

Vernon Teachers' Association VOICES

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Now, more than ever in these times of tough choices, it's important to stand up and make your voice heard. **CAST YOUR BALLOT!!**

Speaking for Teachers in the North Okanagan



Reflections.....

Greetings colleagues,

School Board Trustees Elections have rolled around again and the time has come for residents to make choices about the management of our School District. If we consider that the Term of a Trustee is 4 years, that means that parents have the opportunity to choose the School Board ONLY 3 times in their child's education.

Trustees matter. Sure, they often seem to have their hands tied behind their backs by the provincial government's funding or policy decisions... but they still make a significant difference in the lives of teachers, students and parents. The vast majority of trustees locally or across the province get into the position because they want to have a positive influence on education in their communities. Our trustees are responsible for designing or changing the policies that guide the operations of the Board and the District. Trustees can implement policies that include, or exclude, the ability for parents and employees to have opportunities for genuine consultation. The decisions that trustees make month by month can have a profound effect on what it is like to do our jobs. Resources are limited so where should they be focused? Trustees decide. Policy on fieldtrips needs to be established to ensure safety and to support educational opportunity, so how does this happen? Trustees decide. Educational initiatives or local courses need to be put in place or put on the shelf, so how do we figure it out? Trustees decide.

Many of the candidates have made the time to individually meet with the VTA, to seek our perspectives regarding current issues and ways to make progress. We have made clear that our top priorities are:

- improvement to supports for teachers, and asking teachers what they need
- improvement to supports for special needs students, ensuring that budgets reflect students and instruction as a first priority
- continued analysis and progress on climate and culture in SD22
- improved transparency in Board decisions, including the creation of Board committees where teachers can be heard
- improved budget consultation processes, which are done early enough to have impact
- a commitment to trustee engagement in local and provincial bargaining processes, ensuring that there is a positive tone maintained at tables

Please read the following candidates responses with the lens on where they sit on these important issues, as well as the issues that are important to your vision for education at your school and in your community.

On **October 20**, please make it your priority to vote.

In Solidarity,

Lisa

BC's PRO REP REFERENDUM

Coming soon! Expect your ballot by post. VOTE by mail-in ballot

between October 22 and November 30, 2018

Question 1

Which system should British Columbia use for provincial elections?

Vote for only one

- The current First Past the Post voting system
- A proportional representation voting system

Question 2

If British Columbia adopts a proportional representation system, which of the following voting systems do you prefer?

RANK in order of preference. You may choose to support one, two, or all three systems.

- Dual Member Proportional **DMP**
- Mixed Member Proportional **MMP**
- Rural-Urban Proportional **RUP**

You can answer both questions or just one. Your ballot will still be counted if you answer one question only.

Your 3 PRO REP System Choices

DMP • Dual Member Proportional. Two near ridings merge to become one, 2-member riding. Voters pick a pair of candidates. The 1st seats in a district are won by the 1st candidate of the party receiving the most votes, while the 2nd seat is allocated by province-wide voting results. The geographically larger, rural ridings in BC would remain single-member, as they are now.

MMP • Mixed Member Proportional. Voters elect a team of 2 MLA's, one is a local MLA, as they do now, but in slightly larger ridings; plus, a few regional MLAs to make results proportional. Of MLAs, 60% would be local, 40% would be regional. Used in Germany, Scotland, Wales and New Zealand.

RUP • Rural-Urban Proportional. Ridings elect MLAs in a way that best fits their geography. In Urban areas, merged ridings elect a team of MLAs with a ranked ballot. In Rural areas, voters elect a local MLA, plus a team of regional MLAs, as in Mixed Member. Variations of this system are used in Scandinavian countries.

Each system retains MLA accountability to a specific area. It will give more power, NOT less to rural and remote areas. When PR passes, there will be another referendum, 2 elections from now, to keep or toss PR. All three systems have a 5% threshold for any party to gain a proportionally allocated seat.

GIVE DEMOCRACY SOME LOVE♥ SAY YES to PR

Candidates were given the following questions to answer for this Special Elections Edition of VOICES. The answers have not been edited in any way. The candidates' answers are listed in this order:

Vernon (4 to be elected)						Lumby (2 to be elected)	
Ron Burton	RB	Mark Olsen	MO	Mark Rivette	MR	Sheri Minard	SM
Paula Harned	PH	Robert Lee (acclaimed for Coldstream)	RL	Nicole Makohoniuk	NM	Gen Acton	GA
Christie Tujik	CT	Jenn Comazzetto	JC	Tom Williamson	TW		

Mollie Bono (Vernon) no response; Lori Mindnich (Lumby) no response

Vernon Candidate Responses

1. What experience do you have that you consider relevant to the role of school trustee, particularly in the areas of communication and advocacy?

RB: I have been a School Trustee for the Burnaby School District for the past 31 years. I believe that the skills I have acquired during these past years working collaboratively with the partner groups are transferable to working with the Vernon School District;

The Burnaby school board maintained both formal and informal communications and an excellent relationship with the Burnaby Teachers Association, CUPE and DPAC. We were very successful in addressing issues as they arose rather than allowing them to drag on.

We advocated and collaborated on a number of issues including;

- Trying to force the Provincial Government to recognize and honour the negotiated collective agreement regarding class size and composition.
- Lobbying the Federal Government to continue funding SWISS workers.
- Lobbying for teachers right to free collective bargaining;
- Lobbying for increased hours and professional development for SEAs.
- We set up meetings with MLAs, MPs and Council Representatives to keep them apprised of ongoing issues in the District.


I have the ability to build consensus with various groups for ongoing projects, including working with all Political parties for the benefit of teachers and students. We worked together to;

- Build Burnaby South High School to projected enrolment for the first time in the Province.
- Build a Theater at Burnaby South.
- Facilitate Day Care options for families.
- Build joint facilities with the city.
- Relocate Jericho Residential School for the deaf to Burnaby South ending a painful history for the students with hearing impairments.
- Addressed major gender inequities in leadership positions in Burnaby.

PH: As a life learner, all my experiences have been relevant to my role as school trustee. Serving as a SD22 Trustee from 2008-2011 gave me a deep appreciation of the stakeholders' roles. Understanding that the Superintendent is the employee of the board and trustees are employees of the public is tantamount to fuelling the need and effectivity of the advocacy work school trustees must do.

Serving as PAC Chair for the Vernon Community School, member of the Seaton Athletic Committee and Vice President of SKY Volleyball Club has required advocacy in a number of ways; on behalf of the members I was serving at the table and in securing suitable sites, funding and staffing.

Strong communication and advocacy require a deep understanding of the issues. As a mother and business owner my communication skills have been strengthened greatly. These roles require guiding teams of people to success by creating



a positive inclusive culture and communicating clear directions. My strong ability to use email, text, telephone, in person, and social media has facilitated my success in this role.
Quite simply, all of my experiences have prepared me for this role and will continue to make me better at it everyday.

CT: My relevant experience as it pertains to the role of school trustee is as follows. I attended college for Business Administration for Accounting. I worked 10 years with two different financial institutions. In those 10 years I was in many different roles including Audits, Business Accounts, and Balancing of funds.

In the past 3 years, I have been involved with PAC, DPAC and volunteer in my children's classrooms and for school events. Being part of PAC and DPAC is a very rewarding.

I have been able to make presentations to the school board on 2 different topics. The first was asking for a 5th FI K class for the school years of 2017/2018, which was granted. (My child was not on the wait list). I saw a need and fought for it.

Second, was the need of a crossing guard on 27th street and 35 avenue at Beairsto, which too was granted for this current school year. (My kids were taking the bus). I believe everyone should be able to get to school safely. Sarah (from PAC) and I spent about 5 months working on the 30 page proposal. We collected data, did research, collaborated with others and developed a survey to get all the information needed to back our proposal.

MO: I have over 30 years of working experience in the Vernon school District and through this experience I have gained a broad understanding of the issues that are faced by all the partners in education including Administration, First Nations, teachers, support staff, parents and students

I served as President of the CUPE support staff for a time and as such I sat on many district committees including the Student Nutrition Policy Committee; Joint District Occupational Health and Safety Committee; and the Hiring Committee for District senior staff, as well as attending DPAC meetings. I was also the Vice-chair of the K-12 Presidents council representing 27,000 school employees.

Through all of these collaborative activities I have shown a willingness to work with and encourage open communication with those who share a passion for providing a high level of service for our students.


My advocacy in the education system has included advocating for clean and safe schools to improve working and learning conditions for employees and students. I also advocated, both at the Provincial level and the local level for increased support for special needs children, with the result of successfully increasing daily support time for these students.

I believe my experience of working with all partner groups and problem-solving the topics presented, display's my ability to work together for the betterment of our district and our students. I value the input and opinions of all groups as it helps us all to come to a better understanding of various perspectives. Coming together and approaching issues in a respectful, transparent manner is the first step to better communication.

RL: I am honoured that constituents from Coldstream/Lavington have acclaimed me to the trustee position for this upcoming term and I value the trust that has been placed in me to continue my work as a trustee for all of greater Vernon to provide the best education for our children. I believe during my first term that I have demonstrated good communication skills in a variety of communication formats and obviously, I believe good communication is something that is very important in my role as a trustee. In terms of advocacy, I believe it is my responsibility to speak up and advocate when it is required and there are instances when I have done that for parents, students and schools. At this time, I will not mention specific advocacy situations that I have been involved in but rest assured that if the situation warrants my advocacy - I have done so. Obviously, I believe it is extremely important as a trustee to communicate clearly and consistently in a variety of formats and to advocate in situations as required as it is part of our responsibility as a trustee for our community. I have been fortunate in my former job as a school principal, as that has provided me with a valuable educational background that many within our general community would not have. Combined with my first term as a school trustee, I now feel that I am in a position to bring my experiences in both positions to help me become a member of the School Board that will continue to provide a good educational program for all our children.

JC: I am a successful manager and teacher and have repeatedly lead very successful teams. Through collaboration we routinely worked to improve ourselves, the knowledge we had, the way we communicated with others and respect for each other. I work well to bring this attitude of empowerment and understanding to groups as well as individuals. My results have been repeatable and generate leaders who can teach others to be leaders.

I have an extensive amount of leadership training both in management and sales. Both really are different forms of effective communication. I believe if you understand the "why" something matters, it changes "how" you work at it and perceive it. It also brings greater perspective of "when" something needs to change and both "who" and "what" need to change.



MR: My work background begins during my teens at Safeway and later, following post-secondary education in 1984 a Medical Laboratory Technologist. By 1986 I became one of the first volunteers for the 1988 Olympic Winter Games. In my role as Volunteer Coordinator I presented to thousands of prospective volunteers. My passion was highlighted in a local paper feature article.

During the Olympics I moved into a more specific role as the Coordinator of Medical Services Volunteers. This was a stepping-stone to my acceptance and completion of my Masters in Health Services Administration. A program focused on the ethical, operational, policy, and financial aspects of a Public Sector system. I worked with the University Task Force on Equality and Respect on Campus and was a member of the Mission Statement and Accreditation Committees for the MHSA program. I continue to volunteer for the Alumni Association including the Selection Committee for Annual Student and Alumni Awards. As my career in Public Sector advanced I took on the role of a Senior Accountant at a major hospital. I gained experience in building business cases for a number of new programs including an AIDS Clinic and the In-Vitro Fertilization Clinic. Eventually I took on the role as the Budget Officer. I was responsible a \$200M Tertiary Acute Care Centre Budget impacting over 4000 employees. I also contributed to the 1995 Provincial Funding Formula with key ideas and data sets to support regionalization.

By 2001, after having project managed a \$50M systems consolidation project supporting regionalization, I moved to Private Sector to provide leadership in the creation of a new payroll services company and by 2010 became the President of that payroll services company. I was highly engaged with the executive level teams of our key clients including the Province of British Columbia, the Vancouver Board of Education, the Calgary Board of Education, Hamilton Health Sciences, the Royal Victoria Hospital and Alberta Health Services. In that role I was responsible to ensure that over 200,000 public sector employees in Canada received accurate and timely pay.

To deliver complex pay a team of highly skilled professionals is required. To enhance their success a work environment of engagement, ongoing development, and a culture of recognition is needed. Through my passion for communications and employee engagement this team moved from an engagement score of sub 40% to an awarded World Class score of 86% during my tenure. By 2017 I was semi-retired and had permanently moved to the Vernon District. I now look to new challenges as a School Board Trustee to utilize my work and volunteer experiences and give back to my community.

NM: The experience I have that is relevant to school trustee stems from 12 years of various roles of parent involvement that culminated in my being elected president of British Columbia Confederation of Parent Advisory Council (BCCPAC), where I was trained in advocacy, media communication, and working as a team.

The training that I bring to the role of trustee are as follows:

- Associates certification in Not for Profit Management,
- Foundations of Collaborative Conflict Resolution: Workplace Focus
- Early Childhood Education

Locally, I have stepped up and advocated for parents, youth and colleges in my various positions at Teen Junction Youth Centre, as an Early Childhood Educator, and DPAC President.

I am known for doing my homework and meeting with individuals and groups to learn as much as I can as I advocate for various issues, concerns, or individuals.


TW: I have extensive experience garnered over 40 years with School District #22 as an educator and District Career coordinator. I developed the ground work for the creation of a comprehensive and accountable Career Education Program within our district. I have developed programs with public/student/staff/administration/School Board input. I have been a guest speaker at PAC meetings, Vernon Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, other School Districts, as well as Community Futures, promoting innovative learning strategies. I have also served on the ITA Employer Advisory Committee, placed apprenticeship candidates, and served on the CES, and ITA, at the provincial level. Also, I have actively participated within the community through coaching Vernon Minor Hockey. I formed a novice hockey league for marginalized players, developed an exclusive First Nations Video apprenticeship, and was founder of the Vernon Summer Hockey School.

2. What do you believe to be the pressing issues within our School District?

RB: Since I have only been in Vernon since June of 2017 I have not yet developed an intimate knowledge of local issues the Vernon School district is facing, but plan to work with partner groups to learn about local issues. However, I am fully aware of Provincial issues facing school districts as a whole and I am sure the Vernon School district is also dealing with these pressing issues.

- Recruitment and retention of Teachers, SEAs and senior administrative staff.
- General underfunding of Public Education.
- Resources to deal with class size and composition.
- Maintaining programs such as the arts and libraries;
- Ongoing Pro D for the new curricula.

PH: One of the most pressing issues facing the district is a culture of feeling inconsequential and unheard. The role of the board of education is to employ the superintendent of schools and create a culture in response to the wishes of the public. The Board of Education is a collection of people from across the community who come together to support the vision of what education means to the public. The incoming



Board of Education has the opportunity to create an environment that fosters mutual cooperation, emotional support and personal growth as we all work together to achieve what we could not dream of accomplishing alone.

Other pressing issues include ensuring fiscal responsibilities are being met by all members of the learning community, facilities need to be reviewed, provincial teacher shortages, and the upcoming contract negotiations, just to name a few. All of which can be successfully addressed provided there is a positive, inclusive, collaborative culture in which to address them.

CT: What I believe to be pressing issues within our school district are bussing/transportation, lack of EA's and the continued space issues at the schools (this would include the future of FI in our district).

I don't necessarily disagree with charging for bussing, but I disagree with the amount and process in which the decision was made. This is why my children do not take the bus any more. The district has gone from 1750 courtesy riders to 823, which has lead to 2-3 less bus routes and a couple CUPE jobs. At some schools including Beairsto traffic congestion has become a safety concern in the parking lots and surrounding areas. Let's also not forget the environment impact this has.

With regards to EA's, I believe we need more in our schools. I don't know all the in's and out's in this area. From what I can see, the beginning of the school year is hard on them. Not knowing what school you will be at or your hours until the middle of Sept. I am hoping to work with all groups to find a better way to do this process, retain EA's and promote EA's to come to our district.

MO: One issue that faces all districts is the funding formula provided by the Provincial government. There needs to be two separate streams of funding allocation; one for education services and one for asset and infrastructure management. This would better facilitate providing the required resources to the classroom.

- The current system allocates a per student basic amount. Aside from the general population of students this allotment also supports students with special needs that are not covered by the current categories receiving additional targeted funding. Support for students with learning disabilities, mild intellectual disabilities, moderate behavioural issues, and gifted students come from the basic per student allotment. This also means services like Learning Assistance and Speech and Language Pathology must also be funded from this source.

- The basic per student allocation must also cover the costs of District support services.

- There are some targeted grants that address issues like unique geographical locations and more complex special needs support but they are not extensive, specific, or comprehensive enough.

Unfortunately, the need to maintain district assets are not synchronized to fluctuate with student enrollment and things such as building sanitation and maintenance suffer during reduced enrollment or increased cost pressures possibly placing our children and employees in additional health and safety risks.

The funding formula needs to address additional funding for class size and composition. Students with moderate behavioural issues can be potentially disruptive to the whole class and if an Education Assistant's time is taken to assist those students it reduces the support for the students they are to be working with.

RL: Our School District faces a number of issues: an ongoing challenge is always our budget. Although we have a budget of approximately \$100M, it is simply not

sufficient to always meet our educational needs - not when we have over 8500 students spread across 19 schools and all the infrastructure and support which must be provided to be a good educational system. At the moment, we are struggling to deal with our transportation system. Last year, we supported our bussing with

approximately \$1.5 M out of our general funds...General funds which could have been used for directly helping your children in the classroom. We need to come up with a good long term solution in the near future as we cannot continue to subsidize transportation with educational funds.

I believe it is also important for us to build upon and expand different areas of our programs so that our School District can generate income for ourselves and not be dependent upon Victoria to support a 100% of our funding. One example is our International Program. Our International Program was able to generate approximately \$500K surplus which can be used by our District. This is an example where we were able to provide a great educational opportunity and also generate a surplus which may now be used for our entire School District without depending on our government. We need to be creative and seek more ways to provide different learning opportunities for our children and also generate income for us so we can be more self sufficient. We have a staff of over 1000 people. I believe there are many bright and creative people within our staff. With this many people, I have no doubts that we can generate good ideas which can be used to save money or provide new and creative ways for our students to learn and also generate a profit which can benefit our entire School District and lessen our dependency on Victoria.

JC: Improved transparency. The public needs to know what is happening and why these decisions are being made. If people don't know about budget issues, they won't understand the bussing cutbacks. If people don't know about teacher burnout, they won't understand why their children are not receiving enough support in the classroom. The more we can bring the discussions to the open, the better we can work together. Admittedly, it's hard to be vulnerable and have my decisions questioned, but when we have a broader sense of the context in which these choices are being made, then we have a better opportunity for real consultative feedback and improved suggestions for resolution.

MR: The most important issue is the implementation of the visionary work completed by the existing board in collaboration with the community and key stakeholders called “Vision 2022”. To achieve success by 2022 we need to immediately begin to define and coordinate implementation activities, schedule expected milestones, monitor the achievements and update the plan as required.

A subset of the most important goals to achieve Vision 2022 include:

- Ensuring resources are available to meet the needs of each student through strong transparent budget management and advocating for appropriate funding and contributing to any new provincial funding formula developments.
- Engaging District employees through their own personal development plans, enhancing their skill and knowledge while working in a stable and consistent environment including a fair and equitable process in negotiating collective bargaining agreements.
- Communicating in ways where information is effectively shared between the various stakeholder groups and individuals including parents and students.
- Developing deeper ways to address the acceptance and respect for all students of the public education system.

The Vision 2022 is a complex, multi-faceted and ambitious plan. While such plans can make great change they do not proceed without conviction, commitment and strong leadership. These are strengths and abilities I bring to the Trustee role. I have significant experience in large public sector organizations leading massive change and successfully meeting the stated outcomes. I will be focused on the implementation of Vision 2022, its Mission, its Guiding Principles and its Goals.

NM: Fiscal responsibility and collaboration

SD# 22 has a Budget of approximately \$110,000,000.00 yet many of the board members have little training. We need to have more training opportunities for those trustees who may need a little extra support, to be brought up to speed.

As a Trustee I will need to look at the Watson Report and do the necessary changes to have a working school district with trustees that have the skills and abilities to move our district forward.

As DPAC President, I witnessed many years where consultation of the partner groups was either an after thought or something they felt they had to do, this year was no exception. DPAC, teachers, administration, and CUPE get notice in March or April for budget consultation for a budget that gets approved at the end of the month. How can we have a meaningful, inclusive discussion in that short time frame? To do this we would need to do a policy change.

Our policies are on the right track but not enough! I want to really look at all our policies to make sure they are inclusive of all our students, families, and partner groups so we are supporting our students. We need to take down barriers that keep us from communicating and collaboration.

TM: Some pressing issues currently would most certainly be the introduction of the new Provincial Curriculums – namely, achieving parental understanding and support of such. Class sizes, professional staff development and integrating curriculum to career transition are important issues as well. Logistically, the ongoing transportation issues, portable classroom space, school boundary restructuring and efficient use of existing School District facilities are also ongoing challenges.

3. What are your top priorities in terms of allocating educational funds our district receives?

RB: Student programs and teachers’ well being are the priority.

- Funding for ongoing programs, and resources to allow teachers and CUPE workers to continue to effectively deliver education to students.
- Funding for Professional development for teachers and E.A.s.
- Programs that meet the needs of students with special needs.


PH: As school trustees it is our fiduciary responsibility to ensure all spending is done with an innate sense of appropriate fiscal management. It is critical that the culture adapted in the board room has an opportunity to spread throughout the entire learning community. Vision 2022, the strategic plan recently created, has been adopted as the driving mechanism for the coming years. We need to ensure all decisions, including funding decisions, are in response to the principles and strategic goals set forth in this document.

All incoming funding needs to remain in its specified area. Educational dollars must fund educational opportunities, as do special education, aboriginal education, English language learning, and adult education dollars. Trustees need to be able to ask the hard questions to ensure these funding streams are being utilized to deliver adequate levels of services to students for which they were intended.

My top priority in terms of allocation of funds is to make sure that we are supporting students and staff by ensuring that they are experiencing a safe, healthy, respectful, and supportive learning environment. If all spending can answer to that one end goal, then we will be surprised by how effective the spending can be.

CT: I find this question to be a tough one. I am not sure what is meant by educational funds and the different programs available. So, I will answer as to what I believe them to be.

I would like to see funds go into more literacy programs similar to the one to one reading (however, it would be for children who are further behind in reading).



I would like to see more resources to parents and teachers like SOGI 123 and Story of our Ways to name a couple. I look forward to learning about the various programs offered in the district and being part of the review and selection process in the future. I know this district has done a great job in these areas, but we can always go one step further.

MO: Determining the allocation of funding is one of the most important duties a Trustee will perform. Those decisions affect not only the students and their scholastic future, but also the employees of the school district. I have stated I believe the funding formula needs to be revamped to take into consideration education services and infrastructure and district support services separately. In the current format we run the risk of pitting groups with differing interests against each other and I would continue to advocate for addressing the current formula.

Some funding directives are predetermined by the Ministry of Education but my top priorities should harmonize with everyone involved in the system and that is ensuring we provide the resources and support required for the success of every student in the Vernon school district. This process requires meaningful consultation and transparent decision making with a clear attempt to reach consensus. We may not be able to achieve this but we should make every effort to try.

RL: My top priority in terms of allocating educational funding in our district is to maximize teaching and support personnel into our classrooms because the classroom is the heart of where all the action is. Nice buildings and good programs are all necessary but it is in the classroom where the rubber meets the road. The School Act of British Columbia mandates trustees to - 'improve student learning and achievement.' As noted above in question #2 - our challenge is to allocate a budget which really is insufficient for all our educational needs therefore when we are faced with pressures all around and not enough financial resources to service everything it becomes very important how we prioritize and allocate our budget. To paint a word picture: allocating funds is similar to throwing a pebble into the pond. The very first splash and ripple is the most important. In my opinion, that is the classroom with the teacher, support staff and students. That is the first ripple. The second ripple is the school where all the classrooms are housed and all the remaining staff that goes into making the school as educationally efficient as it can be. After that, funds are allocated according to the order of the ripples. This is where the committee I've mentioned in #4 below would serve a useful purpose.

JC: Our children's learning has to be foremost. They need an environment where learning is possible and not stressful. Our education professionals need to have the proper tools for a healthy environment, both mentally and physically. We need a healthy balance of adults and students in each classroom. Our teachers are our largest investment and we need to provide them the upgrading, the time and the energy to be able to maintain a healthy lifestyle which our students will be watching and modeling. My biggest questions will be "will it help the students learn?" "how many will benefit from this?" and "are there other, more cost effective ways that this can be effectively taught?"

MR: My priorities are defined in the Vision 2022 document. What is important is finding the right balance for short-term allocation of resources for immediate impactful priorities balanced to those that are of longer-term impact. Things on the shorter-term scale include replacement of books, supplies and educational tools and equipment. On the longer-term scale we need to invest in the professional and non-professional team members to maintain and advance skill sets. As per all aspects of life the rapid change in the tech sector creates pervasive change everywhere including learning styles. All organizations need to understand this technology impact. Ignoring it is perilous as we may get to the point where instead of investing to evolve our existing organizations to adopt the impact of new technologies it may be easier to simply dissolve historical organizations and start anew.

In summary there are three key allocation priorities, the short-term impactful allocations, the longer-term developmental allocations and the view to the future allocations. Included in the view to the future is a component that is relatively unique to the educational sector - the land holdings and a strategy for managing those landholdings. One of my priorities as a trustee will be to quickly develop an understanding of the current land holdings, the projected growth areas in Vernon District and various data sets and census statistics from city planners with the goal of developing plans, ideas and options for managing both future land holdings and dealing with existing land holdings.

NM: "What is best for our students, teachers, support staff, and administration. How can we as a board allocate funds where there will be no job loss and all students and teachers will be supported."


My top priority is to make sure all students and staff feel supported and heard.

Teachers need the supports to help them with their jobs (the list from talking with the various teachers is varied and thorough), is there a way we can find these supports while keeping the bottom line that will be the challenge? If we need to make cuts, it needs to come from areas that don't negatively affect the students.

Currently, education funds are supplementing the cost of busing. I would be working towards ways that busing can be economical, without job loss, and be more equitable. I will look to the partners to help.

I will look at our Long-Term Facilities Report, Strategic Plan, and finally the overall needs of the district. I have lots of learning to do and I will need teachers, CUPE, Administration, and parents help to make it all work fairly.

I will work with the board and partner groups to find more creative and out of the box ways to keep students our number one priority.



TW: My top priority would be the development of a comprehensive and accountable Career Education program, as it is one of the Three pillars of Education. I would advocate introduction of 'creative learning activities' at the intermediate level, to help relate to future career choices. I would also like to see the support staff ratios in our schools improved and /or expanded.

4. What will you do to ensure that there is regular and meaningful consultation with all partner groups regarding the district budget?

RB: Hold meetings with all partner groups prior to the start of the budget process. Continue consultations with all groups throughout the building of the budget. Receive and provide feedback as the process moves along.

PH: My research and experience around the budget process never showed a clear process for the input to be consolidated and moved forward to influence the decisions of the board. It seems, what has been historically happening around budget consultation indicates a challenge within the timeline. As part of the new board of trustees I will pledge to look for adjustments that can be made in the timeline to allow for consultation with all of the stakeholders to be meaningful. I will also pledge to reach out to trustees from other districts to learn about their processes, successes and failures to learn what can be effective for SD22.

As for regular consultation, I am aware of the budget committee but was unsuccessful at finding information about it on the School District Website. First questions to ask: Are all of the stakeholders part of this committee? Are they meeting at appropriate times? Are members of the committee given the opportunity to seek feedback from the group they represent prior to the meetings? To name a few.

We need to work together as a team to develop a process that will allow for valuable input to make its way to end decisions.

CT: When it comes to the budget I believe it is too short of a discussion window. I think the budget process should start earlier, this way we are able to hear from all the partner groups with more collaborative conversations. I think as trustee's we should dig into the budget a little more. Take the time to look at the impact to all.


MO: The development and implementation of the district budget affects every aspect of the operation of the District and as such I believe all the partner groups should have meaningful and timely input into the development of the budget. Each group; parents, First Nations, teachers, support staff and administration, have a unique perspective on the needs and requirements of the district and should have the opportunity to be heard. Decisions have to be made but it is important to be respectful of opinions and to consider all aspects and suggestions. Once decisions are made it is also important to justify the decisions with the reasoning to support them. I would commit to being available to participate in any venue that would accommodate this input and consultation.

RL: At the moment, we have regular budgetary reports which are provided at public meetings regarding the status of our budget and our financial position. This reporting is good and allows us to show our public where and how our funds are being spent. But in order to have meaningful consultation with all partner groups, we need a process where our stakeholders have opportunity to provide input into the budget process at the development stage. A budgetary stakeholder committee group at the beginning of the budgetary process would provide input into the budget development and partner groups would be part of the budget development with this model. This process gives all stakeholders a sense that they were part of the process and not just spectators.

JC: I would like to limit in-camera meetings and bring as much as possible to open forums whether it be town halls, meeting minutes of board meetings actually being available online in a timely fashion and agendas being better accessible with adequate time for review before discussion. I would like all groups involved to be able to receive the "homework" of the agendas at the same time, so we have equal access to research and better more informed discussion of the issues. I believe in being approachable and am willing to listen provided those who are bringing the feedback are also willing to engage in meaningful dialogue. I will listen to you just as much as you are willing to listen to me. Then we can have a conversation about it and hopefully we can agree, or at least find a common area where we all know what we can each do to improve the situation. Together we can make anything better.

MR: With a number of years of experience as the Budget Officer for a Public Sector organization of over 4000 employees and a budget of over \$200M (1990 CAN dollars) I have learned that the consultation process is a balance between directive approaches and collective approaches and its balance changes from year to year. It typically aligns not from any specific decision of the administration more coming from the financial decisions at the ministerial levels.

I do believe meaningful consultation can always occur in a specific budget process. The process I prefer is that the administrative team decides annually on a specific and well-defined budgetary theme usually encapsulated in a catch phrase. The initial consultation step in



the process is to ensure that the theme is communicated and understood organizationally. At this step various forums engaging all levels of the organization with attendance mandatory for some and voluntary for others will occur. The theme is reviewed and feedback on the theme is obtained in the forums. Once the theme and the upcoming process is organizationally understood then the next steps is to define the revenue budget followed by separating capital from operational funds. With the operational funds clearly defined then a review of existing positions is completed in a way to develop a salary model. It is at this stage there is enough information to go into the consultation stage with various organizational subsets or business units to describe what costs are required to support status quo and allow for discussion to occur on changes and new requirements. The requests may be accommodated, new business cases may be needed for new programs and any changes are documented and incorporated into the budget. Each business unit is managed individually and the requests and changes are rolled up into a first draft of the corporate budget. The next stages are approvals and revisions to finalize.

It would be remiss to not mention a key role of senior administration and the trustees, impactful to the budget, will be to advocate on behalf of the District to the Ministry of Education ensuring the allocation of revenue funds from the Ministry are maximized. At the same time it is crucial for the Board and Administration to be aware of potential changes, provide suggestions and ideas, and influence the Ministry on variations to funding formulas.

NM: When I attended a BCSTA Conference in 2014 the biggest recommendation was to start the process earlier and create a finance committee comprised of ALL your partner groups, start in November, and present out to the community in February or March. If elected I will promote changing the finance policy to include the recommendations from the Watson Report as follows:

#7 Define the Process for Assigning work to Management

One of the elements of establishing constructive relationships is to have a respectful and agreed-upon process to engage, provide information and answer questions. A process should be established for the receipt of Board and stakeholder requests to management for information and analysis, the prioritization of those requests, and the reporting back by management to the Board and stakeholders on the responses to requests/questions.

#22 Audit and Finance Committee

The Ministry should require every school board in the province to establish an Audit and Finance Committee of the board. Terms of reference for this Committee should include oversight of audit and financial reporting, including review and approval of quarterly and annual financial statements, transfer of surplus between funds, risk management and internal controls. Provision should be made for members of this Committee to include individuals other than elected Trustees to provide advice and help ensure the presence of necessary financial expertise.

TW: To have regular and meaningful consultation with all partner groups regarding district budgets would require open dialogue with all stakeholders, allowing discussion in effective allocations, as set within the parameters of Provincial guidelines. I think it is important to involve administration, classroom teachers, support staff, parents and students in developing innovative and effective programs.

5. Across BC, school districts are short classroom teachers, specialist teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for retaining teachers in Vernon?

RB: This is a very complex issue with no easy solution. The issue became chronic with the well deserved Supreme Court Decision regarding class size and composition.

The District could work with city officials to publicize and attract young people to Vernon. Make the work environment a positive place. Initiate a “Shadow a Teacher day” to expose Grade 11 and 12 students to the teaching profession. Look at creating a local course that gives students the opportunity to learn about teaching. Possibly create a district training program for Educational Assistants.

PH: Some of the tasks identified in Vision 2022 around this goal are to create more stability and consistency for employees, create supportive, collegial, and professional working environments, enhance mental health and wellness services for employees. Some of my first questions around this issue would be: “How is the work progressing in achieving these goals?”

The Board of trustees needs to work with administration, teachers and other partner groups to create a culture of support. Together we can discover what needs to be adjusted so Vernon can be the place where all teachers want to come and work. As a team do we need to adjust hiring timelines? What other things can be adjusted to make Vernon a magnet for quality team members at all levels? Provincially, what can be done to make teaching a more desired profession for new graduates?

CT: Ideas to retain teachers is like any job really. Why do we stay in our jobs? Well, I can tell you we have to make sure people are feeling valued, through collaboration, listening, and further education.

Let’s expand on this... First, people become teachers because they have a passion or an interest. Then with that passion they are shaping the minds of our future. Feeling valued is listening to the ideas of the teachers as they may have thoughts on a way to make things better and sometimes easier to teach. We have teachers who may think outside of the box and we should collaborate with them to see if their ideas fit into the curriculum, does it fit the class/grade being taught and does it add value to our motto of making this a great place



to learn.

Lastly, further education... On pro d days I believe EA's and other part time teachers should be included. They need to keep up with their area of teaching and what is happening in the district.

MO: We are fortunate to live in an area that offers so much outside of the workplace setting that attracts people to live and work here such as skiing in the winter and water sports in the summer. That works in our favour for recruitment. As for retaining teachers; teachers are on the front line for delivery of educational services and showing respect for the service they provide and for their opinions on the direction we should go as a district is a big part of job satisfaction and subsequently employee retention.

It is also important to encourage the next generation of teachers who are coming up through our education system and having an employer who respects their chosen profession would be a big step. Vernon needs to be acknowledged as a district that recognizes and appreciates their contributions.

RL: There are many factors which come into play when it comes to attracting and retaining teachers. I believe that teachers will become attracted to our District as we develop a reputation for treating teachers and staff as partners in helping children learn. All teachers want the opportunity to teach because helping students learn is what motivates teachers. But all teachers also need to feel valued and appreciated. This culture needs to start at the top which is basically the Board of Trustees. As a trustee, I need to model good listening skills, advocacy for the education system and opportunities for teachers to have input into decisions which affect their classrooms and children. As a District we need to demonstrate that we place a high priority in providing our teachers with the necessary tools and support personnel so that they feel they are working to the best of their ability. This level of trust and commitment comes when we build an education culture which is open to feedback and dialogue with our teaching and support staff and it is demonstrated by our actions which show that we are putting maximum resources into places which help our teachers do their jobs.

We are fortunate that we already have many attractive factors in place. We live in a nice size community. We have the amenities which a lot of people desire. Our housing costs are still reasonable compared to other parts of the province and our climate is conducive to all four seasons of outdoor activities. When we combine this with an educational community which is collaborative, shared and valued, I believe we will be able to attract and keep excellent teachers - which is what our students deserve.

JC: I have regular access to health benefits that improve both mind and body. I would make sure that all our teachers have similar access to tools and resources that will help maintain their physical and mental health. Most of us like being in a workplace where we feel valued, supported, heard and encouraged. We are more reluctant to look for other employers when we have a healthy workplace. Our schools are the workplace for our teachers and they need the same resources and support that we may take for granted or wish we had. I would encourage all of us to support a teacher in some way. If each person in Vernon took the time to make sure a teacher knew they were valued, respected and supported, our teachers would not want to leave our beautiful valley.

MR: I recognize that in the Province of BC and the recent Supreme Court Decision that an increase in demand for teachers has been a consequence of the additional funding earmarked to reduce classroom size. What is not clear is whether that demand has increased equally across the Province and into each District. In other words is the shortage as impactful in Vernon as it is in Vancouver? And what are the specific issues in retention of teachers in Vernon?

I would rather understand the problem prior to recommending a solution. In developing and understanding the problem the steps taken could be:


- What is the level of teacher churn in Vernon compared to other School Districts?
- If it is an issue, what is the basis of the issue? Here we can do engagement surveys to understand the staff's perspectives on working conditions, salaries, recognition, skill development, and organizational culture.
- Define actions, implement solutions, monitor and communicate the actions completed, look for changes in the original measures on churn and engagement.
- Cycle back.

Knowing why teachers are leaving would be a great step in understanding the focus of the retention programs. In other words, the solutions must align with the problem or resources could be allocated inappropriately. This cycle also has the potential of raising staff engagement and thus a contributing solution to a potential retention issue.

I do believe that any retention issues may also require a further look into our city and its impact on retention. In such event as that knowledge is obtained then the Board needs to have access to the City Council and Mayor's Office to discuss the findings and to obtain commitment that the City would be willing and able to support programs that would positively impact retention.

NM: Some communities have created an incentive package to retain doctors, so could we do that here? I would explore all options around the incentive package with the city as well.

I think if Trustees and Teachers collaborated we could build on our partnerships with the various colleges in BC to continue to build on the skills of our teachers and continue to mentor students who are becoming teachers. As Mr Roger mentioned in his presentation at the Performing Arts Centre in September "Vernon has been recognized as an innovative school district we need to continue to build on that."



Vernon has a large amount of “experienced teachers” which is amazing, and they come here because of affordable housing and the great weather. Can we continue to build on that and train the new up and coming teachers? I would hope so.

TW: Retaining high quality, qualified teaching staff within our district could be approached on a broad-based collaboration. Supporting Job sharing programs, hiring local graduates, and ‘brainstorming’ with the local VTA would be but a few options.

6. How will you help foster respectful and productive negotiations in the upcoming round of local bargaining?

RB: I have been through many rounds of local bargaining and have always been able to find common values and goals. I believe I can do the same in Vernon and then build consensus on the Board and direct staff to make it happen.

PH: This new board will have a shortage of people who have been through these contract negotiations before. This can be a good thing, this can bring to the table fresh perspective. However, the initial work will be to allow all of the trustees the opportunity to understand the timelines, the history, and the viewpoints of all parties involved. As trustees we need to be able to ask the hard questions and increase our level of understanding of the positions of all the parties involved to ensure that negotiations are thoughtful, respectful and productive.

During my previous experience on the board I found that updates from the negotiating table came with the perspective of one point of view and often times when questions were asked they were simply dismissed. I hope to be a part of a new era in SD22, one that facilitates the team members to come together with all of their differing points of view and learn from each other. Modelling a supportive, respectful culture which will hopefully flow into the rest of the learning community and facilitate productive negotiations.

CT: Local bargaining is a difficult question to answer. I have never been in this role before; therefore I am not 100 % sure how the role of school trustee fits. That being said I have a willingness to learn and listen. I have a vested interest in this school district and want to continue to see things grow within it for the betterment of the children.

MO: It is crucial to maintain a congenial relationship between the Board, Senior Management, Teachers and CUPE when entering into the upcoming round of collective agreement bargaining. Bargaining can be a fruitful exercise as well as a stressful and frustrating experience. It is important to keep in mind that in the end we must all work together, understanding in the big picture it is all about student success. That is why we are all involved.


With the financial aspects of bargaining taking place at the Provincial level the various language components are the remaining issues to be resolved locally. I would have the expectation on the Districts bargaining committee to bargain in good faith and approach these sessions with an open mind to hear the concerns raised and address those concerns if possible.

I would not assume either side at the table to agree to all demands or suggestions, but a logical and reasonable approach would be my expectation as a Trustee.

RL: As much as it may sound ancient and may be considered old fashion - the golden rule still has a place. Basically - treat everyone as you would want to be treated yourself. This characteristic needs to be reflected by all trustees in all our interactions as that is how you gain respect - by giving respect.

All staff in our District have a role to play and we are all part of a process which has a goal in helping our students learn and achieve to the best of their ability. This means that all of us are important and none of need to be viewed as unnecessary. Mutual respect needs to become embedded into our District. Once you have a climate of respect, then it allows you to approach contract, bargaining and other issues in a climate of solution seeking and problem solving rather than one of mutual suspicion and distrust. When you can get to the place of believing the better of the other party instead of the worst, then you have a foundation that allows you to look at different opinions in a clear light and allow mutual give and take to bring forward a contract that is built by the bargaining parties - not a feeling that it was dictated by one side. As a trustee, I would look forward to the upcoming contract negotiations as it gives a chance for all of us an opportunity to discuss areas of importance and concern in an open, transparent fashion and work toward constructive solutions.

JC: First, recognize that we are all humans with the basic need of respect. Once we agree to that, we can work in good faith to bring a consensus of first steps towards our goals. We may need to think of alternate strategies and there may be trial and error as we work together. We need to recognize first that we are on the same team and that means that we all win together. No one wants to lose, so we need the perspective of finding the wins where everyone benefits. Perhaps we need an education piece about why a perceived “loss” is not necessarily negative. Recognition of different perspectives and taking the time to understand where the perspective is coming from and how it integrates into the whole scenario can be very enlightening. I intend to come to every meeting in good faith with the best of intentions of getting work done. The sooner the work is done, the sooner we see improvement. This leads to a positive feedback cycle where even the smallest improvements can signal more opportunities for growth.



MR: In my semi-retirement I have begun a consulting business where I have been able to take the most enjoyable and exciting parts of my work career and use that experience to be self-employed. That experience is contract negotiating. My achievements associated with negotiating and closing very large service contracts and partnership agreements has a total estimated commercial value of over \$750M with the contracts serving over 200,000 employees in Canada.

My intent is to be integral to the upcoming round of negotiations. My reputation in contract negotiations is not one of protraction of process. I believe in a thorough process although one that has a continuous cadence from start to completion. I encourage all issues to be raised by both sides at the earliest stages. While issues are often dealt with sequentially or sometimes parked for later review I do not support last minute additions of issues as a bargaining strategy. I do believe in clear ground rules for participants at the negotiating table.

I am not a supporter of the Win/Win philosophy. I do not like taking competitive analogies into negotiations. I do believe in what I have termed Fair/Fair negotiations. The process of accepting terms to any agreement is about compromises. Compromises are about good ideas and alternative ideas. The ability by both parties to compromise is highly predictive of Fair/Fair outcomes.

My experience on determining whether negotiations have proceeded respectfully and productively is the tone of the signing event. Signing a major contract is a significant event with the result typically being that both Parties are either happy or both are frustrated. Very rarely have I seen one Party happy at the expense of the other. I have noted that the predictability of how the parties actually work together (frustrated or happy) after the signing is highly correlated to the tone of the signing event.

Through experience of negotiating major contracts, some done very well some with many learning's, it is my goal to see the upcoming local negotiations be respectful with compromises by all Parties. And, through good process, that the negotiations occur productively and the signing event has a tone of happiness and all agree that the outcomes were fair.

NM: Through creating a better engagement process, I will have open dialogue with the VTA that will continue through the negotiations.

I respect BCTF for establishing The Declaration of Teaching and Learning Conditions (July 2014) that sets out the rights and responsibilities of BCTF locals and members, the rights and responsibilities of students, and the teaching and learning provisions that will ensure an education system of the highest quality and responsibility.

I look forward to learning the best practices on posting and filling of jobs as well as layoff processes and the school calendar then negotiating in good faith with Vernon Teachers Association. I look forward to hearing from government in the other areas BCTF is advocating for, such as:

- to establish dispute-resolution mechanisms for locals and school districts
- to provide funding to support negotiations at local tables
- shift more items to local tables so BCTF locals and school districts can find solutions that make sense in their communities.

TW: I feel that by being available for discussions during a time of local bargaining and by engaging in the process in a respectful and understanding way, serves all parties well.

7. What is your position on the implementation of the SOGI 123 principles in public schools? Why?

RB: I support SOGI 123 because any program that encourages tolerance and acceptance for our most vulnerable students is moving towards an inclusive culture for all. We need to bring about understanding and respect for all members of our community. I believe that there needs to be professional development opportunities for staff to assist them in delivering this sensitive part of the new curricula so that everyone involved is comfortable.

PH: I completely support the implementation of SOGI 123 principles in public schools. Our job as School Trustees is to foster an environment that supports all members of the learning community. Creating an environment that is safe, healthy, respectful, and supportive is a critical step in the learning and growing of all individuals. Sharing of knowledge and experience is one step towards doing this. Moving towards a more accepting supportive atmosphere throughout society is one of the integral steps in our evolution process.

I am certain there are operational and facility issues that we will need to address along the way. It is my belief that with open collaboration, as a learning community we will be able to work through these issues and support all of our staff and students.

CT: As a parent I was unsure of SOGI 123 at first. I keep thinking to myself it is up to me to teach my children at home about different areas outside of the regular curriculum. However, I realize not every family does this. I believe the implementation of SOGI 123 is a great resource for our district. It shows the district is moving with our changing social environment, it makes all the children feel valued, listened to and cared for by feeling safe. It helps educators by giving them a set of additional tools. These tools will in the end make children feel safe and included.

MO: As a Trustee I would expect our District to encourage and support inclusiveness and acceptance. We cannot allow bullying in any form to occur in our schools and must nurture respect for all individuals. Simply said, students need to feel safe in our schools. School communities are a microcosm of our society at large, being as diverse, and we all benefit when we are accepting of others for who they are.

SOGI 123 is just one tool available to our teachers to broaden students understanding and acceptance of others. The content has been deemed age appropriate and I have faith in our teaching staff in the application of these principles and any discretion they may believe appropriate for their specific classroom situation. They know their students and are best equipped to utilize these resources.

RL: (SOGI) or sexual orientation and gender identity is not its own curriculum. It crosses grades and subject areas. Basically, SOGI inclusive education is learning to treat each other with respect and dignity regardless of our differences. It gives teachers an opportunity to include all students and families in their lessons and learning. It ensures that everyone can understand the diverse society that we live in and all families can see themselves as being included.

There are teaching aids and materials which have been prepared by the Ministry to assist teachers to use as they see the need and opportunity. SOGI really falls under the umbrella of 'bullying' in the same sense that we obviously do not want children to bully others or be bullied. All our children need to feel safe and included within our school system. SOGI is just one more tool that a teacher may use to help with diversity and inclusiveness.

JC: All humans have the basic right to be heard and respected. This is part of our core of being human. We generally look down on other species that practice exclusion, why do we do it? I find it sad that we need to have SOGI 123 principles because I find it sad that we would exclude others on any basis. It speaks to the core of our human condition. We have many examples from history where basic rights have been fought for and won. Many examples are for voting rights and the recognition of "personhood".

Our children need to understand that society does better when we empathize with each other, when we work together. We must look at how much we are the same. Not where are we different. United we stand, divided we fall. This is applicable to this issue as well. SOGI is more about an attitude. It's not a curriculum or an overt teaching. If we look for differences, we can find them, but it will not improve us. Where we look for similarities and find strength in our different opportunities, we can reach the stars. Today's students are tomorrow's community. Let's give our students the benefit of what we learned and help them learn from history's mistakes. Let's teach them that all life matters and that they have amazing potential if they are willing to learn together.

MR: I am supportive of any curriculum templates, strategies or suggestions that can assist teachers to educate students on the diverse nature of our human states.

I also believe that we need to recognize diversity as a powerful strength in classrooms, communities and workplaces. Diversity comes in many forms whether physical, mental, social or cultural. I temper that belief in that I also believe in the rights of the individual always being paramount to the rights of any group.

The public education system (where separation is only made on the basis of individuals' developmental stages – classroom composition) is built around diversity not homogeneity, we accept all who enroll, and it is a combination of student's, parent's and educator's responsibilities that the diversity is, not only accepted and respected, that it has a place to safely flourish.

NM: I believe it is a strong resource for teachers developed by teachers, and I value that it was developed in partnership between BCSTA, BCTF, FNEC, BCASBO, BCCPAC, and CUPE.

My hope is that more collaboration can happen, so we can create more resources for making schools safe for all students and their families. I trust teachers to use this resource in the most age appropriate ways and look forward to the safe dialogue that can happen between teachers, parents, and students as this resource is being used. After all, we need to create safe spaces for everyone to learn from each other.

TW: SOGI 123 – The purpose of SOGI is to keep students safe with a knowledge that they are accepted and included in the school. Trustees have an obligation to create an inclusive environment. SOGI materials are Provincially approved. School Boards cannot repeal Provincial mandates and they do not have the power to overrule or forbid the use of Provincially approved teaching materials.

Lumby Candidate Responses

Sheri Minard SM

Gen Acton GA

Lori Mindnich no response

1. What experience do you have that you consider relevant to the role of school trustee, particularly in the areas of communication and advocacy?

SM: I am:

- An active PAC member
- A former PAC secretary for a 3-year term
- A DPAC rep for my PAC
- A former DPAC President
- I have served on the District bussing committee, hiring committee and calendar committee
- I have created and taught courses at two Vernon DPAC parent work shops and two COPAC (Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Councils-Kelowna) seminars entitled Minute Taking for PAC's and How to Run a Successful meeting
- I am a former vocational instructor for Okanagan College and have a Provincial Instructors Diploma
- I am a senior legal assistant at a local law firm specializing in real estate and mortgages

Communication is a vital component to every volunteer and paid position I have done and within the education I have completed. I believe that being successful at communication involves being able to convey information, ideas, concepts as well as being an active listener. In my current position, clients return to our office for additional services because of my customer service skills.

As a school trustee, my goal is to use these skills to insure greater and more transparent communication with our partner groups. I believe this will result in a stronger, more cohesive district which is for the betterment of everyone, especially the children.

- What do you believe to be the pressing issues in our district.

I believe that the pressing issues include but are not limited to:

The budget process revision and greater transparency and communication with partner groups are two ideas that work hand in hand with each other. Revising the budget process to start earlier combined with greater input and collaboration from our partner groups can provide trustees with information on what worked in the previous year, what is currently working or not working and what they feel is best for the present and future. Using this information can allow us to allocate funds to provide the largest impact and benefit to our students.

The inclusion of SOGI 123 in our district should be one of celebration. Providing education to help foster a greater understanding and acceptance, not only for the LGBTQ community, but for all students. Schools should be a place where students feel safe, accepted, and welcome regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion or background. As trustees, we need to lead by example and embody the practice of respecting diversity of culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, association and ability.

With the new curriculum comes new challenges for the District. Along with ensuring that our students are supported with additional educational staff, the technology rich curriculum presents challenges to a lot of districts. The district needs to advocate to the Province for additional funding to create equal technology opportunities for all districts. Each school in our district should have the exact amount of technology that is needed to support the curriculum. A lot of schools have been fortunate that their PAC's have been able to fundraise for some of the technology required but not all PAC's are able allocate their fundraising efforts for technology.

GA: As a Registered Professional Counsellor, specializing in Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports, I have daily experience supporting clients, staff and care-givers with healthy relationships, healthy communication and healthy conflict resolution strategies. I am a trained Mandt System (Non Violent Crisis Intervention) Instructor.

I work with adults with developmental and physical disabilities who communicate in a variety of means varying from typical to requiring augmentative learning tools. I write Behaviour Support Plans which provide strategies to improve our population's quality of life. I support transitioning youth from youth to adult services. I advocate for funding and services with Provincial government agencies.

For 25 years I worked as a Public Relations/Marketing Consultant contracting (and later employed) as Communications Officer/Grant Writer for the City of Vernon. I have completed several contracts for other municipality and government agencies in the Okanagan valley. Over the years I have, and continue to, build positive working relationships with Federal, Provincial and Municipal government officials and administration.

In my current position, I have experience mediating with BCGEU representatives. I sit on the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee in an employer capacity. I have training through Worksafe BC Employers Advisory board program.

2. What do you believe to be the pressing issues within our School District?

SM: I believe that the pressing issues include but are not limited to:

The budget process revision and greater transparency and communication with partner groups are two ideas that work hand in hand with each other. Revising the budget process to start earlier combined with greater input and collaboration from our partner groups can provide trustees with information on what worked in the previous year, what is currently working or not working and what they feel is best for the present and future. Using this information can allow us to allocate funds to provide the largest impact and benefit to our students.

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GA: Speaking on behalf of the rural communities that I am looking to represent, there are three key issues facing our community.

The first being the future of our high school and the options that have been presented. None of which are desirable for the families or allow for future growth in the Village of Lumby.


The second being bussing students in rural communities who are not awarded the same quality of walkways and lighting as students attending schools within the city limits, yet fall within the same 2.4km cut off.

The third is the need to a Joint Use Agreement between SD22 and the Village of Lumby and the Regional District Areas D & E (Cherryville) to be put in place which will enable community facilities and our schools to be utilized to the best advantage to the residents and the schools would to be used to full capacity. This discussion has been ongoing for many years.

3. What are your top priorities in terms of allocating educational funds our district receives?

SM: I consider establishing continuous and regular consultations with our partner groups one of the top priorities. Creating communication channels will allow Trustees to receive information from many view points to help base our decisions on. Meeting with our teachers, CUPE members, Aboriginal education, Principals and Vice Principals and our parents can provide us with information on what worked in the previous year, what is currently working or not working and what they feel is best for the present and future. Using this information can allow us to allocate funds to provide the largest impact and benefit to our students.

Another priority issue our District faces is funding. More funds would mean more we can do for our students' education. But as we know, fund-



ing comes from the government, so as we fight for a better funding formula to provide us with more funds, we need to concentrate on the funds we do receive. Revising the budget process to start earlier combined with greater input and collaboration from our partner groups is the first step. As trustees, we must always remember the goal of our position which is to provide the best and most educational choices for all students in our district to be successful.

The current Board of Education has implemented a courtesy rider fee in order to help with transportation costs. Unfortunately, because of this new rider fee, the number of courtesy riders has declined. We need to re-evaluate the transportation system. Perhaps going to an all rider payment plan would be an answer. Having a user-based system that provides the bussing routes and schedules and can accommodate riders that live in high transfer, dangerous to walk areas as well as all of the regular riders is a consideration. My attitude has always been if I'm going to pay for a service, I want that service to provide me with the best and most choices available. If there is value in the service, having to pay for it feels less of a burden.

GA: To ensure that all students have the right to equal education across the district.

To ensure teachers have the necessary tools and supports to provide such education.

To look at options for increasing class choices to broaden the electives offered.

To look at classroom assistance to support those students who require additional help but are not diagnosed with a condition eligible for funding.

4. What will you do to ensure that there is regular and meaningful consultation with all partner groups regarding the district budget?

SM: I believe the best way to ensure that there is regular and meaningful consultation with all partner groups is to:

- Start the budget process earlier to allow for time to meet with each partner group. Meets could be scheduled periodically for updates so if there are areas that we can see will need support in a future budget, the partner groups and the trustees could start to prepare for that.
- Partner groups would need to let trustees know what they are hoping to receive from the district budget based on current need, what was successful in previous years and the areas that are identified as needing improvement.
- Partner groups could prepare a wish list, want list, can't live without list to assist trustees in deciding what needs are the most important to be met.

Trustees and our partner groups then need to actually use the information we are being provided with. The process of consulting and including our partner groups is pointless unless we can incorporate the changes and requirements that are being suggested.

GA: I will meet with all stakeholders to gain all perspectives on the area of discussion.

I will do my best to attend all meetings pertaining to the proposed allocation of funds.

I will keep up to date with policies, procedures, guidelines and all reading material required for the functionality of my responsibility as a Trustee.

I will work as a team player on the Board to determine the best use for the District's allocation of funds.

5. Across BC, school districts are short classroom teachers, specialist teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for retaining teachers in Vernon?

SM: We need to consider many factors when trying to attract someone to our school district for a position. The job itself is one major consideration – If our potential employees are moving here from out of province they need to consider wages, benefits, holidays, working conditions – do we meet or beat their current location? They also need to consider housing. As we know, our rental market is very poor. If a new hire wanted to purchase a house, the process can be a challenge with the limited inventory currently available. We need to make the lifestyle that we have here in the Okanagan known to potential candidates – partnering with the City of Vernon and the Village of Lumby tourism departments to create specific materials for potential candidates to promote all the wonderful outdoor activities we get to do in all 4 seasons in our great communities is one idea. Partnering with a relocation service to assist in the potential employees move is another item to consider.

It is usually much easier to hire a new graduate than to find a new employee who has specialized training in specific areas. Why not encourage our current district employees to further their education into a specialized field and then promoting from within our own district? There are many avenues to explore and the new Board of Education will need to work with the VTA to find the best option available to promote our District and our area.

GA: Staff retention is a challenge across the board. We need to be the employer of choice. Staff need to feel supported; their concerns to be heard and addressed. Often it's the working environment that holds onto or loses staff. If people are happy in their work and with their co-workers, and they feel supported, they will stay. Rarely, unless there is a change in personal circumstances, do people leave a position they feel happy and supported in. As leaders, we need to see mistakes as mistakes; everything in life is a teaching moment.

6. How will you help foster respectful and productive negotiations in the upcoming round of local bargaining?

SM: I'm not very familiar with the specifics of local bargaining but as a Trustee, in order to be respectful to help foster productive negotiations, this is the first step I need to take. For me having conversations with our teachers and the VTA to better understand what our educators are asking



ing for in the upcoming local bargaining is another important step that should be taken by all Trustees.

GA: I have worked with the BCGEU on numerous occasions in my current role. I pride myself on my ability to mediate collaboration using healthy communication by treating people with dignity and respect.

7. What is your position on the implementation of the SOGI 123 principles in public schools? Why?

SM: I support the SOGI 123 principals. Our world is made up of diverse, dynamic people of all races, religions, sizes, colours, abilities, sexual orientation and genders. I believe everyone should be treated equally and respectfully. Including this resource for our educators is an idea that should be welcoming to all. Schools are building with vastly different individuals and starting a discussion, at any age, around how to treat each other respect and dignity at an early age, fosters inclusion, patients and understanding. For me this quote from the SOGI 123 website summarizes my feelings on how Boards of Education should be looking at SOGI 123 “Schools have the responsibility to pro-actively create safe, inclusive learning environments for all students—including students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. Unfortunately, schools have not always been safe places for LGBTQ+ youth to be out or to be themselves. While this has been changing, and while a lot of great work has occurred over many years to improve the school experience of LGBTQ+ youth, there remains a need to work together to help ensure that teachers, principals, vice principals, and other adults who work directly with students in schools have access to tools, resources, and supports to help make a difference.”

GA: It is my understanding that SD22 is one of the Districts that has implemented SOGI 123 and as such we need to support this curriculum. Sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political views, family demographics, colour of skin etc should have no bearing on a student receiving the right of equal education in a safe environment. I support zero tolerance on bullying on any person at any time and any education that supports that should be adopted.

Vote Plumping: What Is It?

Vote plumping is an approach to maximizing the relative value of your vote(s) in a multi-seat election.

Let me explain.

In our trustee election for Vernon and Area B and C, nine candidates are running for four seats. Therefore, voters have the opportunity to vote for UP TO four candidates. In Lumby there are 3 candidates running for two seats. At the end of the night the candidates who receive the highest vote totals will be elected.

Here is the rub. Using Vernon, Areas B and C as an example — what happens if there are less than four candidates that I as a voter feel really match my vision of who I want on the board?

For most of us, voting is something that we feel strongly about as a part of our civic duty. If four trustees are to be elected, many of us feel duty-bound to put four Xs on the ballot. The problem of course is that if I only feel strongly about supporting two candidates in a system that elects the top four vote getters, the votes I cast for the two other candidates that I half-heartedly chose might give one of them the votes they need to move past the candidates I really want to see on the board.

What to do? Unless there are four candidates that really appeal to you and your sense of what you want from the next board of education, vote only for those who do. Remember, you're not throwing away some of your votes; you are strengthening the votes you have carefully cast.

VOTING MATTERS

5 Reasons to Vote for School Trustees

- ◆ We need trustees to advocate for improved supports for students in our district.
- ◆ Your taxes are an investment in the future of our children and grandchildren. School Boards make decisions to allocate those tax dollars. Have a say in those decisions and challenge a government that has greatly increased funding to private schools.
- ◆ School District #22 is one of the largest employers in the area. Decisions made at the Board level affect the local economy.

We Need Trustees Who Will Speak Out

- ◆ Speaking up and defending public education, not just quietly administering cuts.
- ◆ Lobbying government for targeted money to support vulnerable students and ensuring special needs students get the support they deserve.
- ◆ Building strong relationships with teachers and support staff so together we can make a difference for our students.
- ◆ Invite parent, employee group, and student participation in decision making.
- ◆ Taking the lead role in building community support for our schools.

SCHOOL TRUSTEE ELECTION VOTER INFORMATION

WHEN

ADVANCE POLLS - OCTOBER 17TH 8:00 am - 8:00 pm - SCHUBERT CENTRE
OCTOBER 18TH 8:00 am - 8:00 pm - CITY HALL
VOTING DAY - OCTOBER 20TH 8:00 am - 8:00 pm - SEE BELOW

WHERE

VERNON VERNON RECREATION COMPLEX - VERNON SECONDARY SCHOOL
ELLISON ELEMENTARY - CITY HALL
LUMBY LUMBY MUNICIPAL OFFICE OCTOBER 20TH ONLY

WHO

RESIDENTS OF VERNON, REGIONAL DISTRICT AREAS B AND C (INCLUDES BX, SWAN LAKE, AND WESTSIDE) and COLDSTREAM. YOU DO NOT NEED TO REGISTER BUT YOU MUST BRING 2 PIECES OF IDENTIFICATION TO THE POLL.

WHAT

FOUR TRUSTEE POSITIONS FOR VERNON and TWO POSITIONS FOR LUMBY WILL BE DECIDED. ONE POSITION FOR COLDSTREAM HAS BEEN ACCLAIMED.



VTA GENERAL MEETING

Monday, November 5th - VSS Theatre - 4:00 pm

- **Bargaining Update**
- **BCTF Executive Member—Q&A Time**

Reason to vote #1:

It's your Right. Every citizen of Canada has the right to participate in our democracy by casting a ballot on Election Day. In a world where rights are trampled on and people die fighting for the right to vote, why would any Canadian willingly not exercise theirs?

Reason to vote #2:

It's your Responsibility. Voting is not just a right guaranteed to you in our democratic system it's also a responsibility that comes with receiving the benefits of that system. All the services, all the freedoms, all the good things about Canada that you enjoy every day all come with a price: the responsibility of voting to ensure the strength of our system.

Reason to vote #3:

You deserve to be represented. If you don't cast a ballot, your values and beliefs will not be heard. The best way to make sure the things you care about are actually reflected in society is by actually supporting those things at the polling station. If you don't vote for what you believe in, no one else will do it for you.

Reason to vote #4:

You're paying for the decisions elected representatives make. Your tax dollars are used to fund the programs and policies that elected governments create so why not tell them how you want them to use your money? If you don't, your money will be used to fund the priorities of other people without you ever having your say.

Reason to vote #5:

You live in a community that your vote helps shape. Schools, parks, housing and law enforcement are all just a few aspects of the communities we live in that are directly shaped by the outcome of our elections and the people we elect. You live in your community and have a say in how it's shaped. Even if you don't speak up, others will so you might as well get your say, too.