

Trustee candidate answers from Donald Benson

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

I think that a lunch program would be helpful for those students which require such.

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

I think that a wider net should be considered as COVID is coming to a close and there is likely teachers that could fill the positions. Perhaps a small add in the community newspapers would be helpful.

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

By welcoming teachers to attend meeting and give them an opportunity to put forward their recommendations.

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

Reviews are a necessary means of assessing situations and looking for improvements and I support such.

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

I will suggest that a committee be established to address the needs and see that the calls to action are add eared to.

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

No one wants to see increased class sizes and cuts. I will have but one vote of budgets however I will hopefully be on the budget committee and be able to have my input and look for ways that class sizes are reasonable and cuts if any are kept to a minimum.

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

I will look dimly upon the incidence of racism which comes to the attention of the board and see that it is dealt with in the appropriate manner.

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

I am in favour of full day kindergarten as I see it as a benefit to the children and the families as many are two parent working families.