

Sharon BOURASSA

Questions from DPAC:

1. I believe the learning is a journey, not a destination. I also believe that I have a lot to offer as a School Board Trustee. I have the educational background, the experience and the desire to achieve better for the district. I love the work, I have a passion for education and I know how to make things better.
2. I like the idea of choice of schools and when the demand is there, I will certainly advocate for programming initiatives. Programming really depends on the demands from the parents, availability of resources and support from the teachers. If the choice of school is causing overcrowding of one school, while the neighboring school sits half empty, we should be looking deeper at the perceptions causing this to happen and address the underlying issues.
3. I am an advocate for collaboration. As a former Trustee in SD#33, and former chair of the finance committee, I was cognizant of the public's need for providing input and we completely revamped the structure of the committee to allow for stakeholder input to the spending. We conducted workshops that were strategically timed according to budgeting deadlines, to learn what the priorities were for the district. This is just one example, and school districts are not a 'one size fits all'. I have always had an open door policy, and when the stakeholder groups said they wanted input, we provided the avenue for them. Other methods to receive input from the community include questionnaires, and forums. One trustee cannot possibly have all the answers; we need the input from the various groups to make informed decisions.

Questions from PGDTA:

1. I believe we need to get in front of the Ministry to detail why the current funding formula does not work. I don't think writing letters is enough. The Ministry receives hundreds of letters per day, and I am not convinced that they go to the person intended. The government of the day needs to see the facts and figures so that they can see why the funding formula does not work. Without additional funding, improving composition would be challenging. It would also be possible to target the most challenging areas within the district, and funnel additional funding to those areas. This can help with any current inequities across the district, but it is limited because the funding is minimal. The Ministry has a new 'family first' motto. Perhaps with this and further communication with the Ministry, targeted funding may come forward to help with class composition.
2. While I cannot go against legislation, I would certainly oppose government initiatives to advocate for the students. Again, I would advocate bringing the facts and figures to the Ministry, rather than send letters that may not be addressed by the intended recipient. The boards across the province need to make their voices heard. This can also be brought to the BCSTA, where boards of education meet to discuss common problems and ways to improve public education. I do not believe that merely sending a letter to the Ministry is enough to advocate for District 57.
3. It is up to the teachers to bring the input forward and it is up to the board to offer the avenue for them to do so, and to understand what it is they are saying. I have an open door policy and always welcome input from teachers, parents, students, administrators, support services, executives as well as the community. We all make up the puzzle and without pieces, it cannot be complete. I would rely on teachers to provide the input to make the implementation successful. With regards to the general operations affecting the classroom, if an issue is being discussed, and there has not been any input from the teachers, I would take the initiative to make the call to find out where they stand. With my prior seat on the board of education, motions have been tabled until further information is gathered, and with more frequent board meetings, this is not a lengthy process. I don't believe in making decisions without all the information.