

## Guy Pelletier - Red Deer Catholic School Board

### Education Priorities

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

In our Division, space to accommodate growth in student numbers is a concern. Capital funding for new facilities will assist in increasing quality. The key role of an effective Board is to establish the right environment for the education experts, our teachers and administrators, to deliver excellent education. Adequate funding, up to date facilities and technology, and appropriate professional development and amongst the key drivers of quality education.

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

A system that allows sufficient choice for students to pursue their areas of interest is important. Class sizes need to be appropriate to the grade and small enough for teachers to be able to understand the needs and potential of each student.

#### 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					X

schools.

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

**X**

*Please comment on any of the above statements:* With respect to full time kindergarten - our Board has experimented with great success with this concept. The results are clear and positive so far. I am not convinced it is the best route for all kids. I would support doing more work in this area to determine how to best provide for the needs of those children that would benefit the most.

## 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?

The government needs to respect the authority of locally elected Boards and work closely with us to meet the needs of students and expectations of parents. Some ability to appoint members to Boards may help to ensure that the Board is well rounded and informed.

### 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?

ASBA has been an effective voice for school boards collectively. Individual boards need to work in partnership with the ministry and understand that in a work of limited funding some tough choice may be required. We need to spend all dollars received very wisely and show evidence of good results. Sound planning and a solid business case for additional investment help the ministry to make good choices.

### 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.				<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.					

## 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?

Continued advocacy to the ministry to fill any funding gaps is an on-going activity. We utilize our Education Foundation to raise money locally to help with unfunded elements in our Division. Effective use of reserves can help us take advantage of opportunities that arise. We also can utilize partnerships with other board and community groups to deliver services more effectively.

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

The recent changes to the funding provided to divisions for inclusive education has created some inequities in the system. I believe the formula needs to be reviewed to more accurately reflect the reality in some divisions.

### 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:* Albertans are blessed to have a well funded education system. It is the second largest budget item in the Province. There are always areas that we could use more dollars to continue the good work of educators. It is critical that Boards work hard to ensure all public dollars are spent wisely.

## 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 think the jury is still out on how effective this model will be. I have some reservations about how it will work over the long term

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

We don't have a lot to do with private firms in our division. I believe any initiatives would have to be dealt with on a case by case basis. As always, the best interests of our students would need to be considered.

**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.					
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:*

## **School Infrastructure**

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

Schools have to remain viable in terms of number of students and the ability to fund it. Closing a school is never an activity a board wants to have to do. If the school is drawing too much funding away from other schools, tough decisions may have to be made.

**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		<b>X</b>			

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closed so that larger schools can offer more programs.

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The school board should work with the province to provide wrap around services in schools.

**X**

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Some schools should be closed so that the province will build new schools in new neighbourhoods.

**X**

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Schools are a part of the community and should be open to other community activities.

**X**

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Boards should advocate for changing the province's school utilization formula to account for space used in after school care and other community uses.

**X**

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*Please comment on any of the above statements:*