



## Trisha Estabrooks, Edmonton Public School Board Trustee Candidate for Ward D

How would you advocate for sustainable and adequate funding for our students?

Advocacy requires clear communication with those for whom we are advocating for -- kids and families -- and those whose minds we want to

change, such as the provincial government. If re-elected, I will continue my conversations with parents and Edmontonians about the current funding framework and its detrimental impact on the budgets of growing school divisions. The current provincial government likes to say the current funding structure for schools boards, known as the weighted moving average, is predictable. And while it might be predictable, it is neither sustainable or adequate for what the students of Edmonton Public and their families need. Ultimately this funding formula results in less money for students enrolled with Edmonton Public. Advocacy for a fair funding formula requires a continued, coordinated approach with other metro school boards and transparency with constituents about critical information, including how a new funding formula affects our classrooms, grants that support students with special needs and our ability to hire staff.

What are your priorities for education outcomes for Alberta's students?

All students must be given the opportunity to reach their full potential. EPSB will need to continue to work hard, and with the community, on implementing our recently passed board policy on anti-racism and equity to ensure that all students have equal opportunities for reaching their full potential. While graduation rates have remained steady within EPSB, graduation rates for First Nations, Metis, Inuit students require greater focus. I would like to see an expansion of EPSB's First Nations, Metis, Inuit graduation coaches. Alberta has consistently placed high on the Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA results. And while the PISA scores are one indicator of Alberta's strong education system, it will be interesting to see if those results change in 2022, when the next set of results are due to be released. Recovering from the pandemic will be a major focus for the next term of the Board of Trustees and will require continued analysis, tracking of data, and investments in the areas of numeracy, literacy and mental health.



### What is your position on the current draft K-6 curriculum?

The current draft of the K-6 curriculum needs to be paused, reviewed and rewritten. If re-elected I will continue the strong advocacy started by the current Board of Trustees around advocating for a rewrite of the curriculum draft. The list of concerns about the curriculum draft are long and valid, including the age appropriateness of the content, proven instances of plagiarism, the lack of diverse perspectives, the lack of Indigenous perspectives and the way in which the curriculum was drafted. I have heard loudly and clearly from Edmonton families, from educators, and from Indigenous leaders who are strongly opposed to the draft curriculum. All students must be able to see themselves reflected in what they are learning. Perspectives of Francophone, Black, Indigenous and Peoples of Colour must be included in all grade levels. The curriculum, as it is written now, cannot be allowed to be taught in our classrooms.

### What is your position on charter schools?

Public dollars belong in public education. The reality is that charter schools do not have to accept every student who applies to attend and therefore, by their very nature, charter schools are not accessible to all Albertans. A school that can prohibit entry based on religion, ability, economic status and other factors is not publicly accessible and therefore should not receive public dollars. Unfortunately, the new Education Act makes it easier for charter schools to set up, meaning applicants can now bypass local school boards and apply directly to the Ministry of Education. In addition, there is no longer a cap on the number of charter schools allowed in the province. Continued funding of charter schools means fewer education dollars for public schools and an education system that is truly inclusive for all students. There are a plethora of options within Edmonton Public Schools, a school division that continues to offer choice based on the needs and expectations of parents and families.

### What are your priorities for new school buildings and other infrastructure?

Balancing the needs of mature school communities and those in the growing parts of our city remains a challenge for Edmonton Public Schools. Each year, the Board passes a capital plan that tries to capture the reality of this balance. Since I was elected in 2017, the Board has been advocating for block funding for capital projects, meaning the government gives us a percentage of our overall budget for capital projects and we determine which schools to build and when. If re-elected I will continue to advocate for block funding as it allows school divisions to make the decisions that are best for their school communities, in addition to giving us the flexibility to align capital projects with other orders of government, most notably the City of Edmonton. I would like to see the provincial government invest in school builds that create hubs in our communities; buildings that are not just schools but also recreation centres and libraries, similar to the new school opening this Fall in the south west of Edmonton, Dr. Anne Anderson School. Here are a few more ideas that I will continue to push for if re-elected:

- I strongly believe that all new school builds should have solar panels, and strive to be net zero, in keeping with a board motion passed in 2019.



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- All new school builds should also include purpose built daycare space. The pandemic has reminded us of the importance of high quality, low cost child care and our schools are well positioned to provide space for families needing child care. Continued advocacy to the provincial government is needed in order for this idea to become a reality.

### What is your position on public-private partnerships to build new schools?

Public-private partnerships continue to be a controversial way to build schools, not just in Alberta but elsewhere in Canada. The main controversy is that the contracts to build P3 schools are often restrictive and do not allow for modifications or changes. For example, maintenance requests are often handled by a third-party contractor, not division maintenance staff, which has slowed down getting a window fixed, or maintaining school grounds. Proponents of P3s often state that public-private partnerships are cost-effective, however, I have yet to see a definitive report that proves this point. An alternative to P3 builds is the idea of a block funding model (see previous response.)

Despite my reservations around building schools using a public-private partnerships, I believe the demand for new schools and replacement schools remains an important fact that Trustees need to pay attention to. If the government decides a school will be a P3, school divisions have little control over changing that delivery model especially as the school being announced is likely desperately needed. EPSB is one of the fastest growing school divisions in Alberta and as such we need the government to fund items on our capital plan.