

Trustee candidate answers from Tim Johnston

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?**

Since becoming a trustee in 2006, I've supported all initiatives that improve student-learning outcomes and I will continue to support same if re-elected. I will continue to advocate for funding to support the needs of children negatively impacted by poverty and will continue to work with PTTA, School/Senior Administration, Department of Education, MSBA, parents and community agencies on these initiatives.

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?**

Labour shortages are having a negative impact across all sectors of the economy, including education. Divisional administration continues with the implementation of the plan to overcome this shortfall. As a Trustee, I have supported administration during the development and implementation of the plan and will continue to support administration going forward.

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

As a Trustee, I will build and foster relationships with teachers by being visible in schools, engaged, informed on current and emerging issues and remain committed to the work and responsibility of the Trustee role.

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?**

The Education Review was to improve student outcomes, ensure long-term sustainability and enhance public confidence in Manitoba's education system. However, the review was politically motivated and unfortunately, the Provincial Government felt they had to "sell" the package on the basis that the current model was a failure, which simply isn't the case. There are areas for improvement and my hope is that the Provincial Government will have meaningful conversation with stakeholders on how best to achieve these improvements.

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 support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's Calls to Action 62 and 63. I am prepared to work with all stakeholders (parents, administration, PTTA, MSBA, Department of Education and Indigenous agencies) on how best to achieve the desired outcomes.

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?

The Board's ability to meet divisional funding needs, through taxation, has been diminished by the Provincial Government. However, Bill 64 or rather the collective community reaction to Bill 64 was an important lesson in democracy and the strength of cooperation. In the role of Trustee, I will continue to work with all stakeholders and be a strong advocate for public education. I will continue to support initiatives that keep dollars in the classroom and for the Province to provide adequate funding to meet our divisional needs.

- 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?**

In my current role as Trustee, I started this conversation with our past Superintendent prior to the onset of Covid-19 restrictions. While I cannot point to a specific area of concern, I believe we haven't undertaken a review in the past. As our community evolves, we gain a better understanding of both systemic and non-systemic biases, which may be unknowingly embedded within Board policy and administrative practices. A review would help improve stakeholder confidence and require the participation of all employee groups in the division, guided by a third party.

- 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?**

As a Trustee, I rely on school administration to assess the benefits of full day kindergarten for their school community and to support the request for funding during the budget process. I will continue to support school administration requests for funding and to support programs that address the needs of their school population.