

Joy Bowen-Eyre – Ward 1 & 2 – Calgary Board of Education

Education Priorities

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

We need predictable, sustainable, adequate funding for education in Alberta. What does this actually mean? You wouldn't plan a full scale renovation on your home or take a one year leave of absence from your job without fully ensuring you had the means to do so. Education is no different. How can we plan for the future in terms of programming, needs, supports and services for each and every student when we wait with baited breath every spring to hear if the Government of Alberta is going to value education by funding it properly and ensure our kids have the best possible opportunities.

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

We need to ensure that each and every student is successful. What does this mean? Many of our students do not graduate from high school. Approximately 1 in 4 students does not graduate from high school in 3 years. In order to do this our students need to be engaged in their learning. They need to feel connected at school and that they belong. We need to work together, the school, the student, the parents and the community to ensure this happens and to better the outcomes.

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: Fully funded junior kindergarten and kindergarten would put a strain on many school board as they would not be able to house the students. Calgary Board of Education would need a surge of additional new schools to ensure this is possible. Schools do not have sufficient specialized staff as school boards have had funding cuts in recent years. In addition school boards have more students with complex needs and a greater ELL population...these students require additional supports so that they can thrive.

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 need autonomy to make their own decisions about the students in their own district. They need natural person powers. Each school board is uniquely different and it should be left to each board to ensure that the needs of their students are being taken care of.

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?

We need to advocate but more importantly we need to work together

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		

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?

Advocate and working together with the greater community.

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

We need predictable, sustainable, adequate funding for education in Alberta. What does this actually mean? You wouldn't plan a full scale renovation on your home or take a one year leave of absence from your job without fully ensuring you had the means to do so. Education is no different. How can we plan for the future in terms of programming, needs, supports and services for each and every student when we wait with baited breath every spring to hear if the Government of Alberta is going to value education by funding it properly and ensure our kids have the best possible opportunities. We need Infrastructure – 25 new schools to keep up with the growing Calgary population. Schools are the heartbeat of any community. Many of our students are being bussed far away, schools are over capacity and class sizes are growing. In addition over half of our schools are over 50 years old. We need modernization dollars to fix our aging schools which desperately require repair. What would be fabulous for all is if the Government of Alberta provided a transparent methodology that disclosed infrastructure priorities so communities would know when or if they would be receiving a school. We need a review of the Metro Transportation funding formula. The Calgary Board of Education is sufficiently underfunded for transportation. We have to charge families to transport children to school because the funding we receive from the Province does not adequately cover the costs to transport. The Government of Alberta has been promising for years to undertake a review of the formula. We transport over 35,000 students every day, many of them on very long bus rides, congregated stops and crowded buses.

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	

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?

We need Infrastructure – 25 new schools to keep up with the growing Calgary population. Schools are the heartbeat of any community. Many of our students are being bussed far away, schools are over capacity and class sizes are growing. P3's have been one solution for building new schools however they can't be the only solution. In order to collaborate with the community and build partnerships sometimes a unique build is in order to house the school, the library, community center and recreation facilities etc...can't do this with P3's.

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

We need to work with the community to get their input and expertise on this.

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.					
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.					

Please comment on any of the above statements: Need to seek community consultation on advertising schools and the naming rights. Currently at the Calgary Board of Education the Board has a policy that states all naming rights must go before the Board.

School Infrastructure

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

When the needs of the students are not being met.

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: The closure of any school is very complex and should never be taken lightly by either the school board or an individual.