

## Michelle Draper – Ward B – Edmonton Public School District

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

I will represent the interests of the community and reflect the values of the community in my decision making as Trustee; and in doing so I will promote and advocate for public education by identifying where need for change exists. Students should have supports they need to succeed in school (e.g. smaller class sizes, more educational assistants, more connections to community programs etc..) I will advocate for long- term, adequate and sustainable funding from the provincial government.

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

We need to support our staff to continue inspire and engage students. We need ensure students have the supports they need to succeed.

### 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 Commision 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 believe in the importance of student and parent choice. Therefore, both community and alternative programs should be supported.

**1. What are the most important changes that need to be made regarding the role of school boards in Alberta?**

Schools boards must work more closely with all levels of government, including city councillors to ensure a better understanding of neighbourhood planning. I would also suggest greater awareness among the general public of the important role of school boards to increase voter turnout.

**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?**

By building relationships and working together for the common goal of student success.

**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:* A trustee is accountable to their constituents and must make an informed vote. Once that vote is complete, the role becomes one of communicating the decision to the public and respecting the decision of the board. The provincial government is underfunding the school system and therefore putting trustees in a position of making difficult decisions and making due with less, to the detriment of student success.

**1. In light of the current funding situation, what strategies should the board use to meet the needs of students and the community?**

Equal parts advocacy and innovative and creative solutions. We need to carefully evaluate our current practices and draw on research and evaluation findings to ensure we are meeting the needs of students and the community in the most effective and efficient ways.

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

To make the best decisions to support students, we must have long- term, adequate and sustainable funding. We need to revisit the funding formula as many of our older schools have large amount of square footage that do not necessarily translate into teachable space.

## 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:* Running a deficit is a last resort and the board would have to have a plan for addressing the deficit and getting back to a balanced budget. Yes, provincial funding should be sufficient to cover increases to teacher and staff contracts but currently it is not.

## 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 question if Public Private Partnerships really saves money in the long term. The recently constructed schools, funded by the province, lack flexibility in their design and do not necessarily allow for inclusion of local perspectives. The long term commitment of the private sector to maintain schools may put high quality maintenance at risk and end up costing the School Board more in the end. Guidelines must ensure inclusion of local perspective and long term maintenance.

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

There may be a role for private firms but that must be carefully vetted at the board level in terms of ethics.

**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>			

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

Closing a school has to be a last resort. We have to explore all possible alternatives to keep community schools open, including bringing additional programming and sharing space with community supports. Trustees must work with city council to be aware of upcoming neighbourhood revitalization projects and development that may influence currently 'low enrollment' schools.

**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>			

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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>	

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