



SUPPORTING ALBERTA STUDENTS by advocating for excellence in education through maximum parental choice

School Trustee Candidate Questionnaire

Dear Trustee Candidate,

[Parents for Choice in Education \(PCE\)](#) is an Alberta-based, non-profit organization that supports Alberta students by advocating for excellence in education through maximum parental choice.

The following eight questions are being provided to public and Catholic school trustee candidates across Alberta to inform voters on key educational issues for the October 16th election. All questions include embedded hyperlinks to provide necessary context and background understanding.

Please record your responses in the attached Candidate Response Form, answering with “Y” (yes), “S” (somewhat) or “N” (no) to each question.

We expect that candidates who respond with “somewhat” to any of the questions will provide the nuance of their answer in the “Additional Comments” section.

Please email your completed Candidate Response Form to admin@parentchoice.ca by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29th, 2017.

Responses will be published on our website (www.parentchoice.ca/2017_trustee_election) starting October 1st and shared through our mailing list and social media to thousands of voters who are highly engaged in the area of education. We will also distribute responses to other groups to share with their networks.

Candidates who receive the survey, but choose not to respond will be noted publicly.

Thank you for your participation and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

=====

***NOTE: Ahmed Knowmadic did not complete the chart provided to indicate “Y”, “N” or “S” to each question. Only the following written responses were provided.**

1. Do you agree that all education laws, school board policies and best practices in Alberta should comply with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Family Law Act* when it comes to the right of parents to direct, and be fully informed about, all aspects of their children’s education?

I assume this question is regarding the GSA debate currently happening in our province. Let me be clear, I am completely against 'outing' children. I would also like to clear up some misinformation.

The provincial government's actions is not saying that all parents are bad and that they are unable to take part in their child's education. What they are saying is who knows your child's gender identity is not up to the teachers nor parents to understand.

This isn't the same as your child committing a crime, hurting themselves or skipping a class. This is a very personal and private thing for your child that they are sharing with people on confidence. If your child feels safe or okay telling you then they will.

This is very simple to understand and is not remotely similar to joining a parent-teacher association or volunteering for field trips.

2. Do you agree that the Alberta government should maintain current levels of [funding to support a wide range of educational choices](#), including public, Catholic, independent, faith-based schools, charter and alternative schools, and all forms of home education?

Public dollars should only support public schools – full stop. It is extremely inefficient for the government to fund private schooling. What I do support is extra funding in place for high needs students. This can include students with disabilities or students requiring extra levels of support to succeed.

3. Currently, provincial legislation requires that parents be provided notice when a program of study includes subject-matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion or human sexuality ([School Act](#), section 50.1). Do you agree that this notice and opt-out opportunity should continue to be provided?

It has been proven that not teaching sex education leads to a rise in sexually transmitted diseases and higher rates of teen pregnancy. This is not a matter of opinion but it is a public health issue. Students must be required to take our sexual education programming.

4. Do you agree that curriculum development [must be transparent and focused on clearly defined and foundational basic skill outcomes](#) in core subject areas?

I agree that curriculum development should be transparent. However, we should ensure we don't step in the way of curriculum experts and those tasked with the current review. I'm not sure of the degree of transparency you are inquiring about but I would prefer some more clarity from you.

5. Do you agree that [high quality standardized testing](#) must be used to ensure education accountability is maintained for students who are covering Alberta curriculum?

While there needs to be a standard, we should not be pushing teachers to teach for a specific test. We have had this debate and I feel the current model is effective. In addition, I support the current weight of our diploma exams.

6. When it comes to communicating student progress for Grades 7-12, would you agree that an objective and clear reporting system of percentages and class averages (as opposed to descriptive terms only) is important?

You can never be 100% objective with a student's progress. Placing all students in pre-determined boxes is not ideal and will ultimately leave students behind. If you look at my platform, I propose launching a review of academic streaming to ensure students are not lost in our education system.

7. Do you agree parents should be permitted to choose the location, type and style of education (i.e. home-based, language, interest, faith-based, etc.) that best suits their child, free of bureaucratic, union or government coercion?

This is a very leading question. What do you mean by government coercion? Please define this clearly if you would like me to answer.

What I will say is that public dollars should fund students in the public education system. Our school board is great in the sense that we do offer a multitude of options based on language and personal interest.

8. In the Spring of 2017 it was revealed that an organization in charge of a government-recommended website was linking children to sexually graphic material, resulting in a severe violation of public trust and the endangerment of children. Do you agree those involved should be removed from authority and access to children in Alberta schools?

People of the same sex hugging each other is not 'sexually graphic materials.'