

Additional questions were given to Candidates after the forum which some have chosen to reply to.

### **Amanda Krebs's** Extra questions from the Trustees All-Candidates Forum

#### Stakeholder groups

#### 1. (RETIRED TEACHERS) Who do trustees work for?

Trustees are stewards for the provincial government. They have to pass balanced budgets for their school district. Now that being said, since underfunding has been an issue in most school districts for some time, trustees are also now advocates for their school districts. This doesn't mean they can ignore balanced budgets though, like the Vancouver school board did and got fired as a result (2016). I pledge to be an advocate but work within the parameters of a school trustee.

#### 2. (RETIRED TEACHERS) How would you advocate for appropriate funding for students in our school district?

I liked the open letters that Patti Bacchus used to write for the Vancouver school board. I would also write open letters, as well as confidential emails to the premier and minister of education. I also want to recruit other trustees from other school districts so we can make one loud voice, rather than many small voices. I believe our funding model should be based on minimum amounts needed to run the district, not the per student funding we currently have. Instead of just complaining of our current funding model, I will work with other trustees to come up with better funding models that we can present.

#### 3. (DPAC)What do you believe are the big issues that affect public education in our province today?

SOGI123 has shown to be a big issue although this shouldn't be an issue at all so I won't talk about it further. The biggest issues are:

- Funding (see above)
- Not enough qualified teachers in BC
- Upcoming teacher negotiations

- Not enough CEAs (either due to budgeting or qualifications, depending on the district)

4. (DPAC)What is your role as a trustee in working with labour unions in education, in particular the upcoming teacher contract negotiations?

The bigger issues (such as pay) are handled at the provincial bargaining table, and local issues will be negotiated between the union and the board of education. What that will look like specifically in our district will depend on what is decided amongst the board.

5. (DPAC)What is your understanding of the core parts of the new School District 83 Strategic Plan, and how will that guide their decision making as a trustee?

I think the strategic plan is well laid out and easy to follow. We have outcomes that we can be monitoring and different strategies to implement. I love the order as well; students first, organizationally efficient, and health and wellness. All of the board decisions need to be backed by the strategic plan. It will act as our template so that we can be consistent and accountable. To see the plan, go here:

[https://sd83.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SD83\\_Strategic\\_Plan\\_Goals\\_Outcomes\\_Strategies-1.pdf](https://sd83.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SD83_Strategic_Plan_Goals_Outcomes_Strategies-1.pdf)

6. (DPAC) Do you think the current supports for vulnerable students and students with special needs are enough? How can we improve?

I think it would be enough if we were actually following what is written for class sizes and composition in the teacher's agreement. That hasn't fully happened for a variety of reasons such as underfunding and not enough qualified staff. CEAs are also in short supply so we often don't have enough CEAs to go around and some fully funded students do not have their CEA for the whole day. These are issues that I will be bringing up when advocating for more funds.

Questions from the public:

1. I am concerned about the proliferation of wireless (especially in and on schools). What is your position?

Wireless has been deemed safe by the WHO. Here is their position:

<https://www.who.int/peh-emf/publications/facts/fs304/en/>

2. What are your thoughts on the need for music programs and gifted programs in school district 83?

I am a strong supporter of such programs. I went to schools which had these programs and they were a huge success. Research has shown that the study of music affects brain development in a positive way that helps with other learning. We also need to make sure that our top students are not ignored. Gifted students who are not being stimulated can often be disruptive in class due to being bored. I (as a teacher) have always done advanced topics for my strong students for that reason.

3. Do you believe that music education is a core part of learning? Will you ensure that music specialist teachers fill those positions?

Yes, see above. Again, I came from a high school that had (has) an amazing music program (Semiahmoo Secondary). If we can find someone to teach it, I would fully support it. We just need to find the money (see question 1 at the beginning).

4. Do you feel we need gifted programs in SD83?

Yes, see #2 and #3. These don't necessarily have to be during school time. These programs often fit nicely as extra-curricular activities, such as after school or at lunch.

5. For the past few years we have managed with an appointed Trustee. All voices seem to heard. Can you tell me why our community now needs a school board?

This isn't really our decision. BC runs on elected school boards. I believe that is important because it makes sure that local views and values are taken into account. It also makes sure that the provincial government has to listen to the people who make up our communities. Can you imagine what bargaining would look like if all the trustees were appointed by the government?

6. What is your vision regarding the future configuration of schools in the district, particularly in Salmon Arm?

I haven't thought of this much, to be honest. I know there are some people who love the middle school model and those who hate it. You can't please everyone. This may be a discussion at a later time but there will be more pressing matters at the beginning. At the end of the day, it doesn't really matter what I as an individual thinks because everyone will be listened to and the best option will be chosen based on the majority. Money will also have a part to play.

7. Students with learning disabilities receive no extra funding at this time. How would you support these Dogwood capable students and address funding issues?

For funding issues, see #1 above. It is true that some students who need extra help are not funded, although some are. This is why having extra CEAs in schools is of value. CEAs can then help not just the funded students, but also the students who are under the radar and need extra help. Having appropriate class sizes and composition will also help with this issue because then teachers have more time to help everybody in the classroom.

8. What concrete involvement have you had at the school board in the past year?

While I haven't been able to go to many board meetings (my husband has night school and I have 2 kids aged 6 and 8), I have kept up to date for the last 2 years by reading the minutes and talking to friends of mine who work in the school district. I am quite knowledgeable about what is going on and have

read through the Watson Report in full. I am pleased to see most of the recommendations have been dealt with by Mike McKay but we still have a long way to go!

9. The DAC, formerly Salmon Arm Elementary, is for sale. Will it stay on the market or do you have other plans?

From what I've read, it will be too expensive to keep due to all the problems and the cost to bring it up to today's standard. That being said, it should be something all the new trustees should talk about to make sure everyone is on the same page.

10. Do you support schools having GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances)?

Yes!

11. Do you support the teaching of sexual health in schools? Why?

Yes! In an ideal world, it shouldn't have to be taught in schools because all parents would do this at home. We don't live in an ideal world though and the fact is, many parents don't talk about it at home.

## **Lawren Richards**

Extra questions from the Trustees All-Candidates Forum

Lawren Richards

For additional information or to ask questions of me directly, find my election page at <http://www.facebook.com/LawrenForTrustee> .

Stakeholder groups

1. (RETIRED TEACHERS) Who do trustees work for?

Trustees work for the public (that is, the community) in order to provide community guidance, governance, and strategic direction to the SD83 administration, which is legally bound to the

Ministry of Education and ethically required to act for the betterment of the community.

2. (RETIRED TEACHERS) How would you advocate for appropriate funding for students in our school district?

The current funding model, as I understand it, allows for dollars per student but no core portion for overhead, which is like budgeting for buying a house with the right number of bedrooms but no living room or kitchen. I would advocate for a more realistic model by approaching the Ministry of Education; elected government representatives; and by working in tandem with other BC school districts to present a solid front and a unified messaging campaign. I am tired of a funding model which forces us to pack our children into schools like sardines in a can, with little or no mentorship, oversight, or extracurricular growth opportunities. That said, we have to live with our current funding model now, and I will look more closely at other school districts to learn best practices for distributing funds in a way that improves the educational experience of all the students. This is a complex issue but I am committed to addressing it in a community-driven, transparent decision-making process.

3. (DPAC) What do you believe are the big issues that affect public education in our province today?

I would really like to hear from DPAC and other stakeholders what \*they\* think are the big issues affecting public education today, but as a parent with children in the system myself, the primary problem I see is that we don't put students first. Education is still underfunded, with a funding model that just doesn't work for rural communities. There are no extracurricular activities to speak of so students hang out with friends at lunchtime and after school on school grounds with little or no adult supervision or mentorship. Drug use at many schools is rampant, with vaping in the

classroom a common occurrence even in middle school—and I believe most parents are unaware of the variety and potency of drugs and toxins that can be vaped and are freely available on campus. “Inclusion” inside the schools and “consultation” outside the schools are buzzwords thrown about with very little funding, training, or implementation happening on the ground. Good policies on technology are not in place, which means students are often using cell phones to text in class instead of laptops to assist with learning. These are the issues I’ve seen but I would be very much interested in hearing more from other stakeholders.

4. (DPAC)What is your role as a trustee in working with labour unions in education, in particular the upcoming teacher contract negotiations? I don’t know the legalities of labour/province/board interactions as well as I would like (and I will learn more if elected), but the role of the Board of Trustees is to provide strategic guidance and governance to the school district administration. As such, I see the students as the primary “reason for being” of the school system, and teachers the most vital of those supports; if the board or the administration has a role in advocating for contract provisions, it would be in support of the goals outlined in the SD83 strategy.

5. (DPAC)What is your understanding of the core parts of the new School District 83 Strategic Plan, and how will that guide their decision making as a trustee? A Strategic Plan usually looks great on paper, and this one is no different: it seems well thought out and has a broad set of strategies to support goals which I as a parent and taxpayer fully embrace.

However, the devil is in the details and a key part of implementing our strategy will be in determining the target measurements for the outcomes we want, because if we want to achieve these outcomes we’re going to have to put funds into supports, and we’re going to have to have the

buy-in of the stakeholders. I've helped many organizations write and implement strategic plans.

It's not going to be easy, and we're going to have to make a lot compromises, but I am committed to

having a transparent, open, consultative process for determining the measures of success for the

plan, and for implementing an appropriate budget.

6. (DPAC) Do you think the current supports for vulnerable students and students with special needs are enough? How can we improve?

Current supports for vulnerable and special needs students are not enough; in my opinion part of

the problem is in a lack of funding, part may be in proper distribution of funding, and part is in the

general environment of the schools in general. Any time we take several hundred children of

varying ages—whether those children have a special designation or not—and pack them in a

building with a few dozen adults we will have problems without a lot of teacher training and student

supports. And that's in the younger grades. Add peer pressure, teenage rebellion, and the 24/7

digital culture without good policies and training in place, and even the average teen become

vulnerable, much less the myriad of kids who have special needs and mental health issues. More

supports are needed for identified vulnerable students, but we also have many unidentified

vulnerable students who are falling through the cracks. I am 100% in support of funding special

needs, but I think one of the ways we can improve supports for those children is to speak with one

voice across the province for children as a whole: not for one need versus another, but for the fact

that ALL of our children are individuals with needs and that we should be looking at better models of

funding and education. A diagnosis of disability is great, but why can't we (parents or teachers) just

identify that "this kid needs help with ..." and have that need supported properly.

We are wasting



money, time, and lives requiring that every child have a diagnosis and a designation in order to get help, and this is not a district problem it is a provincial one. It will require a massive grass-roots movement to change and I believe that our district can lead that if the parents, teachers, and taxpayers support it.

Questions from the public:

1. I am concerned about the proliferation of wireless (especially in and on schools). What is your position?

As a former consultant in the telecom industry and as a parent, I too am concerned about the proliferation of wireless in the schools. Yes, it is handy to pop out our phones and hop online, but there is more evidence compiling that the barrage of microwaves to which we are subjecting ourselves may be harmful. Regardless of that, however, as a parent I would prefer that my children's online activity at school be restricted to supervised time doing educational activities—something that a wired LAN can handle much faster and better than wireless anyway. I recognize, though, that cost is a factor in the decision, and we as a community need to decide where we are comfortable with the associated costs and risks.

2. What are your thoughts on the need for music programs and gifted programs in school district 83?

Music is an important part of learning and creative expression, as are the activities which are explored in the gifted program. I would love to see more creative activities available and believe that we should be supporting all students in achieving their potential.

3. Do you believe that music education is a core part of learning? Will you ensure that music specialist teachers fill those positions?

Music is an important part of learning and as such should be integrated into the curriculum, with specialized music programs offered as appropriate. Creative learning and the arts should be

available at all levels of education. I can guarantee that I will advocate for music and other arts programs but since the budget will require much negotiation and compromise I can't ensure any particular outcomes except that the process will be open and transparent.

4. Do you feel we need gifted programs in SD83?

I love the gifted programs we have and would like to see them expanded to all students that want to participate; I believe most students would benefit from more hands on, interactive education.

5. For the past few years we have managed with an appointed Trustee. All voices seem to heard. Can you tell me why our community now needs a school board?

Mike McKay is a very capable person and in general has done a great job; however, he is not a member of our community nor does he represent it. We need an elected school board which can bring the myriad views in our community to the table to negotiate solutions and decisions.

All voices were not being heard; the nod to "consultation" with the community was often no more than a public meeting to inform us of what he had decided to do, not to include the voice of the community in his decisions.

6. What is your vision regarding the future configuration of schools in the district, particularly in Salmon Arm?

With an emphasis that this is \*my\* vision and not necessarily that of the other nominees to the board, I would like to see a school system that is personal enough for the students that the principal & staff know each and every student, not just the "troublemakers." Whether that means smaller schools, a longer amount of time at each school, or a different, out-of-the-box kind of solution is yet to be explored, but I think too many kids fall through the cracks in our current configuration.

7. Students with learning disabilities receive no extra funding at their time. How would you support these Dogwood capable students and address funding issues?

Advocate, advocate, advocate. We can't keep stretching pennies when we need dollars; there are too many unfunded needs right now with lives going to waste. Any child with an identified academic or social need should have supports early; our current system of waiting sometimes years for a diagnosis and then not often even funding the support is ridiculous. If a kindergartener is struggling with reading, for instance, there are interventions that could happen immediately and yet all too often we let the opportunity slide by while we ask for testing and diagnosis. The identification of disabilities has become a tool for delaying intervention rather than an aid to ongoing intervention. I am a big believer in need-based funding not diagnosis-based funding.

8. What concrete involvement have you had at the school board in the past year?

I attended a single board meeting, special meeting for "consultation" about the decision to sell the DAC, and earlier meetings to hear Mike McKay's plans for the district. In addition I read the report of recommendations from the consultant hired early in the process, and the Strategic Plan. I've talked to parents, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders about issues facing the schools and our students.

9. The DAC, formerly Salmon Arm Elementary, is for sale. Will it stay on the market or do you have other plans?

I was very unhappy with the lack of consultation with the community regarding the sale of the DAC; a meeting to inform us of a decision which has already been made is not "consultation."

However, I don't have plans for the DAC per se; I want to hear more from the community

regarding the true costs and benefits of the building to our community. I am confident that Mike McKay and the school administration looked at the financial costs and benefits of the building but I don't know that they fully considered (or considered at all) the "soft" benefits, or alternative options which the community might think worthwhile for keeping the DAC as a community centre which it has been for many years.

10. Do you support schools having GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances)?

I don't know the nuances of what a GSA involves but if it supports inclusion, kindness, and compassion, I'm all for it.

11. Do you support the teaching of sexual health in schools? Why?

Yes—I support the teaching of health in schools, including sexual health. I believe there also should be some discussion of emotional health and how it is tied to physical health including decisions on sex. I don't believe the schools should be telling kids what to think, but they should be teaching them TO think. Some parents may be distressed that their children think independently about these topics, but I believe that with some guided discussions, kids will make better decisions, at least better than if guided primarily by peer pressure which is often the case today.

### **Terry-Mae Sinclair**

Extra questions from the Trustees All-Candidates Forum

Without taking up time and space repeating answers – I have tried to shorten some answers to the following.....

1. Who do trustees work for?

Trustees are elected by the community. Our responsibility is to ensure the School District is run appropriately – fiduciary duty regarding stewardship of finances, programs and support systems are in place for students, educators and all support personal. A well functioning board works for ALL education partners making consensus decisions while using as a precursor - 'what is end result for students?'

2. How would you advocate for appropriate funding for students in our school district?

I believe we have to lobby the government with a strong united voice. By networking with provincial trustees, and other partners (BCTF, CUPE, etc.) in an effort to put forth a unanimous front providing the facts and rational showing that the current funding model does not address the needs of our students/schools, we are underfunded! I think funding for all physical assets such as buildings, fixtures, furniture, materials, maintenance, etc. should be separate from funding required for education of students.

3. What do you believe are the big issues that affect public education in our province today?

I believe the funding issue stated above is one of the biggest issues. All stakeholders desire more time, resources, etc. to do the job they are required to perform, especially when more and more is asked of all those employed in the education sector. Proper funding would go a long way in relieving shortages in our schools in all areas of teaching, programs, etc. which is also a major issue. The public needs to be informed!!! We need parents and the public to help lobby for funding, personal, resources.

4. What is your role as a trustee in working with labour unions in education, in particular the upcoming teacher contract negotiations?

As a trustee we should be involved in and aware of ALL contract negotiations. The working conditions and terms of employment for all employees must be one of the top priorities of a well functioning board. Satisfied employees will result in better working environment for all which in turn is a benefit to students. Listening to the needs of employees and supporting them is in the best interest of school district as a whole.

5. What is your understanding of the core parts of the new School District 83 Strategic Plan, and how will that guide their decision making as a trustee?

This is a very detailed and well thought out plan and I look forward to working with the board members to share thoughts ideas to ensure we are all on the same wavelength. The core parts – students first (absolutely), organizationally efficient (no other way) and health and wellness (what we all want for our children). I am confident the templates in place will serve as a guide as we learn and grow to serve the needs of our students and the education community.

6. Do you think the current supports for vulnerable students and students with special needs are enough? How can we improve?

No, I do not believe there is enough support for many of our students, again as stated above...this is partly due to funding and staffing. But it may also have to do with the appropriate allocation of funds, which the board would have to look into, through consultation with district staff and relative education partners. Information and understanding are the keys to improving any situation.

Questions from the public:

1. I am concerned about the proliferation of wireless (especially in and on schools). What is your position?

I am confident our schools are aware of the concerns around this issue, and have addressed it - the health of all our students and staff is important.

2. What are your thoughts on the need for music programs and gifted

programs in school district 83?

I totally support all programs for music, arts, gifted, etc. We must provide as many options and opportunities to our children as possible, everyone has their own gifts and talents and we must provide the resources for each student to explore them and develop them.

3. Do you believe that music education is a core part of learning? Will you ensure that music specialist teachers fill those positions?

Yes, absolutely I will advocate for music education and music teachers in our school district. I will be a positive voice at the table and ensure that the board is diligent in obtaining the correct information, crunch the numbers, address staffing etc., in order to that we do all that we can to make this a reality.

4. Do you feel we need gifted programs in SD83?

Yes absolutely as stated in the above answers I support and will advocate for any program that addresses a need for students. Gifted students are often overlooked or misread ....I fully support 'gifted programs'. My motto: where there is a need – address it.

5. For the past few years we have managed with an appointed Trustee. All voices seem to heard. Can you tell me why our community now needs a school board?

School boards are 'elected' by the people, legislated by the government of BC, through the Minister of Education. Local governance is very important – the voices of the community must be involved in the public education of their children, allowing local conditions, concerns and resources to influence decisions.

6. What is your vision regarding the future configuration of schools in the district, particularly in Salmon Arm?

The configuration of schools have changed over the years – closing schools, establishing a middle school, changing SAS to two campuses, etc. These changes are necessary based on the increase or decline of student registrations. I understand the desire to keep rural schools open, to open a downtown elementary school, etc. and should the board have to consider a reconfiguration I would ensure all avenues were explored.

7. Students with learning disabilities receive no extra funding at this time.

How would you support these Dogwood capable students and address funding issues?

My understanding is that there is funding available once a student has been diagnosed or categorized as special needs. As has been the theme for most of these questions a major role in providing services and resources for all the needs of our students, regardless of what that might look like, is funding and available staff. I will work diligently to ensure the board does its duty in addressing areas that require attention.

8. What concrete involvement have you had at the school board in the past year?

Over the past several months I have attended board meetings, DPAC meetings, spoke with councilors, director of instruction, principals and teachers. Read the Watson report as well as minutes of board meetings, financial reports and budgets and items / articles on the district website.

9. The DAC, formerly Salmon Arm Elementary, is for sale. Will it stay on the market or do you have other plans?

The decision has been made regarding the sale of this building, and the new board will be obligated to abide by that decision. I believe it was the right choice....especially in respect to our financial limitations as noted over and over again in the attempt to answer the above questions.

10. Do you support schools having GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances)?

I support schools that do not divide – to have students and staff treat each other with respect is the key to a healthy environment for all.

11. Do you support the teaching of sexual health in schools? Why?

Teaching sexual health in schools has always been part of the public education system. I know that this has changed over the years and there are current changes being considered. Many parents feel it is their responsibility to discuss/inform/teach their children about certain aspects of sexual health. I believe the board has the responsibility to ensure they do their homework regarding any changes to the teaching of sexual health in our schools. Ensuring parents, teachers, councilors and all those involved in this area are fully informed regarding content, what and how it will be implemented - as there are several options on the Minister of Education website.

## **Marianne VanBuskirk's** Extra questions from the Trustees All-Candidates Forum

### Stakeholder groups

1. (RETIRED TEACHERS) Who do trustees work for?

- trustees work tirelessly for the students – ensuring that the most beneficial services are available to the students in terms of support, resources, staffing.
- trustees work for the Ministry of Education – they can be the “messengers” of the government in terms of making policy and abiding by the School Act.
- trustees work for the electoral public – being accountable for the huge budget which is entrusted to them in order to spend funds prudently and transparently to help maximize student achievement and well-being.

- trustees work for all stakeholders in the school district (CUPE, NOSTA, FNEC, DPAC, NOSPVBBA, etc.) who have entrusted them to make the right decisions to best benefit the students.

## 2. (RETIRED TEACHERS) How would you advocate for appropriate funding for students in our school district?

- first we require a needs assessment of our school district and then prioritize the greatest need
- when we advocate, we can't just approach the government with a giant list or some "general" requests
- I would start with choosing one or two top-priority issues and researching the issue(s) thoroughly and then provide specific examples of why the need is so urgent (it is more easy to defend something if it has been properly researched.)
- I am a true believer in the statement "in order to advocate for the student, we need to empower the student" – so, I would actually have students as part of my team – arrange for a meeting with the powers-that-be and let the students do some talking too. (And teachers; and support staff.) To demonstrate to the government that we have thoroughly done the research to support our demands, then we will be further ahead.
- There is an 8-step process which I find very useful for advocating for our students: 1. Know the issues; 2. Know our school district; 3. Know where we stand; 4. Know the decision makers; 5. Know how to contact the decision makers; 6. Know the calendar for decision making; 7. Know how to state our case; 8. Know how to reach the public.
- I would further add to this: get the media on our side; if we can't get answers within the school district then we must meet with government officials in Victoria (also provide an invitation for them to visit us) and discuss that we have tried all measures and now it's time for us to get support and assistance from the government.



3. (DPAC)What do you believe are the big issues that affect public education in our province today? There is a definite teacher shortage. This is likely the biggest issue affecting public education right now in BC. Other issues include: too much focus on capital spending rather than program spending (yes, this means hiring teachers and support staff.) Currently many folks are worried about SOGI 123 – sadly, many are misinformed and keep calling this a “curriculum” whereas it is merely one small tool which teachers can use. The main umbrella which encompasses all to do with SOGI, SOGI 123, LGBTQ2+ etc. is the umbrella of inclusivity. If we want to discuss more localized issues, i.e. in SD83, then I’d say that a shortage of teachers is number one. Also, the low morale of teachers, support staff, CUPE workers – we all need more staff and more hours in all areas!

4. (DPAC)What is your role as a trustee in working with labour unions in education, in particular the upcoming teacher contract negotiations?

The School Act states that one of the primary functions of boards of education is “establishing conditions of employment for employees.” In Salmon Arm, SD83 is the largest employer and it comprises mainly of NOSTA and CUPE members. Basically – we need to support our labour unions to the fullest. We have a responsibility of maintaining good relationships with management, teaching and support staff. I believe the Provincial Collective Agreement will expire next June 2019 and this means preparing now. I am determined to be the voice of our employees of our school district - to thoroughly research their needs and to report this to the Ministry of Education and BCPSEA. We can get support from the BCTF which has expert experience in the collective bargaining process.

5. (DPAC) What is your understanding of the core parts of the new School District 83 Strategic Plan, and how will that guide their decision making as a trustee?

- Three strategic priorities have been stated: Students first; Organizational Efficiency; and Culture of Health and Wellness.
- As trustees we must always question ourselves in the decision-making process – is the current decision that we are about to make directly beneficial to students? All students in the district or just to a select group or region?
- I feel that “organizational efficiency” has been addressed very well as of late. In particular with, the proper running of the School Board. Many policies have been introduced/passed to which we are now expected to adhere.
- I also feel that big steps have been made to do with “culture of health and wellness” but we need to do more. Both in the mental well-being and physical well-being of our students AND our staff. We can always do more.

6. (DPAC) Do you think the current supports for vulnerable students and students with special needs are enough? How can we improve?

We can always improve! Teachers and support staff already have too much on their plate with too few hours to deal with these overflowing plates. Many, many hours have been spent (usually in school-based teams) designing IEPs for students – yet these “recipes” for an individual’s success are not properly being used or implemented. Kind of difficult to do without the proper resources and funding. We need to cut down on wait times for these vulnerable students who require the services immediately. Obviously this means hiring more specialized staff. For example, it’s a very long wait time for a variety of testing to take place – psychoanalytical testing for example is something that could be required for a student in order to then say, yes, we can provide funds for that child – but it’s difficult if the wait times are months or years...

## Questions from the public:

1. I am concerned about the proliferation of wireless (especially in and on schools). What is your position?

- Yes, there was a lady who discussed this issue with me directly after the trustee forum. She also provided me with brochures about wireless networks. I feel I need to do more research on this. I would like to trust that our technology department and our safety committees are also looking at research in this area.

2. What are your thoughts on the need for music programs and gifted programs in school district 83?

- I am quite sure the entire community knows how I feel about music programs. Since key individuals have retired from SD83, or some central staff music positions have not been fulfilled (i.e. a music co-ordinator) then it is very difficult to sustain a strong music program, like which we have had in the past. I have been shocked to hear that some schools are not receiving very many music hours. Again, I assume that this is to do with the teacher shortage and the lack of specialists moving into SD83.
- I apologize, I don't know the state of our gifted programs in SD83 at this time so I can't comment on our need just now. However, our past gifted programs have been exemplary and I'm guessing that likely due to retirement, perhaps these positions have not been filled?

3. Do you believe that music education is a core part of learning? Will you ensure that music specialist teachers fill those positions?

- Of course. There is much research that demonstrates that music education is a core part of learning. As a former language teacher, I maintain my position in that music is a base language which all children should learn. It incorporates math, language arts, fine arts – just a whole umbrella of learning, making tangible connections to life-long learning.

- Yes, I would like to ensure that music specialists are hired in our district again. We need to go on a recruitment spree – these teacher shortages are not just relevant in SD83 – but province-wide.

4. Do you feel we need gifted programs in SD83?

Yes, based on a needs assessment we obviously need to address the need for a gifted program. Surely this means that we need gifted testing to occur – if we haven't got the staff to provide this testing – then it comes down to recruitment again.

5. For the past few years we have managed with an appointed Trustee. All voices seem to be heard. Can you tell me why our community now needs a school board?

- This is an excellent question. Yes, I feel that trustees are part of a team working together with more views and more open minds. Although Mr. McKay had done a terrific job as our sole trustee, it's always best to have good governance in an elected board so that healthy debates can occur and that a team consensus can be acquired.

- We will have more community support if an elected board is hard at work. The electoral public instills trust in us and feels that there is a connection – they can approach us regionally or centrally – I think the community would feel more connected to an elected board, obviously, because the community had some say in the matter.

- I'm hoping for a cohesive board of team players working closely with central staff and all stakeholders.

6. What is your vision regarding the future configuration of schools in the district, particularly in Salmon Arm?

- I need to be very honest here. When I began to work in this school district in 1993 we had the healthiest of school rivalries between the two Junior secondary schools. I worked at the former Jackson Jr. (gr. 8/9/10) for four years and all of us (staff, students, parents) "competed" somewhat with Shuswap Jr. in absolutely everything (athletics, math

competitions, science fairs, cheerleading squads, etc.) School spirit was high. District resources from textbooks to music specialists were used to their best capacity. Staff and students at both schools demonstrated high-achieving work ethic every single day.

- To continue with my honesty, I feel like the middle-school concept has killed all of that. AND, this in turn has damaged the elementary schools which have grade 5 students who are terrific but I feel an elementary school would be better off with grade 7 leaders.
- I don't know the solution to this in terms of the future configuration of schools but I feel it is time once again to strike a committee to assess our school structure as it is. My gut feeling tells me that we moved to a middle school model based on our growth and based on the physical buildings which we had available at the time. It pains and saddens me to say that I feel that the children going through the middle school system do not have the luxury of going through the two junior high schools which we had.

7. Students with learning disabilities receive no extra funding at their time. How would you support these Dogwood capable students and address funding issues?

- I'm not sure about the accuracy of this statement (no extra funding for students with learning disabilities.) I believe there is extra funding for them but in all likelihood there is a shortage of staff and time to properly assist these students and their teachers to achieve their highest potential.

8. What concrete involvement have you had at the school board in the past year? In the past year – mainly just attending most school board meetings. I also have attended almost every single district presentation which has been open to the community. Of course, before I went on parental leave, I was always at the school board office for administrative meetings and also I sat on plenty of committees (teacher evaluation, policy, math, teacher recruitment – many more!)

9. The DAC, formerly Salmon Arm Elementary, is for sale. Will it stay on the market or do you have other plans? Our Secretary-Treasurer will have the best answer to this question but of course, if this building is not earning profits for the entire school district (thinking of all students in the district) then we need to sell it. Otherwise it will become too run down and the repairs will be expensive. I used to work in the building beside the DAC – the former J.L. Jackson Jr. Secondary. I cried when it was torn down but it was too costly to repair and the school district was losing money to maintain it. Most likely, although I'd rather consult with the Secretary Treasurer, the DAC is not earning profits to support our programs (i.e. it's not the best real estate for our buck.) If the building is not salvageable to make repairs and transform it into a future school if our community continues to grow, then we should try to sell it as soon as possible.

10. Do you support schools having GSAs (Gay-Straight Alliances)? I support any school which has a clear policy on "Inclusion". A school where everyone is welcome is the best school. Much work has been done amongst BC teachers of inclusive education (TIE-BC) which used to be known as the Special Education Association. This name better reflects the progression of inclusion not only in the schools but also in the profession. It's about raising awareness and keeping students and staff safe in schools.

11. Do you support the teaching of sexual health in schools? Why? Yes I support the teaching of sexual health in schools – but I would like to see the former system of specialized sex-ed teachers in place at all schools. The specifics of these programs should not be added on to a classroom teacher's busy workload but I feel that specialized teachers with excellent experience in dealing with class, group or individual questions make the most sense. These programs give students realistic, age-appropriate factual info about sexual practices. This would assist

us in supporting our third prioritized goal “Culture of Health and Wellness”.