



Saadiq Sumar, Edmonton Public School Board Trustee Candidate for Ward G

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

I will advocate for equitable funding on a per student basis on a province-wide basis rather than the current model, which adversely impacts growing school divisions. With almost 3,000 new

students each school year, I will work to ensure equity and the highest possible level of success for each student.

With the Program Unit Funding (PUF) changes, the government has tipped their hand with respect to inclusive education and students with diverse learning needs. Research shows that early intervention is critical, so PUF reductions push these interventions far too late for some students. I will push for PUF funding to be restored to previous levels and for evidence-based practices and policies at a school board level.

Not only is this the right thing to do - it is also the most economical way to approach improving our children's education. Without reducing our students to just numbers on a balance sheet, we can look at how spending \$1 on students (including those with complex learning needs) translates to several dollars worth of savings as that child grows, and several more dollars of economic and social contribution from that child as they become productive members of society.

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

The goal of education should be to nurture each student to achieve their full potential, regardless of race, gender identity, cognitive ability, or other factors. As such, the education system needs to be equitable for each student, and provide a holistic view of our local, national, and global communities and engage each student to positively impact the greater community. Education needs to include themes of empathy, compassion, and understanding, all of which are in desperate need in our society today. Education should promote and foster positive physical and mental health for each student. Finally, education should prepare all students for the ever-changing world that they will face upon graduation, not only to pursue successful careers, but also to be able to adapt and overcome challenges that we can't yet recognize.



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

We need to ditch the draft. It's regressive, racist, and focused on America instead of Canada. It's also plagiarized. It needs to go. Parents, teachers, and boards all agree on this point, and this is the number one issue I hear when I'm talking to families while knocking on doors in Ward G. Instead of going back to the drawing board like the current government, we need to pick up where the review left off in 2018. We need to make sure that the curriculum has as many eyes on it as possible (instead of the handful of partisan "experts" that the government has appointed), including educational professionals - current Alberta teachers, who have mind-bogglingly been left out of this process.

I know that many candidates will have the same stance on the draft curriculum, but it's also important for that stance to turn into action. Our campaign team recently had the opportunity to attend the rally for quality curriculum (<https://www.instagram.com/p/CTw8EmQgbwu/>) and, as your Trustee, I will work hard to stop the draft curriculum from being implemented. We need to pick up where the review left off in 2018 and make sure that the curriculum has as many eyes on it as possible (instead of the handful of partisan "experts" that the government has appointed), including educational professionals - current Alberta teachers, who have mind-bogglingly been left out of this process.

Our students' education shouldn't be used as a political tool. Alberta has changed, and the curriculum should reflect those changes. Diversity, anti-racism, and reconciliation are some of the pieces I will advocate to be included in a new draft of the curriculum.

What is your position on charter schools?

Equity should be at the root of our school system. For those parents that choose a private or charter school education for their children, they should be prepared to pay the fees that come with that education without public dollars subsidizing their tuition. Public dollars should stay in the public system.

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

To ensure EPSB students receive the best education, more classroom spaces are needed, which will lead to smaller classroom sizes, better student learning environments, and less burden on staff. I will advocate for new schools and facilities to better serve the growing number of students in the division.

The existing facilities are aging rapidly and the deferred maintenance bill is starting to add up. The deferred maintenance bill could reach \$1 billion dollars by 2027. EPSB is not unique in this regard (other educational institutions and boards are facing the same issue), but that does not mean that this unpaid bill should continue to be passed down to future generations. I will work to prioritize deferred maintenance projects and secure funding to reduce the deferred maintenance bill for EPSB.



Public Interest Alberta

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

My career as an Engineer has taken me to my current role as a Supervisor, where I work with and manage a team of unionized staff. For all of the work that we do as a company, the first and most important consideration is making sure that the work can be completed in-house. I will bring this same attitude to the school board. The work that can and should be done by our staff should remain with our staff, rather than going to third-party contractors.

While some may find “efficiencies” in contract services, it’s important for us to provide compensation commensurate with the work that we are asking for, both in the form of salary and benefits. Many of our AUPE members have years of experience and their work is highly regarded. We should recognize and reward that high quality of work. If our board doesn’t currently have the capacity or expertise to provide required services, we must consider adding resources to our ranks rather than automatically defaulting to contract services