

Anne Marie Watson - Red Deer Catholic School Board

Education Priorities

1. What specific steps would you advocate to improve the quality of education?

Build more schools where needed. In our community, schools are at 100% utilization or higher, the population increased at least 5%/year for the past 3 years, yet the province won't build more.

2. What are the main directions we need to take to develop the full potential of all students?

Differentiated learning. Flexible learning.

3. Please indicate if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or have no opinion on the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
Schools currently have enough specialized staff and resources to develop the full potential of all students.		X			
Increased class sizes will hurt the high school completion rate.				X	
The board should provide support for community schools rather than expanding alternative programs.		X			
The school board should make sure that students with special needs should be provided additional supports.				X	
School boards should work with the provincial government to assure access to early childhood education and quality before and after school care programs.				X	
School boards should advocate for the Alberta government to fully fund junior kindergarten and full-day kindergarten as recommended by the Alberta Commission on Learning.					X
School boards should advocate for the Learning Commission recommendation on class sizes at all grade levels.					X
School boards should advocate for renewed emphasis on the arts, trades and language learning in their schools.				X	
School boards should advocate for appropriate programs and supports for ESL students.					X

Please comment on any of the above statements: In our community, we fully support all community schools as well as alternative programs. It's not an either/or option; it's about supporting both.

The Roles of the Trustee

1. What are the most important changes that need to be made regarding the role of school boards in Alberta?

Negotiations need to remain at the local level. With this last agreement, schools boards were pushed out when the government negotiated directly with the ATA, although in the end the deal had to be legislated. Leave negotiations with the local board and the ATA Local.

2. How can the school board and you as trustee most effectively influence the financial and policy decisions made by the provincial ministry of education?

Strong advocacy and relationship-building.

3. Please indicate if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or have no opinion on the following statements

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
A trustee must be a team player and always defend the decisions of the board, even if the trustee disagrees with those decisions.				X	
All business of the board should be dealt with in open public sessions except when the board is required to protect the privacy of employees or students.				X	
Trustees should actively consult with constituents and school councils on important policy matters.				X	
At times, school boards need to take more active public stands on education issues, even if it means being critical of the provincial government.				X	
The provincial government has seriously undermined the power and authority of trustees and school boards.			X		

Please comment on any of the above statements:

Education Funding

1. In light of the current funding situation, what strategies should the board use to meet the needs of students and the community?

Strong advocacy and relationship-building.

2. What changes respecting the funding of education would you advocate for?

Return of AISI funding. This was a program which allowed for great innovation.

3. Please indicate if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or have no opinion on the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
Education is adequately funded. School boards can live within their means by "cutting fat".	X				
If a school board cannot balance its budget without harmful cuts to education programs, it should be prepared to run a deficit.		X			
Provincial funding for building and maintaining schools is adequate.		X			
Provincial funding should be sufficient to cover increases to teacher and staff contracts.				X	

Please comment on any of the above statements:

Privatization and Commercialization

1. Should the provincial government continue to use Public Private Partnerships (P3s) for building new schools, what guidelines would you propose be placed on P3 contracts?

I am not in favour of P3s.

2. What limitations, if any, should the school board place on the involvement of private firms in schools?

I am not in favour of allowing large corporations (e.g. Coca-Cola, Pepsi) to advertise in schools in exchange for a "donation."

3. Please indicate if you strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or have no opinion on the following statements

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No opinion
Private sector businesses can operate schools more cheaply and efficiently and should be allowed to do so.	X				
The financing, construction and maintenance of a school should be undertaken as a public private partnership.	X				
Parents should be expected to contribute towards the cost of their children's education by paying school fees and fundraising.	X				
School boards should ban commercial advertising in schools.				X	

