

## Cory Litzenberger - Red Deer Catholic School Board

### Education Priorities

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

1) Reduction in class sizes which can be accomplished with new school construction or expansion. 2) Increase unfiltered communication from front-line teachers and parents directly to school boards. 3) Advocate to government based on what we hear from the front lines. 4) Focus on the needs of students, parents, and teachers. 5) Look for ways to improve operational efficiency in cost structures in order to free up dollars to improve overall teaching and learning conditions.

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

Increase communication between the front line teachers and parents directly to the board to encourage more open dialogue about what they are experiencing on the front lines compared to what we may think they are experiencing. Without proper unfiltered feedback channels, we cannot expect to develop educational programs and tools to meet the needs of students. If we don't get useful positive and negative feedback, we will never know what they actually need compared to what they want.

#### 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.		<b>X</b>			
Increased class sizes will hurt the high school completion rate.				<b>X</b>	
The board should provide support for community schools rather than expanding alternative programs.			<b>X</b>		
The school board should make sure that students with special needs should be provided additional supports.			<b>X</b>		
School boards should work with the provincial government to assure access to early childhood education and quality before and after school care programs.			<b>X</b>		
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.				<b>X</b>	
School boards should advocate for the Learning Commission recommendation on class sizes at all grade levels.				<b>X</b>	
School boards should advocate for renewed emphasis on the arts, trades and language learning in their schools.					<b>X</b>

School boards should advocate for appropriate programs and supports for ESL students. **X**

*Please comment on any of the above statements:*

**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?**

School boards must be able to have more input in the overall education ministry decision process. Draft legislation affecting education should be circulated to the boards for feedback. Formulas regarding funding need to be simplified, and school boards need to have more input in the overall direction of administration rather than just the employment of one staff member.

**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?**

Three words: lobby, lobby, lobby. If you are not constantly stating what you need, you may never be heard. I'm not saying phone the ministry everyday until you become an annoyance, but you do need to advocate at every possible opportunity you have. It doesn't necessarily have to be directly speaking with them. It can be done through alternate channels, through other MLAs in the government and/or the opposition, through the media, or through staff in the department as well. The key in lobbying effectively is in the message, not who says it. You get enough people saying the same message, and ultimately the decisions will follow suit.

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

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
A trustee must be a team player and always defend the decisions of the board, even if the trustee disagrees with those decisions.		<b>X</b>			
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.				<b>X</b>	
Trustees should actively consult with constituents and school councils on important policy matters.				<b>X</b>	
At times, school boards need to take more active public stands on education issues, even if it means being critical of the provincial government.				<b>X</b>	
The provincial government has seriously undermined the power and authority of trustees and school boards.			<b>X</b>		

*Please comment on any of the above statements:* The term "always" is too far reaching. In MOST cases, yes, a

trustee should defend the decisions of the board. However, disagreeing with a board decision is not necessarily a bad thing. It promotes dialogue and sometimes "sober second thought". A trustee is elected to the board to represent the public interest. If the trustee strongly feels that the public interest is not being reflected in the board's decision, then it is the trustee's responsibility to advocate for the public interest.

**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?**

Look for cost efficiencies. Negotiate supplier contracts with fixed prices. Collaborate with other boards in close proximity to negotiate larger purchasing power. Look for ways to create alternative sources of revenue, ie: gym rentals, park rentals, event sponsorships, etc.

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

Primarily, simplify the formulas. I'm an accountant by trade, and even I find the breakdown of funding per student, per criteria, etc. too cumbersome to navigate. We need to track specific costs per student to be able to lobby government for proper funding models.

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

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

*Please comment on any of the above statements:* Occasional deficits are fine, provided we have saved the money before to cover the deficit and are not taking on debt to do it. On going, annual deficits are a problem and speak to a larger issue.

**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?**

Yes. P3 is a good way to go. But individual boards should be able to add customizations to the choices at their

own cost.

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

Very little. The involvement of the private sector should not be looked at as the big bad wolf. The only key areas I could see would be in directly marketing to the students. Other than that, if they want to give us a ton of money to call the playground structure the "Pepsi Playground" I'm fine with that.

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

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Private sector businesses can operate schools more cheaply and efficiently and should be allowed to do so.					<b>X</b>
The financing, construction and maintenance of a school should be undertaken as a public private partnership.				<b>X</b>	
Parents should be expected to contribute towards the cost of their children's education by paying school fees and fundraising.		<b>X</b>			
School boards should ban commercial advertising in schools.		<b>X</b>			
Students should be provided with all necessary books and learning materials at no cost.				<b>X</b>	
The public interest is best served by schools that are publicly owned and operated.					<b>X</b>
To address funding shortfalls, schools should be allowed to have corporate sponsors, including naming rights.				<b>X</b>	

*Please comment on any of the above statements:* Private sector doesn't always operate cheaper. Sometimes yes, sometimes no. In any case, we have to focus on the needs of the children.

## School Infrastructure

**1. What reasons, if any, might you vote for the closure of a school?**

Lack of enrollment that could be easily moved to a school with capacity by bussing.

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

	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Additional government funding should be provided to address the infrastructure deficit.		<b>X</b>			
Community schools with small enrolments should be closed so that larger schools can offer more programs.				<b>X</b>	
The school board should work with the province to provide wrap around services in schools.				<b>X</b>	
Some schools should be closed so that the province will build new schools in new neighbourhoods.				<b>X</b>	
Schools are a part of the community and should be open to other community activities.				<b>X</b>	
Boards should advocate for changing the province's school utilization formula to account for space used in after school care and other community uses.				<b>X</b>	

*Please comment on any of the above statements:*