

The Trustee Vote: The Most Important Vote of All
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October 2004

As you read this title and byline, you are probably chuckling and wondering: Whom is she kidding? While I have the greatest respect for the mayoral and city councilor candidates and their work, I am sincere when I say that the most important “X” you will place on your ballot has to do with schools. Why? Because today’s students are tomorrow’s citizens. Policy decisions made today affect our quality of life and the character of our society twenty years down the road. Who makes these decisions? Trustees! Thus, it behooves all of us to pay attention to what is happening in our schools and whom we elect to the decision-making table.

What do trustees do, any how?

The primary task for trustees is to build effective policy that meets the needs of the students in our city. To do so, trustees must ask key questions of their constituents and the Board professionals (Superintendent, administrative experts, principals, teachers): Are all students fulfilling their potential and graduating as contributing citizens? What challenges stand in the way of success? What should our priorities be?

Another duty is to speak up for students and pursue sustainable and adequate funding in a collaborative manner on their behalf. Despite recent increases to education funding and the government’s endorsement of 87 out of 95 recommendations of the Learning Commission report, not all student needs are being met. For example, there are still many children in large classes, there are newer neighbourhoods lacking schools, and there are decisions to be made on what constitutes “basic” education items.

A third task is to monitor that public dollars are spent wisely and on community priorities for education.

And finally trustees must regularly communicate what is happening in schools in an honest and forthright way, and bring people together to discuss how to achieve continuous improvement in schools.

Make a Difference: Vote!

Some people believe that because they don’t have kids in schools, they are not informed enough to vote. There are five candidates running in this area: The Edmonton Catholic Schools candidates include Marilyn Bergstra, Judy Buddle, and Doug McCarthy. The Edmonton Public School candidates include George Nicholson and me. I encourage you to contact us with your questions and ideas. Then on Monday, October 18, please take the time to place an “X” on your ballot for one of the trustee candidates. Your vote counts!