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## Section 1 – Accountability

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

All community members, not only parents, should be involved in consultation prior to any important decisions at the Board – everyone has a stake in the creation of citizens and equity. However, parents, as a subgroup, are uniquely important in that they speak for and, at least until much later in school, largely make the decisions of school and program for their children who are students in OCDSB schools. They largely speak for, support and care for, those who are meant to be the chief beneficiaries of the whole enterprise at any given point in time.

I believe that parents and others need to be kept informed so that they may weigh in as they choose. However, on important matters affecting programming, direction of the Board, budget allocations, changes to schools affecting communities, and much else, parents need to be proactively consulted by the Board. Even before major consultation exercises are launched there should be effective 'pre-consultation', or consultation on consultation, to try to determine what sort of consultation might most effectively reach and engage and empower parents and other stakeholders in the consideration of the matter at hand.

Sadly, consultation is something the Board does not do very well. I have sought over the years to improve on this as I could but am frustrated and am making authentic consultation one of the key parts of my platform for the next four years. Far too often, in my view, the Board still engages in 'check box' consultation, or indeed in false consultation wherein the cake is already mostly baked and a narrow set of options already decided upon unofficially by staff or by circumstances. We need to start consulting on looming issues \*before\* we reach this point and we need to be more comfortable thinking out of the box re solutions and we need to respect the input provided more than we do. The forms of consultation we use need to be less a high-level summary of invited input and more of the nature of focus groups or a rich dialogue. The best consultation is dialogue.

Neither at the school level, nor certainly at the Board level, should things 'happen' to parents or communities. People should be involved themselves and well-informed ahead of time. These are their children we care for and teach on their behalf.

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

I see my role as that of advocate and change agent. The whole point of having popularly elected Trustees, which I agree with, is to ensure community oversight over the practices and decisions of education bureaucrats. If this were not the case then there would be little point indeed. The business of primary and secondary education is too important to students and families and communities to be left entirely in the hands of what, in the final analysis, is a complex bureaucratic machine.

Students, especially younger ones, cannot easily speak for themselves, and indeed many parents are intimidated and bewildered by the bureaucracy. The Trustee needs to play something of an ombudsperson's role as well. The bureaucracy does not always get it right. This is why appeal panels are Trustee-based. Further however, sometimes Trustees have to influentially intervene when a parent is not being treated fairly or the system simply has gone off the rails.

The Trustee needs, as a geographically based representative, to ensure that the needs and the wants of communities and citizens in their Zone are made known at the Board table for all of their colleagues to consider along with their's in joint District decision-making.

I believe that Trustees should be seeking always to improve what the Board does and how it operates. I do not believe in passively sitting there. Probing questions need to be asked of reports, the vision or assumptions animating or driving staff need to be established by Trustees and overseen in implementation. Staff need to be given guidance and 'reset' if they are straying too far from community expectations, indulging in too much undigested ideology, seeking to maximize administrative convenience instead of service, or

where there is a lack of testing of assumptions. Trustees provide an important 'challenge function'. Trustees are also expected to make sure there is value for money and that there is a common sense set of checks and balances at the highest level on behalf of citizens.

Trustees are also prime advocates before the Province and in other arena as it affects their school board and others as popularly elected representatives of citizens on education.

**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?**

It's sometimes impenetrable. Both because of sheer complexity and volume of considerations which masks key considerations or bewilders or often because staff quasi decisions have already been made, often unbeknownst to Trustees as well. See my comments on consultation made elsewhere in this connection. More informal dialogue is required to bring stakeholders up to speed ahead of decisions. The 'black box' which is DEC (Dir's Exec Cmtee) needs to open up and engage in dialogue with Trustees and stakeholders more and reports and recommendations from staff should contain more than one option more often.

Trustees should publicly explain more why they are voting they way they are voting so that people know.

In terms of accountability we can do a lot better. We need to get way beyond harping on District-wide readin' ad writin' and 'rithmetic accountability

measures. We need to account for and make it easier to be held to account for schools which chronically lag in these measures and in dropout rates. We also need to develop new measures which report our progress on equity gaps: How much are we improving or not year over year for this spec ed exceptionalism as opposed to that one? How well are we doing on schools with a demographic in poverty? We seem as a Board almost to be afraid of looking at these equity questions and reporting out on them. I have been pushing for this and again make real progress in this area a priority for the next four years. However, going beyond traditional measures of success, how are our parent satisfaction rates doing? How is student mental health doing? How is bullying doing? How are we doing in the arts or in phys ed? In my view, we need to develop our own comprehensive report card on a variety of measures to present to our public. We would be a model for the Province.

**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?**

Input of parents and communities

**Please explain.**

Again, the whole point of having a popularly elected Board of Trustees is to ensure community oversight and control in the final analysis. Otherwise, you could have some insider's appointed industry Board of some sort. People don't want that when it comes to the education and care of their children and of the citizens of tomorrow and this was reconfirmed as a result of a recent Provincial review of the role of School Board's and Trustees which upheld this role.

It is precisely the point of the Trustee to ensure that the views, concerns, ideas and advice of parents and communities are brought to bear in a powerful way, and not simply an advisory way, at the highest levels in a School Board. That decisions are in the end Board decisions and not District staff decisions gives real heft and importance to community views which otherwise could be shrugged off or de facto discounted by an education bureaucracy otherwise.

That noted, Trustees play a crucial role ensuring key information flows both ways. Trustees are expected by their constituents to digest all of the information available, understand how processes work and to bring considerations back to them. In general parents and communities do not have the time for that – that is one reason they select Trustees to do that work on their behalf. The Trustee then can play a useful role in sympathetically interpreting staff-generated information to the public and public-generated information to staff.

**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**

I not infrequently criticize these meetings and query them in camera. I have had some successes. A recent property disposition matter was rewritten for instance and then re-presented as a public document at a later meeting.

There is very little in my view which should be in camera. It is far too convenient for too many staff and too many Trustees to discuss sensitive matters in camera when they have no legal right (the legal right to do so is actually narrow and is meant to be). In this way they can escape criticism when people should simply bravely state their stand publicly.

Some Trustees want even more in camera meetings and believe that the only duty to the public seems to lie in making sure the actual decisions are made publicly. This is not transparent or accountable at all.

The excess of in camera meetings is a result in three factors which work together in my view. The first is laziness as it is simpler to write one report than two and sometimes a largely public matter will have a few strands of in camera material interlaced. So, rather than two meetings and two reports there is one. This practice should stop but to date there have not been the Trustee votes to try. The second factor is the (false) argument that while the matter may be

largely public in nature the discussion around it 'could risk' straying into in camera matters and so the whole thing is best held in camera. This is clearly a corrupt argument but holds sway amongst many. Thirdly, there is sometimes in my view, the genuine desire to keep things away from the eyes of the public and some Trustees and staff longingly note that some other Boards do this or that corporate Boards can do this and so forth.

There is very little which is properly in camera for me. If actually getting briefed on the likely sale price of a property or actually negotiating a contract or literally talking about an identifiable individual in an HR matter then maybe. we really need to reset this however.

This all noted, I am a big believer in dialogue and sometimes (OK, often) the atmosphere at public committee meetings can be stifling and turgid and uninviting to true dialogue and in large part our non-voting stakeholders at Committee really usually never get involved or express themselves. Sometimes we all need open briefings prior to a meeting. I instituted the practice we have had for three years now of open informal stakeholder and Trustee budget briefings before the budget gets formally discussed at Committee. There are ways to be both open and transparent and engaging and which do not necessarily have to involve the apparatus of a formal committee.

**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?**

I supported both retaining and strengthening secondary gifted centres which made sense and was a strong proponent of keeping alt ed. In both cases, and especially the latter as it was a pivotal matter with respect to the future of the

District, I published long public commentary on the matter in community papers and on-line.

In all cases of conflict such as this the arguments have to be listened to carefully and scrutinized and weighed. In the end it is about what the community wants (see my comments elsewhere here) however one has to assess how representative community voices coming forward are and also whether the community is or is not likely correct with respect to its prescription for its declared concerns as these matters can be complex. On the staff side I need to evaluate carefully why these recommendations are being made, both officially and (where this is not transparent) unofficially. I need to determine if doctrine is trumping common sense and need to examine the assumptions employed. In all things, my approach is to consult heavily and carefully examine the arguments on either side of a question with the ultimate goals of the community in mind. I need to be convinced that, whatever the decision I make, I can show persuasively how it maps to community goals and why.

Unfortunately, far too often, staff recommendations seem to me to be based on thin argument or evidence or indeed to be based on doctrine or group think. Too often crucial community arguments and questions go essentially unanswered. Not that I will always accept community arguments as well thought out or as acceptable and there are many arguments typically emanating from the community as the community is comprised of many individuals. For instance, one argument made for alt ed schools which was represented to me was that it was a great way of ensuring that all those parents who liked to be involved in their schools could get selected out and sorted together. I rejected that argument for reasons I won't go in to here. However, that argument was espoused by only a very small minority of correspondents and I did not take it as indicative of community will generally. The job of Trustee involves indeed trying to synthesize all of the individual arguments emanating from the community into some basic propositions and concerns and then seeing if these are being or will be fully and credibly addressed. If this does not seem likely then their arguments are effectively unanswered and any unanswered argument holds sway and must win the day.

I think that staff recommendations at odds with community will come from place of good will on their part. However, the assumptions employed and goals maximized (adhering to Ministry guidance, administrative efficiency, avoidance of conflict, other) may not be goals terribly important to the Ottawa community.

**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?**

Absolutely. Was one of the Trustees pushing hard to get reports released an extra week ahead of when they used to be. We used to be in the utterly Kafkaesque situation in which reports released on a Friday for debate the following week had to have delegations booked with Board Services the day before on the Thursday for that same Committee meeting the next week! After years of saying it could not be done staff have largely done this and this is one of the parting gifts of the outgoing Director who forced this.

More than this however, too often District staff workflow seems to be driven by a report deadline making everything time sensitive and making it so we are unable to properly consult. If we know that the Board will be discussing this or that in February then why not have the report done up for comment in November and out there rather than wait for late January or late March. Too often reports are delivered 'just in time' re legislative requirements or the demands of the school year and so forth.

Again, re. my views expressed elsewhere on the need to better sever very limited true in camera material from the often very comprehensive matrix of essentially public material they are sometimes embedded in. We can and should start to have more double reports and not reports which are all in camera or all in public.

**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?**

Absolutely again. However, I question the assumption that they are not allowed to do so. Who says? Maybe they feel this way or have been told that but I have no idea on what authority. They are also non-voting partners at all committees including budget but in fact rarely pipe up with their views. I have almost always found their views to be helpful and informing when they have engaged and fervently wish that they, and other non-voting stakeholders, did much more of that. Let's make out committees more about genuine dialogue than staged debate.

If staff with a personal interest in a program advocate for the service or program then that can be taken into account. We're not idiots. Same as for interested parents but this should diminish the respect we have for the information or views provided. What is important is that we get the information unfiltered through senior staff reports as to the way things really are on the ground. Otherwise Trustees can be led like sheep with no other sources of information as to what works or does not work. This may be threatening to senior staff who are the managers for these employees but if this is done by Federation reps on behalf of members, brings real information or considerations to light and is done in a respectful manner focused on the quality and usefulness of the information involved then we should get it. And, if senior staff have opposing or different views then we need to hear that also and why and then we can a Board make more fully informed decisions as to whether we want to support senior staff recommendations or not. I see our staff as knowledgeable partners in this enterprise as well. And, most have been or are parents of students in our system also!

I think we should be able to hear from individual staff delegations on policy matters also. Obviously, strictly personal HR matters need to be taken up through appropriate channels.

And I encourage parents and staff, and indeed all stakeholders, to collaborate more than they do.

## 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?**

Old (but important) ideas include strong advocacy with the Province including under the anticipated looming funding formula review and so do not discuss that important work here as per the nature of your question.

Old ideas also include cutting transport provisions and other spending outside the classroom if push comes to shove.

However, notwithstanding our underfunding, I am really concerned that we do not efficiently use the money we have now. Last election I was all about needed Provincial funding. It's still and atrocious and unfair situation in many respects (transport, ESL, salary gap, etc) I will not get in to, however we really need to pull up our own socks as well. Especially if we want to be credible before others when (correctly) pleading poverty.

One area I mean to push harder on is to push provincially and politically for one school system which promises not only more community schools in more neighbourhoods but economic efficiencies in transport and in many other ways.

We simply do not allocate our limited resources efficiently in many cases. I believe that a large cause of this is bureaucratic inertia but also has its roots in conflict avoidance. A few cases in point if we are indeed focused on District dropout rates and in improving things for students generally:

- I investigated why admin staff felt so stressed at Hopewell PS (recently at least the largest elem school) and found that the allocation formula routinely applied by our staff did not recognize that we had schools above 650 in size – simply did not recognize this and yet no one queried this ... I did and this got fixed to a degree
- We have funded and established turnaround team for schools pretty much only as the Province have funded them but have never tried hard to establish

them ourselves. It makes sense to me to target resources where they are most needed.

– We largely allocate resources out on a per capita student basis regardless of the actual needs profile at a school. When one has scarce resources one allocates those resources carefully with an eyedropper and we have not been doing this. For some reason we insist on the Province recognizing different Board's needs in their funding formula (and yes it is contentious between Boards) but do not hold ourselves to the same discipline ourselves with respect to our schools

– A beautiful example of this cropped up recently re full day learning. Staff came to us to ask that we fund another \$0.3m for it we are not funded for by the Province (going straight to next year's deficit) in order to open two more classrooms with staff at schools oversubscribed for the program. Under questioning (not in the staff report) it became apparent that our staffing for all classrooms is a uniform one teacher and one ECE regardless of class size and when the regulations only require both with classes above 16. We have classes at 13 and classes at 34 and we have been allocating them all the same number of staff! In my view, we did not need to spend this additional \$0.3m we do not at all have but should have rearranged staffing to be more equitable. And, BTW, this \$0.3m is on top of another \$0.3m staff were (insanely) authorized to spend on all-day learning beyond Ministry funding for this new program as they wanted to roll it out now to as many schools as possible with demand rather than wait for the phased 5-year unroll of Ministry funding and risk telling anyone 'no'. Altogether, this is a self-created \$0.6m problem on top of the genuine underfunding of the program which also exists re salary gap and so forth.

As well, we overspend some Ministry funding for political reasons. One example is transport spending which is a hot topic for some areas of the Board. Fundamentally however, if we overspend on transport then we cut into instruction spending or special student supports. It's about that simple. We have been unwilling to take the hard decisions necessary here. In fact our intransigence and political weakness has led us twice now (twice!) to spurn overtures from the coterminous Catholic Board to look at bell times efficiencies in various parts of the city. We love criticizing the Catholic Board for its partnering intransigence but in fact it has been we who have been intransigent in this area (ending by costing both Boards more than otherwise).

We also should be much more proactive at entering into local partnerships. Especially with the City but also the Y and community associations and others. If our schools are seen as real community hubs and an asset for all and as belonging to all then people will be willing to invest in them. Right now our schools largely do not factor in community association meetings or considerations and planning by various entities is siloed.

**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**

Two questions are implicit here really. One re satisfying FI demand and the other re ensuring strong and viable English programming. I do not see the solutions as conflicting necessarily though clearly the questions are intertwined.

First, I think that maximizing the amount of quality French we can reliably deliver to kids is important. I think that any second language is important as it is cognitively stimulating. If we were in Vancouver made it should be Mandarin and if this were 50 years ago maybe Latin. French is a local natural however given that so many romance languages are similar to French and can be easily learned if one learns French first, given that so much of English is based on French, given the Eastern Ontario and National Capital facts, given local demand. Whatever a local student's occupation in the end, whether destined for the federal public sector or engaged in the local service industry, speaking at least some French is sought after and a useful advantage. And, it is key to get any second language (or music) into kids before their minds turn to relative concrete in later years and it is much harder to pick up these things.

We need (and are in the process of) creating a standard french proficiency exit test in addition to a basic immersion certificate. This should help make English Core French more attractive as it will be easier now to fully recognize all skill levels attained by a sort of certificate and not just an immersion one.

We need to (and are) improving the quality of french taught on the english side to improve outcomes there and which should make english programs more attractive.

I think that it is crucial to ensure that spec ed resources are provided in immersion classes. This is not only fair to the students in those classes but also should bring to an end the rampant streaming out of Immersion into regular English classes of kids with challenges. This can lead to an increased incidence of behavioural and learning issues in English classes while Immersion classes are 'cleansed'. I don't think this is good for the system or good for any students. Rebalancing this is a chicken and egg issue with inadequate resources but must be pushed for over time. It won't happen overnight without concerted pushing and I mean to provide it.

By various means then I hope to make English programming more attractive to students and parents than it has been as an option. Maybe by importing some alt ed precepts as well (another discussion). Too many parents in the english stream tell me they feel like second class citizens. We need to change this dynamic. This should in time ease the stampede and pressure towards FI. We may in the interim or regardless may need to long term look at consolidating some english centres to ensure healthy student numbers and programming at a site. However, fundamentally, I support french instruction and in general the more of it the better (see above) ... as long as we don't get carried away with it to the detriment of other more important or more fundamental learning.

This question is, in my view, the most important long range question facing the Board this coming mandate. We need to consult on it thoroughly and very carefully in our Schools for the Future and other consultation exercises. Five years ago about 50% of Gr1 registrations were in EFI. Today it is above 60% and showing no signs of stopping. I am very concerned that we have no plan for how to handle this, that we may be reaching a tipping point for many parents and communities and I do *\*not\** want our english programs to come to be seen as ghettos. Grappling successfully with this question in fact I have identified as the number one District-wide issue for next mandate.

**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?**

Yes

**Please explain.**

I know it's a hot button topic so allow me to explain but in general terms I think it may strike the right balance. However, to be seen and if we need to tweak it some more then we can by all means.

First, I'm not quite sure I agree with the premise in that it restricts school choice very much. The old one had some very real restrictions after all and it seemed to be happily accepted. There were only two major changes of the policy to get it to its present form: one was that now receiving principals have to consult with sending ones first and the second key one was collapsing the long list of reasons for granting a transfer into just a couple and basically trusting in our school principals to sort out what makes sense for families and students more on a real life basis than an artificial one.

I supported the first change (requiring consultation with sending principal) as that is more or less what happens anyway. I voted against and disagreed with the proposed idea of requiring a double principal's sign-off on a transfer (as the local Catholic Board does and as our staff recommended) as too restrictive. Though I'm no big fan of unrestricted school shopping because one doesn't want to associate with other parents or families. However I do see some real value in families voting with their feet in choosing this school or that. We do not have and maybe cannot yet be trusted to have good procedures in place for critically examining what is actually going on at a school and why it is failing if we are not forced to by people abandoning the school. I wish that we did but I

don't believe that we do. From a system management point of view there are pros and cons to it all then in my view.

The second change was to take the laundry list of accepted transfer reasons (it never was open season) and make it a couple of broad ones and up to principal discretion. This makes sense to me a parents used to feel as if they had to invent this reason or that which appeared on the list of reasons. To me, if a student is not thriving at a school we need to find out why and there needs to be some dialogue about this. I want people to give their local school a decent chance. Maybe it is an easy fix. However, the system is very far from perfect and it can be quite unresponsive and parents do need to be able to get to another school if that makes sense for them.

This is better for community building but also for system management and hopefully we will not have some school populations spiraling out of control and some spiraling into the dust in a constant boom and bust as schools acquire this or that evanescent reputation (often undeservedly at either end of the spectrum). I don't want to halt this process – I see a genuine canary in the coal mine positive aspect to it – but I have wanted to slow it. I want every school to be a great school that we would all be proud to send out kids to being able to offer quality programs at a school needs several elements including student numbers.

An increased onus is placed on the Board however to ensure that great climate and great education exists in each of our schools. Now more than before and also for reasons embedded in recent Provincial reg changes in my view. This is why I support a parent satisfaction survey and also want to hold staff and ourselves accountable for poorly performing schools or schools as a source of a larger than average number of transfer requests.

Now, parents are more encouraged to have a dialogue with school admins, to tour a school, to give things a chance. If a parent remains concerned then they can apply for a transfer still under compassionate grounds or for this reasons or that – now for their real reasons and not made up ones corresponding to artificial list of valid reasons: unchecked bullying, conflict with school admin, unchallenging class work, other. As has always been the case, if the principal denies the transfer and so does the local superintendent of schools then an appeal can be made to Trustees. Has always been the case.

This year is the first full year of transfer appeals under the new transfer policy. There has been only one transfer appeal getting into or out of any school in Zone 9 this year meaning its down and not up. The transfer appeals across the system seem to be clustered around 2- 3 specific schools. This is a rich matter for investigation and very useful. What is going on here?! Does something need to be fixed wither by way of an outlier principal or special situation at a school. What gives? We can correct these instances. Of all of the transfer appeals coming to the Board this year about 1 /2 have been granted by Trustees.

In time, I fully expect a reasonable balance will be reached. So far, just based on appeals I have had to deal with, our principals and senior staff are dealing effectively and compassionately with concerns and are addressing them. I have also had virtually no parent e-mail traffic on this issue this school year. Until and unless advised otherwise by the community I must assume, for my communities, that the policy rebalancing is actually working out decently well. And, as noted, if we need to rebalance further as it's not really working out then let's by all means look at that.

I should not also that in part I saw retaining the alt ed elementary program as a bit of an antidote to possibly overzealous transfer restrictions (though this was far from the only reason for retention in my view). It is another program which parents can declare for and then get bussing to if their school is not recognizing the unique individual needs of the child and the system is failing them.

So, I see the current transfer policy as a middle of road compromise sort of policy. It is not at all my intent to 'imprison' students or families at schools which simply do not work for them. I want the system to be more flexible than that for a bunch of reasons. My hope has been however that that will not be the case and that our staff can by and large be trusted to be flexible and to sensitively engage with real concerns. So, checks and balances and what I believe to be a moderate position on the matter.

**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?**

Open more classes! The staff argument has been in the main that demand for these classes is disappearing and that there are no waiting lists or they are going down. My belief is that this is not the case and indeed that the way the information has been presented to Trustees is skewed to support a hyper-integrationist doctrine. I resist this and have become quite impatient with respect to it. I do not think we should cut more specialty classes and believe that we should add more as necessary. These are by and large our most vulnerable students. I think that we should not make these students travel for extra hours each week to top off a class in some other part of the city either. Like MFI or any other program there should be area designated centres and if too many register for it who qualify then we need to put on another class even if not full just like for any other program. Why should our most vulnerable with high needs be shipped all over and yet we do not require this of those registering for a mere program want? Makes no sense to me. We also need to reinstate Trustee oversight of specialized classes location – the removal of this oversight was amongst the largest errors of the Board this past mandate in my view. And, in some cases, our famed 'tiered support' model is in tatters with some exceptionalities some grade levels with no specialized classes at all and so no tiers.

By stating my support for specialized classes I do not mean to suggest that that is the only way to go. Lots do not need them and many choose not to have them even if eligible for them and convenient to access. Maintaining a robust specialized classes option and network is important however. Over-reliance on universal teaching methods or regular class teacher training smacks to me more of ideology than it does anything else and indeed no stats or research literature promoting this direction has ever been provided to me. Lots of pro-integrationist mantra has been re socialization but that is about it. One of the big pushes I have had for the last two years and mean to continue is to actually get some sort of objective analysis in place as to spec ed needs student

outcomes by exceptionality. Then maybe finally we can say something controlling for condition severity, socioeconomics, congregated setting and other factors. This is one reason (though there are others) why I resist deprecating IPRC or even now IEP. Like getting rid of the ling form census, if we do not identify students and study them we will have no real idea of how well we are or are not serving them beyond District wide averages or based on anecdote.

This is a large topic and which I simply do not have the time to go into here.

**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?**

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**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?**

I'm not convinced yet that the numbers of these schools should be expanded over all given the fragile nature of our regular english program (alt ed schools are currentkly all english). I could see redistributing the centres we have to ensure greater equity of access geographically. I could even see decisively transforming all English program schools into genuine alt ed schools but I m very far from convinced that we are up to doing that task authentically at this point and would be dubious about such a proposal. Both are long range options really.

In the interim, the best solution is to ensure bussing from former CBE schools. Right now this is (bizarrely) the only program we have for which we do not have equitable access. We bus from all over for IB and Canterbury as well to FI programs and specialized spec ed classes but not this program. This is a quick fix interim option while we examine others and is absolutely needed. I have a motion coming forward soon at Committee from last school year calling for exactly this.

If demand for alt ed elsewhere than inside the Greenbelt were demonstrated I'd be open to considering another school elsewhere.

However, my primary interest is in (a) exporting the many benefits of alt ed to other non alt ed schools and (b) looking at a full range of options within alt ed including Immersion alt ed and HS alt ed.

**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.**

By this question I am assuming you don't necessarily mean something local or done on behalf of our Board or a motion (I have had many).

I'm involved active in the One School Systems Network (OSSN) as a Trustee and represent our Board on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Public Schools Board's Association (OPSBA).

One I'm proud of was being the co-author for the paper on governance submitted to the government on behalf of progressive Trustees across Ontario who are organized under the banner of ONT (Ontario Network of Trustees). Through until year the government was looking hard at recommendations to castrate Trustees, make them unable to criticize their Boards or the Province, make them more rubber stampers of staff and Ministry directions, elevate them more to less troublesome ethereal boards not as responsive to constituents. The paper was actually written year before last but the debate continued vigorously through into this year and is indeed still unfolding: new rules may be coming to make Audit Committees sit in judgement on Trustee behaviour, etc.

This coming school year strong advocacy will be required by all Trustees around the promised review of the Provincial Funding Formula.

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

Public education is meant to equip students with the skills and the knowledge they will need later in life to be authentically self-optimized, functional and

happy. Much more than this however, it is a machine to create greater social equity (part of the reason for having it going back to the 19thc in Ontario and Ryerson's vision for it when integrating the Irish was a concern!). And it should turn out critically thinking citizens who will hold themselves and their governments to account.

There is naturally strong societal interest then in our schools and what goes on in them and which is why it is appropriate that all can vote for Trustee and not just parents and indeed why it should be important to all.

Schools and education do not exist in a vacuum however but rather are embedded naturally in our communities and serves them. Parents are morally and legally obliged to care for their dependent children and making sure that a bureaucracy is going to do it properly for them is a huge consideration. School buildings are public assets when there are too few of them generally and should be treated as natural hubs of the community and as pillars which help to support community health and community building.

Public schools and what goes on in them belongs to us all and is everyone's business. They should not be seen as separate or as a siloed concern remote from the community by community associations and should be seen as best serving communities in a variety of ways by school boards and others.

I think that schools should only rarely be closed and that only when there is truly compelling argument. Other option should be pursued first and in part because of their effect on the community (which is precisely why closures are understandably so passionate a topic). If a school is disposed of then a public use should be found for it as we not making more public facilities and resources but seemingly only ever fewer of them over all.

I think that schools can be great partners in service delivery to neighbourhoods and to families including health services delivery, recreational services delivery, communal meeting space, community identity formation, daycare and before and after care delivery and in many other ways.