

Pamela King – Ward 5 & 10 – Calgary Board of Education

Education Priorities

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

The Province funds a basic education. I believe that we need to work to re-define what a basic education in today's world is. Our children are coming to school with increased complex needs, and as a society we have higher expectations of the opportunities and services that are provided to support students in the classroom and in the community. There is a tremendous amount of work that goes on in our communities to support students through partnerships and parent fundraising societies. I think the fact that all of this is happening is a strong indication that society has higher expectations of our school system and has a considerably different understanding of what a basic education is for our students today and into the future than the province does. What would success look like for our kids without support from parents, business and partnerships providing resources for artists in residence programs, technology, literacy, field trips, etc? We are going to continue to have funding issues as long as the expectations of society and the province are not aligned.

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

We need to provide the supports and services necessary to ensure that all students have a solid foundation to thrive and achieve their full potential. We need to continue to work with other agencies to support the whole child.

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				X	

Commission recommendation on class sizes at all grade levels.

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: The board should provide support for community schools rather than expanding alternative programs is a question that belongs with the citizens. Some value the choice that is offered for a variety of programs for our students and some value supporting only community schools. I have heard from both sides and as long as we have alternative programs I would expect that we support all students regardless of what school or program they are attending.

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?

As long as school boards exist they should be empowered to make local decisions based on local needs. Trustees are locally elected in the same way that our provincial leaders are and have a responsibility to fulfill their obligations as elected representatives and should be allowed to do so without interference and threats from the province when we disagree. The province needs to either empower boards or dismiss them altogether.

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?

Boards and trustees and to take advantage of every opportunity to advocate their local needs by participating in the community consultations the province holds, meeting with MLA's and improving the lines of communication and relationships.

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: Although I believe there are some issues that Trustees can consult with their communities, I also believe that people elect you to make decisions on their behalf. I expect that my elected officials have an understanding of their communities and that their experience and values help to guide them in making decisions. I certainly do not expect to be consulted on every decision that comes before a group of representatives - if people really expect that they should be consulted on everything why are we electing people to represent us?

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?

Continue to invest in our at-risk students, special education, ELL and full day kindergarten programs. The community needs to become more engaged in the conversation about what their expectations are regarding education and how it is funded. We need provide information about the services that are provided and are not funded for and what the effects of those decisions are so that parents are better equipped to advocate to the province. It can no longer be just boards and teachers that are talking about what students need to be successful we have to involve Calgarians from all walks of life to engage in the conversation.

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

Redefine what a basic education is, determine what the needs are, understand the complexity and diversity of our students, understand what Calgarians expect from their public education system and then fund it! Right now funding is provided and we are working to make all of the other stuff fit.

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				X	

increases to teacher and staff contracts.

Please comment on any of the above statements: Regarding running a deficit I feel that is not in the best interest of our kids - eventually that money has to be paid back and will hurt future students. My understanding is that Boards cannot run a deficit with out the Minister's approval. So even if a Board felt that was the best option for our students and our district the Minister can over turn that decision.

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?

An issue that has been identified with recent P3 schools is regarding security. The security of CBE schools should all be tied into our security systems to ensure prompt responses when there are issues. Another issue that was identified was that some of our P3 schools have different rules regarding community use. We are one school system and the rules and expectations should be the same at all schools that we operate. We need to be consistent.

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

I would like to hear more from the community on this one. My value on this topic is simple. We teach our children the importance of giving back to their community and I would hope that private firms are giving back because they recognise the value of public education and it is the right thing to do and they are not doing it solely for self promotion and name recognition.

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				X	

publicly owned and operated.

To address funding shortfalls, schools should be allowed to have corporate sponsors, including naming rights. **X**

Please comment on any of the above statements: I do not know if the first statement is true or not so I can't comment. As for the rest of the questions that I have indicate no opinion is because I believe this is something I would like to hear more from the community about.

School Infrastructure

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

1. If a building has been deemed to be unsafe 2. The community supports it 3. When it is evident that it would be difficult to provide appropriate learning opportunities for students.

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: