

**Survey from AUPE's Committee on Political Action – submitted by Linda Mywaart, Trustee candidate for Fort McMurray Public School Division (FMPSD)**

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**Curriculum:**

It is unfortunate that some good work previously done on the curriculum was shelved and I am concerned that parts of the proposed curriculum halt advances previously made. So in the face of impending change I will continue to ask the government to listen to the voices closest to where the learning occurs, that is, the teachers, parents and even the students themselves. I am not a curriculum expert, but I know that here in FMPSD we have many who are, so as a trustee I will also rely on their expertise with content and other details. I will carry, to the provincial association (Alberta School Boards Association) and government, the many voices who want, need, and deserve to be heard. I won't say the entire draft curriculum should be scrapped, but I fully support ongoing conversation and review on the curriculum.

**Funding:**

I think one of the challenges facing FMPSD (and other school Boards across the province) is mandate creep and how to stretch the education dollars further and further, at times for use beyond the scope of education. Expectations for what takes place in our schools has risen and with increased expectation comes increased cost. The demands and expectations are increasing disproportionately to the funding received. It is a challenge to keep classroom dollars in the classroom. We are delving into reserve funds to meet shortfalls.

Providing an excellent educational opportunity for the students is top priority. It is critical over the next term that we prioritize the further exploration of ways to balance our budget, without compromising the services, supports and opportunities for students. At the same time we must continue to press the government for adequate funding that will fully provide for the diverse needs of our students. We have held meetings with the MLAs for our region and the Minister of Education, clearly presenting facts and data and speaking on behalf of our students. I will continue to be that voice.

**Privitization including P3s:**

As much as possible, public dollars should stay in the public realm, but I'm not certain there is a one-size fits all answer to the question you have posed. Each circumstance or capital project requires thorough investigation and probing to determine how we maximize the return to our students for every dollar we spend. Cost, quality and timeliness of projects and service delivery all need to be factored in.

In education, we rely on many partners especially when it comes to providing services for our students. Our Regional Collaborative Service Delivery model, provides many specialized supports and resources to students and families (some of which are private for example: psychologists, therapists) that we would be unable to provide from within FMPSD. So, in terms of specialized services I do not oppose partnering with private entities in order to meet the needs of our students. Our ultimate goal is to do what's best for the kids we serve.

I support keeping as many services and projects within our organization when it is possible and feasible..

### **Schools as Employers:**

The education provided to our students can only be top-notch if we invest in highly qualified staff in all levels of FMPSD and compensate them appropriately and adequately. But no two learners are exactly the same, nor are any two staff, so having a variety of employment opportunities (full-time and part-time) responds to the needs of our very diverse community.

I want as many classroom dollars as possible to stay in the classrooms, where I believe it benefits both students and staff.

I believe in local autonomy, and hope that provincial governments will continue to delegate to local school boards the right, the responsibility, and the adequate funding to make decisions in their local context.

### **Covid Safety:**

I support mask mandates and other preventative measures that we have been practicing in our schools for the past year and a half.

And while I believe in vaccines and their effectiveness for myself personally, I am not ready to take a stand on mandating vaccines. At this time I feel conflicted and unsettled about telling somebody else what they should put into their body, i.e. that they need to have a vaccine. I have more thinking to do about this.