

Jonathan Lambert responses
Candidate for Fort McMurray Public School Trustee

1. Do you agree with calls to scrap the draft curriculum and start over to develop a curriculum that is accurate in capturing Alberta's colonial history, diverse present, and modernized to reflect the world we live in?

I know that this topic is an important one for our schools, students and parents. I believe there is much more work that needs to be done to ensure the revised curriculum is at the high level that all Alberta parents want to see for their children. It needs to be reworked as upon review from our highly qualified teachers, it contains mistakes, plagiarism, is sometimes not age-appropriate, and lacks diverse perspectives, particularly lacking Indigenous perspectives. Teachers have told me that it does not support critical thinking as it relies heavily on rote learning. Our government need to do better to ensure all students are getting the highest education possible within Alberta. If I am successful in getting reelected as FMPSD trustee, I will not be happy with any curriculum that is not endorsed by our teachers along with support from our parents.

2. Do you believe the current education funding formula is sufficient for your district? If not, how will you work to convince the province to provide sustainable and adequate funding?

I believe proper funding for our district is not sufficient to meet the needs of our students and staff. With the ever changing landscape of education, more demands are being placed on schools which require proper funding. Things such as new curriculum, Covid mandates, proper increases of salaries for all staff and needed expertise for mental health support are just a few examples of how better funding need to be a priority of the government to ensure that Alberta students are getting the highest level of education possible.

If re-elected, I will work with my fellow trustees to ensure FMPSD is leading the way in lobbying government to properly fund education in Alberta and in our district. In addition, we will join with the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) so the larger provincial voice of trustees in the province is heard loud and clear when speaking to government about providing sustainable and adequate funding.

3. Will you oppose privatization of school services and infrastructure, including Public-Private-Partnerships aka P3s? Will you support bringing previously privatized services in-house?

I do have concerns about the privatization of school services and infrastructure. Many of our school services are done through district employees who have been with the district

for years. They are personally invested in the job they are doing and they have valuable relationships with school and district staff that is often overlooked. These employees take great pride in what they do and are often the backbone of the district and our schools. When I taught high school in our district for 8 years, I personally saw custodians who, outside of keeping the school spotless, walked students to class to ensure they were not lingering in the halls and being late. I have seen district staff who, although the “job” was to paint a certain section of the main gym, went ahead and painted a bit more because we both agreed that “it just looked better”. And I have seen admin assistants stay well past their work hours so that school events were planned and executed so students would have the best and most memorable experiences. If we allow outside companies to take over what these employees do, although the “job” might get done, we would be losing employees who are passionate and professional about our students, teachers and overall district’s well-being and are likely more focused on filling their contract with the district so they can be paid.

4. Will you support your employees and your community by ensuring the school board employs staff with living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights?

I will 100% support the idea that our school board employs staff with adequate living wages, full-time hours where desired, job security, and collective bargaining rights. It is more important than even that these staff have a sense of security for themselves and their families.

5. Will you oppose attempts from the provincial government to legislate against school staff including cuts to the Local Authorities Pension Plan, or restrictions on their right to strike?

Similar to my previous answer, I am 100% opposed to attempts from the provincial government to legislate against school staff and put restrictions on their right to strike.

6. Do you support measures such as mask mandates, and vaccine mandates for staff to limit and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in your schools?

Previously in life, I was a high school science teacher. As such, I fully support the science community and in this case, all that has been proposed to reducing the effect that Covid has had on our schools and community in general. I believe that vaccination is the most important thing that will get us back to our “normal lives”. So I do believe that vaccine mandates might be needed for staff to ensure the safety of our students and staff can be ensured. And until we can say that all staff and students are working in a safe

environment that is free of Covid, we should have mask mandates in place as it is a proved way of reducing the spread of the virus.