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Section 1 – Accountability

1. In your opinion, what is the role of parents in the Board's decision-making process?

Parents know their children best and must be consulted on the decisions that affect programs, boundary changes, capacity issues at schools, strategic planning etc. Trustees must be giving a voice to parents and students concerns at the Boardroom table.

2. If you are elected, how do you see your role as a trustee in the decision-making process?

I see my role in the decision making process as one of soliciting input from the parents and students in my Zone and using that input to develop my vote on issues.

My decisions/votes will be based on the needs of our children as a whole and the pressing needs of my Zone.

3. Do you believe that trustees should serve as intermediaries between parents and the Board and/or their school (when all other avenues have been exhausted)?

Yes

Please explain.

4. Do you believe the Board's decision-making process could be more transparent?

Yes

If yes, what measures would you propose to improve the Board's transparency and accountability?

I would like to see the Board post summaries of decisions made and voting records, on issues that the Trustees and Staff know are important to students and parents, as well as issues students and/or parents have taken the time to tell the Board Staff or Trustees are important through emails, phone calls, delegations, public questions etc.

5. What do you believe should have greater weight in the decisions made by trustees: the advice of educational professionals or the input of parents and communities?

[no response]

Please explain.

I don't think you can de-couple these avenues of consultation. I think at the highest level of the education system, the educational professionals should be developing curriculum and educational strategies. However, I think educational strategies and guiding principles used in the development and implementation of the curriculum should be meaningfully vetted by parents and communities as they are developed – not just upon completion or once they have been introduced at the school level.

6. This past year has seen an increase in in-camera (closed-door) committee and Board meetings. As a trustee, would you undertake to ensure that in-camera meetings are held only when necessary to protect the privacy of individuals?

Yes

Additional Comments

We all should have a voice in what the Board is doing regarding education. In order to understand fully what is happening at the Board level, transparency is necessary and information should be made available to all of us, provided it does not violate the privacy of individuals.

7. Last year, the Board reviewed its Alternative Schools program and its Secondary Gifted program. Despite strong stakeholder support for these programs, Board staff recommended that they either be closed or eventually phased out. As a trustee, what kind of information would you seek and what kind of questions would you ask in order to come to a decision when staff recommendations are opposed to the views of the community?

The most fundamental questions that must be asked about all Board Staff recommendations, at a minimum are:

How will this recommendation affect all of our children?

How will this recommendation enhance education for all of our children?

How were the views of parents and the community considered?

What weight was placed on the views of parents and the community?

What would be the impact of following parental and community wishes?

What is the basis for the recommendation?

8. Good decision-making requires good and comprehensive data which is shared with all public education stakeholders. What will you do as a trustee to ensure that Board reports are released to the public in a timely fashion and contain accurate information?

As a Trustee I will review the reports that come out of the Board or reports that are put forth to the public for consultation. I will want to ensure that Trustee review takes place before general release of a report. As part of those reviews I will look at the organizations or sources the report information is based on and question any evident natural bias. I will question any data that does not seem to be current or relevant, if the data is being portrayed as such. I will review for relevance the expertise of a third party engaged to research and write a report, as well as review the Terms of Reference and proposed list of experts/study group, to be surveyed or literature to be included in the report. I want to make sure reports are not predisposed to bias. I will ensure Terms of Reference for reports contain realistic, useful completion dates, which reflect the urgency of the report.

9. Teachers and support staff who work in the classroom every day with students are well-acquainted with student needs, yet are not permitted to contribute to the public discussion when changes to programs and services are under consideration. Do you believe that the experience and knowledge of the professionals in the classroom should be better represented in the Board's decision-making process?

Yes, the board should not overlook the very valuable input that should be coming from all the teachers and support staff in our classrooms. It is not possible for the Board Staff or Trustees to be in each and every school or classroom often enough to understand the experiences of the students, teachers and support staff. If our motivation is to make the entire system work best for our children, we must not only allow, but seek the classroom teachers and support staff's insight.

Section 2 – Educational Issues

10. Given the chronic under-funding of education, what new ideas would you bring to the table to address the Board's ongoing financial challenges?

I want to see the Board be more collaborative with the other large boards in Ontario and make the priority of this collaboration to be a directed effort to get the Provincial Ministry to fully fund the on-going Salary gap, transportation, specialty support such as ESL teachers and Multi-cultural Liaison Officers, as well as all new initiatives before they are introduced. I also think we should be doing more to solicit support from local businesses that would benefit from a well educated work force.

11. It can be a challenge to meet the demand for French Immersion while maintaining a strong, viable English program. How important do you think it is for the Board to respond to the ever-increasing demand for French Immersion in this region?

Very important

Additional Comments

We live in a bi-lingual country and city and parents overwhelmingly enroll their children in French Immersion programs. We must offer a robust French

Immersion program to address the future needs of our children as well as to support programming choice.

12. Do you favour the Board's revised student transfer policy that restricts students' ability to transfer from their neighbourhood school to the school of their choice?

No

Please explain.

I support a policy that allows students to transfer to schools that have programs that are not available at their neighbourhood school.

I also want to make sure all of our schools are delivering quality in their programming.

13. While the Ontario Ministry of Education is encouraging school boards to integrate students with special learning needs into the regular classroom whenever appropriate, it recognizes specialized classes as one of a range of options for exceptional students. At present, the OCDSB provides specialized classes for students with autism, Asperger's syndrome, developmental disabilities, giftedness and a number of other exceptionalities. Do you support the continued provision of specialized classes for students with these and other special educational needs?

Yes

13. a) If yes, what would you do to reduce waiting lists and improve student access to these classes?

First we need to make certain we are getting information into parents hands so they are aware there are choices for students with learning exceptionalities and they have a right to have their child's learning exceptionality identified. We need to ensure access to testing within a shortened timeframe. Then we as a board, in collaboration with other boards need to go to the Province and demand full funding for these classes. In the meantime, the board must set spending priorities such that all of our children are in the classroom that best fits their learning needs.

13. b) If you answered no, how would you ensure that both exceptional students and their peers without special learning needs receive the support they need in order to learn and thrive in the regular classroom?

[no response]

13. c) When changes are proposed to special programs, would you agree that any proposed changes should first be evaluated through pilot programs with well-defined, measurable outcomes?

Yes

14. Recent changes to program delivery at this Board have reduced access to specialist teachers in the arts, science, physical education, and other subjects, especially at the intermediate level. Do you believe that students are receiving enough subject specialist education in the elementary/intermediate years?

No

Please explain.

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15. At the same time as students have less access to outdoor education centres, research is showing that children need experiences in the natural world for improved learning, for their well-being, and to be informed citizens about the environment. Would you increase the role of outdoor education centres in our students' education?

Yes

If yes, how?

As more of us live in cities it is often difficult for children to connect with our environment in a way that leads them to understand the impacts of their lives on our environment.

Outdoor education centres should be used from primary school age through high school as frequent field trip locations to facilitate hands on learning in the areas of the many disciplines of science, recreation and as great way for children to learn to value and preserve our environment .

16. The Alternative Schools program was reviewed this past year and found by the Board to have many benefits for students. As a trustee, would you ensure this program is continued and is extended to zones where it's not currently available?

Yes

If yes, what are your ideas to make this happen?

[no response]

17. Ottawa receives more refugees than any other city in Ontario, has the second largest immigrant population in the province, and the first language of approximately one third of Ottawa residents is neither English nor French. Do you believe that the OCDSB is doing as well as it could to serve the needs of students and families that are new to Canada?

No

If no, what changes would you propose?

Section 3 – Philosophy

18. Current trustees: Please give an example of something you did last year to further public education. Other candidates: Please name a specific effort you would promote if you were elected.

I will promote full support and choice in educational programs. I want to see the programs we currently have that are addressing our children's needs and learning styles continued and fully supported such that parents and students know they will have access to the programs and once they are enrolled OCDSB is committed to the continuation and expansion, should the need be apparent, of these programs.

19. What is your vision of education and its role in our community?

Education is the foundation of our community. The children in our schools today are our doctors, engineers, carpenters, teachers, entrepreneurs, etc of the future. Without a strong education system and students that are graduating with the skills, abilities and understanding to have a productive fulfilling life, we will not have a good community. The children in our schools today are the

image of our future community. We must ensure every child has the education they rightly deserve. We cannot choose which children will receive the full measure of education excellence – the fact is each and every child deserves a quality education and our communities depend on it.