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Support Our Students Alberta(SOS Alberta) has created this **2017 Public School Trustee Citizen Handbook** for the public to use as municipal campaigns rev up towards election day, October 16. Citizens are encouraged to print off or email these questions to their local trustee candidates. Have it handy at the door when candidates come knocking or just as reference material when researching your school board candidates. You can ask as many or as few of the questions as you feel are appropriate. You can record the answers yourself or ask that your candidate answer and email them back to you or to [SOS Alberta](#) directly! We consider this handbook to be a fluid document and would love to have people contribute and participate in gathering further questions and we can post any new ideas as we go!

Email: info@supportourstudents.ca

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SOSAlberta/>

Twitter: [@SOSAlberta](https://twitter.com/SOSAlberta)

Public Education:

- Support Our Students Alberta defines public education as a system free of barriers, financial or otherwise, that accepts ALL students and is 100% funded by government.
- Currently in Alberta public education includes K-12 Public, Catholic/Separate and Francophone schools. All are funded by the provincial government but user fees can be applied including for alternative programming and transportation. Not all programming is equitable or available across the province.

School Board/Trustee Election Quick Facts:

- Public school board trustees are democratically elected representatives of public schools in Alberta which include Public, Catholic/Separate and Francophone boards.
- While charter schools are 100% publicly funded they do not have trustee representation on local school boards and do not have publicly elected boards.
- Private schools do receive public dollars, but are not part of local, elected school boards and also do not have publicly elected boards.
- All Albertans who are eligible to vote in municipal elections have the right to vote for a school trustee and participate in their local school board.

Role of Trustee: Trustees are elected officials comprising a school board. They act in variety of roles including:

- setting school division goals that ensure students have the knowledge and skills that enable them to be better prepared for life;
- planning school division priorities based on provincial curriculum requirements, community input, available resources and best practices in education;
- developing and implementing an annual budget for the school division based on curriculum requirements and strategic priorities;
- developing policies to guide school division administration and employees toward division goals;
- ensuring residents of the school division are regularly informed about the work and achievements of the school division;
- advocating on behalf of the school community to decision-makers and stakeholders on important issues that affect education, and to ensure education is a top public priority;

- ensuring regular opportunities for public input and access;
- evaluating the school division's chief executive officer – the superintendent of schools. ([ASBA, Trustee Election Brochure](#))

More information about the role of trustees, school boards and elections can be found at <http://www.asba.ab.ca/being-a-school-trustee/>
<https://education.alberta.ca/school-board-elections/school-board-elections-guide/>

Questions for Trustee Candidates

Name:

City/Town:

School Board:

Ward/Region:

Public education:

1. Why is public education important to you?
2. Do you support publicly funded privately run schools? **Y/N**
3. Do you support school fees, including fees for transportation and extracurricular activities and extra fees for alternative school programming? **Y/N**
4. Should publicly funded schools be able to deny students admission? **Y/N**
5. Identify areas where equity can be improved in Alberta education, what will you do to improve equity in these areas?

Curriculum:

Sexual Health

1. Do you support science-based, age-appropriate and non-judgemental comprehensive sexual health in schools? **Y/N**

2. Do you support students learning about issues of consent, body agency and body autonomy? **Y/N**

3. Should sexual orientation and gender identity be included as part of comprehensive sexual health education? **Y/N**

General

4. Are you in favour of the current curriculum re-write? **Y/N**

5. What is your understanding of the role of a trustee in curriculum implementation? *(For Example, do you believe a trustee has the authority to change/fix math curriculum and it's delivery in the classroom?)*

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Schools

1. Do you support GSAs in all Alberta schools? **Y/N**

2. Do you support "outing" LGBTQ youth? **Y/N**

3. Should LGBTQ issues be a required part of the Alberta K-12 program of studies? **Y/N**

4. Do you support the creation of one provincial sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression policy for all schools? **Y/N**

Mental Health Supports

1. How do you see your role as trustee in addressing the rise of mental health concerns showing up in schools?
2. What are some of the challenges that create barriers for supporting student mental wellness/mental health? What are some solutions to those barriers?
3. What do you believe is the role of school board in working to support mental wellness?

Inclusion/Special Education

1. Do you support inclusion initiatives in your board? How can inclusion be improved?
2. What are the biggest issues facing students with disabilities in the classroom? How will you address these concerns?

Assessment policy

1. Do you approve of standardized testing including provincial achievement/diploma exams and the international PISA test as a means to assess student, school and board performance?
2. What are your ideas/solutions for making sure assessment is student focused and is used to productively improve future learning outcomes?

General Issues

1. What is the most pressing issue(s) for your school board?
2. What are your ideas or solutions for addressing these issues?

Financial

1. What is the most critical budget issue in your school board? How will you work to improve this issue?
2. Do you support parent and school generated fundraising as a means to fill funding gaps in the system?