Crown Point Kidz Questionnaire

1. What is your personal and professional history with schools in Ward 3? Which schools have you been involved with, and in what capacity?

I have deep roots in Ward 3 schools as a parent, community advocate and former public school trustee. I represented Ward 3 as an HWDSB trustee from 2014 to 2018, working closely with families, staff, school councils and community organizations across the ward.

My involvement included Memorial, Adelaide Hoodless, Cathy Wever, Prince of Wales, Parkview/Mountain and the Delta/Sir John A. Macdonald communities that would eventually come together at Bernie Custis Secondary School.

A few examples of that work include:

- **Helping secure $300,000 in playground improvements** at each of Memorial and Adelaide Hoodless, working in partnership with our Ward Councillor and school communities.
- **Supporting improvements at Adelaide Hoodless**, including the kindergarten playground renewal and the *Depave Paradise* project that transformed approximately 2,250 square feet of asphalt into greener outdoor space.
- **Advocated for improvements to the field at Cathy Wever**, meeting with school staff and parent council after problems with the irrigation system and pushing the board to address the condition of the field.
- **Helping establish a Home and School Association at Prince of Wales**, while staying connected to families through school events, council meetings and activities—including everything from reading with students to school celebrations.
- **Working through major school transitions,** including staying involved with Parkview families after their move to Mountain and participating for months with families, staff and community partners through the Delta/Sir John A. Macdonald transition.
- Working with the Ward Councillor to **help preserve the former King George School** for community use after its closure.

But some of my favourite memories are the smaller ones that don't appear in board minutes: Rotary Christmas celebrations, spaghetti fundraisers and Christmas bazaars; speaking at graduations and Remembrance Day ceremonies; and participating in events such as the One Wish Kindness Awards.

I came to the trustee role as a parent and community advocate, and that has always shaped how I approach the job: listen first, do the homework, ask questions and make sure Ward 3 families have a voice at the table.

2. Before deciding to run for trustee, how familiar were you with the challenges facing Ward 3 schools?

Very familiar. I represented Ward 3 for four years, so I've been part of some pretty difficult conversations about our schools — closures and consolidations, aging buildings, declining enrolment, special education, transportation, school boundaries and making sure inner-city schools get their fair share of resources.

But I also don't want to pretend that because I was trustee eight years ago, I automatically know everything happening in our schools today. A lot has changed.

That's actually one of the reasons I'm running again. I look at things like attendance, student achievement and what's happening with some of our most vulnerable kids, and I have questions. We made some big changes when I was on the board, particularly around special education and inclusion. Eight years later, I think it's fair to ask: Did they work? Are kids doing better? And if they aren't, what do we need to change?

I've never believed a trustee's job is to defend every decision the board has made. It's to listen, ask questions and be willing to change course when something isn't working.

I've stayed involved in Ward 3 and continued following education issues since leaving office. This time I bring something I didn't have in 2014: four years of experience actually doing the job. But I hope I still bring the same thing I did back then — I'm a local parent who cares about our schools and isn't afraid to ask questions.

3. Can you identify one or two things that you believe Ward 3 schools need that they are currently not getting from the school board?

Two things come to mind right away.

The first is making sure the board is paying attention to what is happening **outside the school fence**, because those decisions affect our kids too.

With LRT construction, for example, I'm already hearing concerns about trucks and traffic being diverted onto streets like Dunsmure beside Memorial. HWDSB needs to be at the table with the City and Metrolinx before a problem becomes an unsafe route to school, not after.

The second is Bernie Custis. We built a beautiful new high school without giving students the outdoor athletic facilities we would expect at a new high school anywhere else in Hamilton. The future of the old Dominion Glass property is still uncertain, so I want us pushing for a permanent solution while also making much better use of Hamilton Stadium and the recreation facilities already next door.

Ward 3 schools don't exist on little islands. Traffic, housing, parks, recreation and development all affect what happens inside them. I'll once again be a trustee who pays attention to all of it.

4. How do you plan to build relationships with parents and caregivers in Ward 3, particularly families who may not traditionally participate in school council or board meetings?

A trustee can't wait for parents to come to them.

I want to be in schools and neighbourhoods — at school events, council meetings, parks, community events and the places families already are. Some of the best conversations I had as trustee happened in a hallway, standing beside a schoolyard or talking to someone at a community event.

And not everybody is going to come to a school council meeting. People work nights. They have kids at home. English may not be their first language. Some people simply aren't comfortable walking into a formal meeting and speaking in front of a room.

That doesn't mean they don't care.

My job is to find ways to hear from them too.

5. How will you communicate with parents about decisions being made at the board level that affect Ward 3 schools?

Communication was important to me during my previous term and would be again.

I believe trustees should explain what is happening at the board before important decisions are made, not simply explain the result afterward. I would use my website and social media, regular written updates, school councils and direct communication with families to make board business easier to understand.

When a major decision specifically affects a Ward 3 school, families should know what is being proposed, why it is happening, when decisions will be made, and how they can participate.

6. Some Ward 3 schools have struggled with aging infrastructure, low enrollment, limited resources, and perceptions of being overlooked. What is your plan to advocate for investment in these schools?

Ward 3 has already lost a lot of schools, so I think we have to be very careful about the cycle we can create.

An older school doesn't get investment. Families start wondering whether the board is committed to it. Enrolment drops. Then declining enrolment becomes another reason not to invest — and eventually someone asks whether the school should close.

That's a cycle we should be trying to break, not help along.

Of course enrolment matters. So does the condition of the building, accessibility, programs, neighbourhood growth and what that school means to the community around it.

And Ward 3 is changing quickly. There is new housing coming, intensification along the LRT corridor and neighbourhoods that may look quite different ten years from now.

I don't want us making a decision in 2027 that we're kicking ourselves for in 2032.

7. If elected, what are the three things you would prioritize during your term as Ward 3 trustee?

First, our neighbourhood schools. I want Ward 3 schools getting their fair share of investment, and I want communities involved before big decisions are made about them — not brought in after most of the work is already done.

Second, the kids who aren't doing well in the system. That means special education, attendance, learning supports, mental health and making sure opportunities aren't determined by which school a child happens to attend. I want us looking closely at outcomes and being willing to change something when it isn't working.

Third, communication and accountability. I want people to know what their trustee is doing. Tell you what's coming to the board, explain my vote and be available when you need me.

Those aren't three separate campaign promises to me. They all come back to the same idea: listen, do the homework and make sure the people affected by decisions have a voice in them.

8. How would you advocate for community partnerships that bring additional resources and programming into Ward 3 schools?

One of the advantages Ward 3 has is that we already have a lot of things around our schools that other communities would love to have — pools, recreation centres, libraries, sports organizations, community groups and people who are willing to help.

Sometimes the job is simply connecting those dots.

Water safety is a good example. Cathy Wever and Prince of Wales have pools right beside them, and Memorial and Adelaide Hoodless are within walking distance of pools. HWDSB already participates in Swim to Survive, so I've been asking why we couldn't find a way to make that opportunity available to many more Grade 3 students.

And that same thinking can apply to food programs, reading, sports, arts, mentorship or after-school programs.

The board doesn't have to build everything itself. Sometimes there is already a great resource five minutes away.

9. What would success look like for Ward 3 schools at the end of your four-year term?

I'd make it more measurable without inventing targets:

I would hope families feel better about sending their kids to Ward 3 schools than they do today.

I'd like to be able to point to buildings that received needed investment, better opportunities for kids, stronger connections between schools and their neighbourhoods, and parents who feel like somebody at the board actually listens to them.

But I also want us looking at the harder stuff: Are more kids coming to school? Are they learning? Are students who need extra help actually getting it?

Four years from now, I don't want to tell people we had a successful term because we passed a lot of motions or wrote good policies.

I want families to be able to point at something and say, “That got better.”

10. Lastly, how can voters learn more about you?

Voters can learn more about my record, why I'm running and what I care about at my website and on social media.

But more importantly, come talk to me. Say hello at a school or community event. Send me a message. Ask me a hard question. Tell me something you think I'm wrong about or something I'm missing.

I've done this job before. I didn't always get it right, and I certainly didn't always get my way. That's democracy.

But I showed up. I did my homework. I explained my decisions. And I never forgot who sent me to that table.

That's the kind of trustee I want to be again.