

## Sherry Hanson - Red Deer Public School Board

### Education Priorities

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

I am keen to better understand the value our community places on the learning and development of our future generations and to advocate for financial support that aligns with that value. Teachers and our schools are heroes for the work they do in commitment of public education's mission to develop responsible citizens. I am excited to join in the important discussions on defining and achieving success, and to providing quality learning opportunities so that every student can be successful. I am eager to seek to understand the issues and do what is best for students.

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

I am a strong believer of inclusion. It reflects the value I place in democracy and developing responsible citizens. I understand some of the complexity that an inclusive education system brings to classrooms and some of the challenges teachers and schools face. I think a critical factor to improving learning conditions is having all professionals in Public School classrooms sharing a commitment to inclusion and with the skills, resources and support needed for each student to be successful.

#### 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:* I am a strong advocate for Public Education, I believe in community and I have the skills and a keen interest to have our community more engaged with the education of our children. While advocacy with our Provincial Government is important (as evidenced by my responses to the questions above), I think it is equally important for School Boards to seek out opportunities to collaborate and to explore opportunities to work together with other stakeholders.

## 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 enable open collaboration that engages citizens in their investment for public education. I think that school boards should be highly diverse in order to effectively inform decisions that affect our students. This isn't always achieved through the election process and so I think it is a critical role for school boards to intentionally consider voices not engaged around the table and to be willing to more broadly advocacy for all aspects of children.

### 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?

Our Public Education system must be supported in a way that reflects the value our community places on the learning and development of our future generations. I am keen to better understand the value our community places on education, to understand the issues our schools and classrooms face and to use that information to inform policy decisions at the local and provincial level.

### 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				<b>X</b>	

stands on education issues, even if it means being critical of the provincial government.

The provincial government has seriously undermined the power and authority of trustees and school boards.

X

*Please comment on any of the above statements:* I remain hopeful for the changes that have been made to the new Education Act.

## 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?

Quality PUBLIC schools are vitally important to community and community is vitally important to quality PUBLIC schools! I think the strategy of community engagement is important. Schools must have the awareness and skills to engage their community in supporting the education of students. There are lots of opportunities!

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

It is certainly about advocating for appropriate funding to education ... and as a School Board Trustee I would seek to be informed on the issue - including stakeholders sharing their experiences with class size and other challenges. I would provide leadership to ensure the voices of our community (Red Deerians/Albertans) influence decisions that impact education. If we truly value education and educators, Government policies (and resulting funding) should reflect that core value. I will 'harvest' and share our community voice (loud and clear) to that issue.

### 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 think P3's for building new schools is an example of community engagement. Where partnerships can be established for the benefit of students, community and the school system, I think it is a shared reflection of the strong value on education. I think guidelines that clarify operations, maintenance, naming, "ownership" and public use are important. Even though developed through a P3, the ownership and naming of the facility should remain the public. There are other ways partners involved can be recognized, appreciated and involved.

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

Schools should remain public spaces and there should be limitations on naming and operation of the facilities. If P3s are possible, there are other motivating factors for partners that can be accommodated without impacting the critical thinking of student 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
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	
Students should be provided with all necessary books and learning materials at no cost.		X			
The public interest is best served by schools that are publicly owned and operated.					X
To address funding shortfalls, schools should be allowed to have corporate sponsors, including naming rights.		X			

*Please comment on any of the above statements:*

## School Infrastructure

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

Decreasing student population, aging infrastructure that would be too costly to repair and changes to community demographics (impacted through migration and development) are reasons I could see considering the closure of a school.

### 2. 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
Additional government funding should be provided to address the infrastructure deficit.			X		
Community schools with small enrolments should be closed so that larger schools can offer more programs.		X			
The school board should work with the province to provide wrap around services in schools.				X	
Some schools should be closed so that the province will build new schools in new neighbourhoods.		X			
Schools are a part of the community and should be open to other community activities.				X	
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		

*Please comment on any of the above statements:*