

Ken Gibson – Ward E – Edmonton Public School District

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

The priority areas identified by PIA provide an excellent direction. I would add that the contributions from the broader community to assist teachers can enrich student experience, learning, and success beyond school.

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

Trustees need to be strong advocates for adequate sustained consistent public funding of education and services that support learning. Trustees also need to ensure that the funds received are well spent. My platform speaks to the opportunity to bring resources from the community to assist and to explore means to share resources.

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: The board should provide support for community schools rather than expanding alternative programs. Disagree The Board should respond to the community in determining programming.

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

Restore taxation (ability to raise own revenues) and collective bargaining powers to the individual Boards.

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?

Through evidence based arguments backed by broad community support.

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: A trustee must be a team player and always defend the decisions of the board, even if the trustee disagrees with those decisions. Disagree A trustee should not have to retract their views. However, once the board decision is democratically reached, neither should the trustee campaign against that decision. 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. Disagree Strategic planning and strategy regarding government advocacy for example are more effective if developed in private The provincial government has seriously undermined the power and authority of trustees and school boards. agree While the new Education Act provides natural person powers to Boards, autonomy regarding taxation and collective bargaining have been undermined over the years.

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

My platform and letters to the editor have suggested a number of strategies. These can be found on my website.

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

The power to raise revenues should be returned to Boards. Provided there is accountability measures in place, Boards should seek sufficient resources to address results more broadly defined than is currently in place. Such a change would be consistent with the Provincial Government's desire to move to results-based budgeting

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: Education is adequately funded. School boards can live within their means by "cutting fat". Disagree. My platform does suggest options to supplement funding and economize resources If a school board cannot balance its budget without harmful cuts to education programs, it should be prepared to run a deficit. Agree although chronic deficits suggest the need for deeper examination and discussion Provincial funding for building and maintaining schools is adequate. Disagree My platform does suggest options to supplement funding and economize resources

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?

Provided it can be demonstrated that P3 schools provide the same or better quality and save the taxpayer money, P3s are an acceptable means to build new schools.

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

Partnerships with private sector entities should focus on resources to assist teaching and 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	
<i>Please comment on any of the above statements:</i> The financing, construction and maintenance of a school should be undertaken as a public private partnership. Agree The Auditor General’s review suggests that the initial round of P3 schools saved taxpayers funds. I am unaware of any concern over the quality of the P3 schools. To address funding shortfalls, schools should be allowed to have corporate sponsors, including naming rights. Agree. I view sponsorship of space and equipment such as UA 488 investment in M.E. Lazerte’s welding lab differently than commercial advertising					

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

Please see my letters to the editor on my website

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: Community schools with small enrolments should be closed so that larger schools can offer more programs. Agree. Under certain circumstances rationalizing space benefits students educationally. Some schools should be closed so that the province will build new schools in new neighbourhoods. Disagree. Should be 2 separate issues. Schools are a part of the community and should be open to other community activities. Agree Provided there is additional funding for these services. Boards should advocate for changing the province's school utilization formula to account for space used in after school care and other community uses. Disagree. Changes to the utilization formula are a diversion from the real issue – insufficient enrollment in whatever size of school to offer quality programming