Oaks allows use of schools after hours such as the summer months. If taxpayers are funding the schools, why can't they use the school gyms for some activities in the summers? Third issue I have ties into the above two. The school budget is never transparent, every year we hear we're hurting for budget, so if we open schools in the summer for rentals and summer camps like Mini U at U of M, can't we make generate income from there? Yet, the superintendents are making more money than our mayor, but our test scores are going lower, not enough budget to hire more educators etc. etc.

6c. Yes I have, from the WCSA (Winnipeg Chinese Senior Association).

-----end question 6-----

QUESTION 7

7. Vision and Priorities for Public Education

- a. What is your vision for public education in this division?
- b. What is the most important responsibility of a school board?
- c. What are the current challenges facing public education in our division?
- d. Which three areas of public education require immediate action in this division?
What are your plans for addressing these three issues?

Asim Nawaz

7a. Education is a fundamental right for every child, and every child truly matters. My vision is an inclusive, forward-thinking public education system that celebrates diversity and equips our students with the real-world skills they need for the future.

7b. To act as a genuine bridge between the community, staff, parents, and students, starting with listening to everyone involved.

7c. Severe resource shortages, funding constraints, and growing school overcrowding.

7d. Classroom resources and overcrowding: Actively advocating for more school infrastructure in growing areas like Ward 3.

Staff support and retention: Addressing workload issues through targeted hiring and resource allocation.

Equitable funding: Ensuring division funds are prioritized where they directly impact students' learning.

Carrissa Reyes

7a. Ensuring budgets are handled in an appropriate manner. Ensuring students and staff wellbeing is put at the forefront of every decision.

7b. To provide responsible decision making and ensure well being and quality education for every student. Staff deserve to feel safe and heard when they raise issues or have questions.

7c. Overcrowding in classrooms. This is tough for all students and staff to learn and teach. Hopefully with some new schools in the works it will reduce some of the overcrowding to ensure quality education.

7d. Staff need extra support. Classrooms are overcrowded. Budgets always need constant monitoring

Listening and offering support. Wait for Ecole Iskonakwa to open and hope it relieves some pressure of overcrowding. Understand and maintain the budget to ensure responsible decision making.

Cindy Nachtigall

7a. That we continue to support student, family and staff initiatives that promote mental health and a healthy school/work/life balance.

That we continue our work to support Indigenous education and Truth and Reconciliation and Anti-Racism.

Continued support for inclusive education that meets the needs of all our learners, including the Ignite summer program

Continued support for meeting the needs of evolving technology through education for staff and students on AI usage.

Continued support of Specialists in the schools such as Librarians, music and band teachers and physical education teachers

7b. Ensuring that our budget and resources reflect the needs of our students in the division to provide the highest standard of education possible.

7c and 7d together

Space! Space to accommodate the fast pace of growth in the south. If the two new schools forecasted for 2027 and 2029 opened yesterday, they would already be at capacity. If we could build a new high school tomorrow, it would be easily filled. We bus over 25% of students and are out of space for storing or serving our buses.

We have and will continue to lobby the province to address these issues. They have been active listeners and supported the addition of two new schools in Waverley West and have made a historical change by including playgrounds in school builds which is amazing, but we keep growing at rocket speed and need to accommodate the continued growth.

Eric Labaupa

7a. My vision is to provide the highest quality of public education possible for the students and families in Pembina Trails.

7b. The most important responsibility of a school board is the responsible management of the division's budget keeping the best interests of students as the top priority.

7c. Massive underfunding is the largest hurdle that our school division is facing currently.

7d. Underfunding – openness to explore new and creative avenues for funding and strongly advocating to recoup previous funding that has been cut.

Implementing Right to Read recommendations – advocating for increased funding for specialists and increased training for science-based reading interventions.

Clear information technology plan and framework – navigating the fluid and rapidly changing social media, AI, cybersecurity, and more landscape is certainly challenging. The division should be pro-active in being current and helping lead the development of appropriate policies.

Heethy Maan

7a. I want our schools to be a place where every child is seen, supported and challenged. Students should leave Pembina Trails with strong reading, writing and math skills, but also with the confidence and support they need to succeed. I want families to feel confident in their schools and teachers to feel supported in their classrooms.

7b. To make sure students are getting the education and support they need, while being responsible with public money. My ultimate goal would be to make the best decisions for the staff, students and families.

7c. Our growing classrooms. Houses are popping up everywhere, which means we will have more kids in our neighbourhood. We need to make sure we are planning ahead instead of thinking of quick solutions. Times have also changed, this generation is a tech generation, and although technology is great, we need to ensure our kids are learning the basic reading, writing and math skills. I would be in support of the resources which would help with this.

7d.

1. School capacity and growth

We need better planning around enrollment/capacity so students aren't learning in overcrowded schools or temporary classrooms for years. I would push for active long term planning and regular communication with families.

2. Learning support and student success

We need to make sure students are actually getting the support they need to read, write and do math at the appropriate level. I would like to see early intervention and initiative, so there is an

active place to ensure that every student stays on par, and isn't just pushed to the next grade level. ie. MORE EA's, resources for students who are behind and or thriving.

3. Safety and well being

Students and staff need to feel safe at school. I would look at what schools are currently dealing with, where the gaps are and whether they have the staffing and resources to respond properly.

Noman Zaheer

7a. My vision is for Pembina Trails School Division to continue being a leader in student success, innovation, inclusion, and community engagement. I want every student, regardless of their background, ability, or circumstances, to have access to high-quality educational opportunities that help them reach their full potential.

I envision schools where students feel safe, supported, and inspired to learn; where educators have the resources they need to succeed; and where parents are active partners in their children's education. I also believe we must prepare students not only for graduation, but for life by strengthening literacy, numeracy, technology skills, critical thinking, citizenship, and career readiness.

As our communities continue to grow, we must ensure our schools grow with them by planning responsibly and investing in the supports students need to thrive.

7b. The most important responsibility of a school board is to ensure that every decision is made in the best interests of students.

Trustees are responsible for providing effective governance, setting strategic direction, approving budgets, establishing policies, and ensuring accountability. A strong school board listens to students, families, educators, and the community while ensuring resources are used responsibly to support student learning, well-being, and success.

Ultimately, the role of a trustee is to balance the needs of today with the long-term success of students and the division.

7c. Like many growing school divisions, Pembina Trails faces several significant challenges:

- Rapid enrolment growth and increasing pressure on school facilities and resources.
- Increasing student support needs, including mental health, well-being, and inclusive education services.
- Maintaining safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environments for students and staff.
- Keeping pace with technology, cybersecurity, and preparing students for a digital future.

- Ensuring sustainable funding to support growing student needs while remaining accountable to taxpayers.

These challenges require thoughtful planning, strong partnerships, and responsible governance.

7d.

1. Student Support and Mental Health

Students are facing increasingly complex academic, social, and emotional challenges. Ensuring that students have access to appropriate supports is critical to both well-being and academic success.

My approach:

- Support evidence-based investments in counselling, mental health, and student support services.
- Advocate for early intervention strategies.
- Continue listening to educators and families to better understand emerging student needs.

2. Growth and Classroom Resources

Ward 3 and surrounding communities continue to experience significant growth. We need to ensure schools have the capacity, staffing, and resources required to support students effectively.

My approach:

- Support long-term enrolment and infrastructure planning.
- Advocate for funding that aligns with student growth and classroom needs.
- Support investments that directly enhance student learning and classroom experiences.

3. Safety, Technology, and Future Readiness

Today's students need safe physical learning environments and secure digital learning environments. Technology has become an essential part of education, and protecting student information is increasingly important.

My approach:

- Support ongoing investments in school safety initiatives.
- Advocate for strong cybersecurity measures and data protection practices.
- Support technology and digital literacy opportunities that prepare students for future careers and post-secondary pathways.
- Encourage responsible use of technology to enhance learning outcomes.

As a Trustee, I would focus on collaboration, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making.

I would:

- Listen to students, parents, educators, staff, and community members to understand priorities and concerns.
- Review student achievement, well-being, enrolment, and resource data when making decisions.
- Support transparent budgeting that aligns resources with student needs.
- Advocate for investments that directly support learning, inclusion, safety, and student success.
- Work collaboratively with fellow trustees, administration, and community partners to identify practical solutions.
- Ensure decisions are guided by the question: "How does this help students succeed?"

My goal is to help build a division where every student feels safe, included, supported, and prepared for a bright future, while ensuring that public resources are managed responsibly and transparently.

Tasneem Vali

7a. My vision is captured in Building Strong Public Schools: a division where families and communities have a voice, educators have the conditions and resources necessary to do their work, and student achievement remains at the centre of Board decision-making.

Strong public education should provide students with excellent academic foundations while also preparing them to participate in their communities and future workplaces. It should be inclusive, accountable and responsive to a changing community demographic.

7b. In my opinion, the Board's fundamental responsibility is governance in the interests of students and the public education system. This to me translates to establishing strategic direction and policy, approving and overseeing the budget, monitoring student outcomes, employing and evaluating the superintendent, and ensuring the division meets its legal responsibilities. The school board does not manage operations, we govern.

7c. Based on publicly available information and talking to parents and teachers in the division, I see several pressure points:

1. Rapid growth in the area
2. Matching resources and facilities to that growth
3. The increase in complexity of student needs
4. Maintaining safe schools

5. Sustaining strong student achievement

The financial challenge is clear. However, as a candidate I do not have the internal operational information available to the current Board. I would want to review current data and hear from staff and administrators before claiming that I know which challenge is greatest.

7d. The three areas I would immediately want to address are:

1. Student achievement and early support: I would ask for regular, understandable reporting on literacy and numeracy; support early intervention and examine whether resources are reaching students who require additional support.
2. Planning for growth and changing student needs: I would support long term capital planning, use current demographic information and advocate to the province for facilities and funding that keep pace with growth in the division. I would use alternate methods of projecting the growth and diversity like collaborating with real-estate companies to harvest data on housing unit increases.
3. Supportive learning and working environments: I would monitor safety and well-being information, support student and classroom resources, listen to educators and families, and ensure Board policies and resources support safe, respectful and inclusive schools.

I would not assume I have all the answers.

Tony Guan

7a. I want the students to be proud that they were educated in this division. I want the parents to feel safe and ensured their children are well taken care of in this division. I want our sports teams to be the top in the city. I want our schools to win national competitions such as math contests.

7b. To ensure student achievement, safety, well-being by setting the division's vision, passing policies, approving budget and holding the superintendents accountable.

7c. High growth neighbourhoods (Bridgwater & South Pointe), overcrowding, understaffed, specialized staffing needs, EAL programs, mill rate adjustments, funding vs. operational inflation, mental health, transportation with shortage of drivers.

7d. First is staffing. Second is budget transparency. Third holding superintendent accountable. Direct funding to hiring more staff. If the budget is transparent then we can have a better understanding of where to allocate to help ease high stress areas.

8. Governance and Decision-Making

- a. How would you describe an effective school trustee?
- b. Could you support a board decision you did not vote in favor of?
Why or why not?
- c. Do you believe that Educators should have greater input/voice in division decisions that impact their work and their students?
If so, what would you support?

Asim Nawaz

8a. An effective trustee listens deeply and acts as a fearless advocate for the rights and success of students, staff, and parents alike.

8b. It depends on the nature of the decision. However, if the board reaches a final decision and it ultimately serves the best interests of our students, staff, and community, I will respect the collective democratic process and uphold it.

8c. Yes, absolutely. Educators are the experts on the ground; their voices must carry significant weight in division decisions because those choices directly shape their daily work and student outcomes.

Carrissa Reyes

8a. Being approachable, visible in the community and having good communication skills to ensure board governance and a welcome presence in the community.

8b. This is a very tough question; this is very dependant of the situation/circumstance. I am someone who can see all sides and I can understand and relate to where others are coming from with their views. For most things I think I can support a board decision if I did not agree on it. However I cannot say for sure until these situations came up.

8c. Absolutely, they are the ones teaching and guiding our children every single day. None of us will truly know what each teacher thinks of a situation or know the supports they need without them telling us. They are the backbone to every single classroom and school. I believe their voices should be heard, and the board should take their input in to consideration when making decisions.

I would support additional training and resources for school staff. Upgrades to the school or classrooms within reason. I would need to know the education benefits before making a decision.

Cindy Nachtigall

8a. Most importantly, an effective trustee is one who truly cares about wanting the best education for all students. An effective trustee understands the important commitment of inclusion and understands the responsibility of that commitment in public education. A trustee who comes on time to meetings prepared, having read the reports, and agendas and is engaged in the discussion. I personally feel that there is great value in bridging the needs of the community by connecting with community members at PAC meetings and other opportunities as they present themselves. I also believe a strong, effective trustee respects trustee practises and policies and learns the various roles regarding what is operational and not our lane and what is our lane and our trustee responsibilities. I feel a trustee must be a good role model and follow rules and procedures. We expect this of our students and staff, and we should be modelling that same behaviour.

8b. Yes, that is part of the commitment as a school trustee. We are not an island we are a Board, and based by majority we make and pass decisions. It is our role to back the majority as a trustee; however, we are free to vote against a decision initially and express our views.

8c. I believe we are all lifelong learners and can learn from others who are in the field and are active boots on the ground. I would value the opportunity for staff to share ideas with their leadership and would be supportive of an environment that would give a voice to that.

Eric Labaupa

8a. An effective school trustee is one who is aware and can respect the point of view of all sides to an issue. An effective school trustee takes the responsibility of being accountable to the students, taxpayers, and families of the school division tremendously and bases their decisions on such.

8b. I anticipate that not all board decisions will be black and white. There will be instances where pros and cons will have to be weighed. It's difficult to provide a definitive answer to the question, but I can commit to being open-minded, willing to be firm in my point of view, and acting in what I feel to be the best interests of the students of Pembina Trails.

8c. I am admittedly not familiar with what the status quo is in regard to educator input in board decisions. I can say that I would most certainly be open to input from educators to gain as much information as possible to formulate the reasonings behind my decisions as a board member.

Heethy Maan

8a. Someone who is genuine and takes the best interest of the community. Listens, asks questions and takes appropriate action. And someone who isn't afraid to challenge unpopular opinions. You have to be willing to hear different perspectives, make difficult decisions and always remember that you are there to serve students and the community.

8b. Yes, that's democracy. We all will play a role in who is elected, so whoever is elected, deserves a fair chance to advocate for our community. I may not agree with the decision, but there is a proper process and I would respect that.

8c. Yes. Teachers and school staff probably spend the most time on the weekdays with our kids. Why wouldn't we?

I would support open communication with our educators so we have their input as well.

Noman Zaheer

8a. An effective school trustee is a strong listener, a thoughtful decision-maker, and a responsible steward of public resources. Trustees must represent the interests of the entire community while keeping students at the center of every decision.

I believe an effective trustee:

- Listens to students, families, educators, staff, and community members.
- Makes decisions based on evidence, collaboration, and the long-term interests of students.
- Demonstrates transparency, accountability, and integrity.
- Respects diverse perspectives and works constructively with others.
- Focuses on governance, strategic planning, and policy rather than day-to-day operations.
- Advocates for safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning environments for all students.

Most importantly, an effective trustee asks, "How does this decision support student learning, well-being, and success?"

8b. Yes.

Healthy governance requires respectful debate, different perspectives, and thoughtful discussion. Trustees are elected to bring their views forward and make decisions they believe are in the best interests of students and the division. However, once a decision is made by the Board, it is important to respect the democratic process and work collaboratively to move forward.

If I voted against a motion, I would be transparent about my reasoning during the decision-making process. However, once the Board has reached a decision, I would respect the authority of the Board and support its implementation, provided it is within policy and legal requirements.

I believe strong governance requires both independent thinking and the ability to work as part of a team. Disagreement should not prevent trustees from collaborating toward shared goals for students and families.

8c. Yes.

Educators work directly with students every day and bring valuable frontline experience to discussions about learning, student supports, curriculum implementation, school climate, and resource needs. Their perspectives can help inform better decisions and stronger outcomes for students.

As a Trustee, I would support:

- Meaningful consultation with educators during policy reviews and strategic planning.
- Regular opportunities for teachers and support staff to provide feedback on issues affecting classrooms and student learning.
- Open communication between the Board, administration, staff, and employee groups.
- Using educator feedback to help inform budget priorities and resource allocation decisions.
- Opportunities for staff participation in discussions regarding educational innovation, student supports, inclusion initiatives, and school improvement planning.

At the same time, I recognize that trustees, administration, educators, families, and students each have distinct roles within public education. My goal would be to ensure that educator voices are heard, valued, and considered as part of a collaborative decision-making process that ultimately supports student success.

I believe the best decisions are made when those closest to students have a meaningful opportunity to contribute their knowledge, experience, and perspectives.

Tasneem Vali

8a. An effective trustee listens, asks questions, understands the difference between governance and administration, communicates respectfully and remembers that trustees govern collectively rather than individually.

A trustee should be accessible to the community but should not promise to personally solve individual operational or personnel matters. A trustee can help parents understand the proper process and ensure that the Board's policies are functioning as intended.

8b. Absolutely, in my experience good boards will sometimes disagree. I would explain my position respectfully and vote according to my judgment. Once the Board has decided, I would respect the Board's authority, even though I voted differently. Being able to disagree respectfully and continue working with colleagues is an important skill.

8c. Educators are an integral part of building strong public schools and should have opportunities

to contribute to decisions that directly affect their work and students. They bring expertise and experience that trustees do not have.

Pembina Trails already has a Staff Involvement in Decision Making policy, and its policy-development process states that employee input is encouraged. I would support consultation before major initiatives affecting classrooms are finalized and clear procedures for feedback.

Tony Guan

8a. An effective school trustee must be someone that is not afraid to address the concerns within the district.

8b. I only see priority; the only times I will not be in favor would be when I feel weighing multiple issues, the highest priority one isn't given the highest priority. I'm not here for personal gain, I'm here to be a voice for our students, parents and educators so whether my vote "wins" or not matters none to me; only prioritized issues not being addressed in a timely manner.

8c. Of course! I feel parent-teacher meetings are not enough to help gauge a student's current levels. We should put emphasized value on frontline staff as they're the ones that are interacting with the students daily. I'd say holding seminars or recorded videos with frontline staff members to address current levels of education in order to get the parents more involved.

-----end question 8-----

QUESTION 9

9. Motivation and Values

- a. What inspired you to run for school trustee?
- b. What experiences or core principles will guide your decision-making on the board?

Asim Nawaz

9a. My children, and the strong desire to see more diverse representation at the board table so that our leadership truly reflects the community we serve.

9b. Respect, integrity, diversity, inclusion, and the foundational principle that every child matters.

Carrissa Reyes

9a. I feel that a school trustee should be someone who has children currently attending a Pembina Trails school. Anyone can run and be elected, but I believe that without kids in the current school system, a lot of folks might not truly understand what is happening in and around the schools. I was approached by a handful of community members to suggest I would make a great school trustee, as folks know my community dedication.

9b. I am a responsible decision maker and excellent board member. I believe in doing what's best while ensuring that no one will be singled out or affected in a negative way by the decision.

Cindy Nachtigall

9a. As I mentioned earlier, I am passionate about educational excellence at every age and stage, and I am a strong advocate for children and their families navigating their child's educational journey. I had a unique role working with families in our community prior to their children entering public school, and I felt that lens would be an asset that was not present at the Board table.

9b. I believe in inclusive education. I believe it is our responsibility in public education to ensure that every child receives the highest quality education possible in a safe and caring environment. I believe their education should not just include academics but also encompass the "whole child" approach, including the social and emotional pieces. When we ensure that children thrive and are nurtured, they become the best version of themselves. I want every child to feel confident and ready for their next step! Together we can make that happen!

Eric Labaupa

9a. I am running for School Trustee because I believe parents and families deserve a strong,

accessible voice at the board table, and that the best interests of our students should always be at the heart of the decisions the board makes. I am a parent of two daughters who have recently graduated from the public education system and have our youngest still in elementary school. I felt it important to be a part of the process to contribute a parent's point of view in addition to my extensive community-based experience to the board.

9b. As a School Trustee, I will bring a parent's perspective, a commitment to responsible decision-making, and a willingness to listen and work with others. I want to be a strong voice for our students and families and help ensure Pembina Trails continues to be a school division our community can be proud of.

Heethy Maan

9a. My kids are a big part of why I decided to run. I've been in this community for years, volunteering with kids and families and serving our community. I want to see not only my kids succeed, but all children. This is our future, if we don't do the right things now, these kids will be running the world when we are old.

I also think public schools can be better, and I believe we need a trustee who is a parent that's actually living this. I am, and I am in it for the right reasons.

9b. I'll always come back to a few basic things: what's best for our students, what's fair to staff and families, and are we being responsible with public money?

I'll listen before I make decisions, I'll ask questions when something doesn't make sense, and I won't be afraid to speak up when I disagree. I want to be a trustee who is accessible, accountable and actually connected to the community I represent.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me. I appreciate you taking the time to hear from all the candidates.

Noman Zaheer

9a. I decided to run for School Trustee because I believe public education plays a critical role in shaping the future of our children and our communities. As a parent, community member, and technology professional, I have seen firsthand the importance of strong schools, engaged families, and dedicated educators in helping students succeed.

I was inspired to run because I want to help ensure that every student in Pembina Trails has access to safe, inclusive, and high-quality learning opportunities. As our communities continue to grow, I believe it is important to have trustees who are willing to listen, collaborate, and advocate for the resources students and schools need to succeed.

My professional experience in information technology has helped me develop skills in problem-solving, strategic planning, budgeting, accountability, and working collaboratively with diverse groups of people. Through community involvement and ongoing conversations with parents, students, educators, and residents throughout Ward 3, I have gained a deeper understanding of both the strengths and challenges facing public education.

Several core principles will guide my decision-making as a trustee:

- Student Success First: Every decision should be evaluated based on how it supports student learning, well-being, and future success.
- Transparency and Accountability: Families and community members deserve clear communication and responsible stewardship of public funds.
- Respect and Inclusion: Every student, family, and staff member should feel valued, welcomed, and respected.
- Collaboration and Listening: Good decisions come from listening to diverse perspectives and working together toward common goals.
- Evidence-Based Decision-Making: Decisions should be informed by data, community input, and the expertise of educators and administration.
- Future-Ready Education: Students should be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and digital literacy needed to succeed in an evolving world.

If elected, I will approach every issue with an open mind, a willingness to listen, and a commitment to doing what is in the best interests of students, families, and the Pembina Trails community. My goal is to be a trustee who is accessible, thoughtful, accountable, and focused on building a brighter future for every student.

Tasneem Vali

9a. I have spent many years working with children, families and community organizations. Through that work, I have realised how important schools are not only to students but to the entire community.

I have helped newcomer families understand and navigate the public-school system and have worked to build bridges between educators and families from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Those experiences showed me how valuable it is when families understand the system and feel comfortable asking questions to advocate for their child.

I am running because I want to contribute to Building Strong Public Schools.

9b. I would be guided by integrity and accountability.

My community experience has taught me to work with people who do not always share the same background or perspective and to ask questions before reaching conclusions. This helps to look for practical ways forward.

My faith is important to me and teaches me the importance of service, compassion and treating people with dignity. As a trustee I would represent a diverse public-school community. My decisions would be made within Manitoba law, Pembina Trails policy, the responsibilities of a trustee, available evidence and the interests of a strong public education system.

I also believe this means I am willing to say, "I don't have enough information." As a candidate, I do not have access to internal statistics, operational reports or staff perspective. If elected, I would ask for the data, listen to the people directly affected and not assume I have the answers.

Tony Guan

9a. My main motivation to run for school trustee is that I want to be the voice for our residents to make a more efficient community. If we all sit out and mumble about our disagreements, then we are at risk of putting people in charge who are not going to instigate change. I completely understand if I'm successful, my vote is still a single vote, but if that's going to deter anyone then we will never see change. We must make proper adjustments as we are putting our children's education and future in jeopardy. The school board has been stagnant and have held meaningless meetings that never pass motions to help the district, yet parents and students sit still waiting in the dark; it's time for change!

9b. I have over a decade of experience working in wealth management dealing with people from all walks of life. As well I serve on condo boards, non-for-profit and work committees. I am well equipped in handling high stress situations by making the right decisions while being fully aware we cannot always satisfy everyone. However, I will always make the best decision to prioritize top issues. I'm here to instigate and implement change and my decision making will be guided by my unwavering commitment to student-centered governance and transparency.

-----end question 9-----