



## Teach? Vote!

Do you remember voting in the last local elections in November 2014? What I remember most from that time is recovering from a drawn out, demoralizing fight with Christy Clark's government throughout that spring and summer. I remember weeks of eating my lunch while sitting on the sidewalk outside our school when we were locked out of our classrooms, separated from our students, and docked 10% of our salary daily.

Do you remember the Surrey School Board of Trustees calling upon the government to bargain fairly and ensure enough funding to address the needs in our schools?

The trustees who comprised the school board during our job action had been elected in 2011, when only 23% of eligible voters in Surrey turned out. They were elected with the support of between 6% - 13% of eligible voters.

In other words, the choices of an average of about 9% of voters in Surrey impacted 100% of the more than five thousand teachers and 67,000 students (at the time) in the school district over a period of three years.

There is another election in less than two weeks.

Whoever is elected as a school trustee on

October 20 is going to have the power to determine the qualities and characteristics of the learning conditions of nearly 72,000 students in Surrey for the next four years.

That's a lot of impact to have on the day-to-day experiences of children in our schools.

Teachers will also be affected by the election results. The working conditions of nearly 6,000 Surrey teachers will also be shaped by the choices voters make. The provincial government has restored the elected board of BCPSEA, the BC Public School Employers' Association. The government has thus far insisted that BCPSEA will not begin new contract negotiations with the BCTF until after school trustees have been elected and have had a chance to get up to speed on the issues.

Trustees, through BCPSEA, will be able to influence the language of our new collective agreement.

That means that we are essentially voting to elect our bosses for the next four years.

What kinds of bosses would you like to have?

Wouldn't you like to have bosses who are willing to take political risks and push the province and city to make significant investments in schools and staffing for Surrey kids, and stop development from outstripping the capacity of our schools?

We have heard loud and clear from you that the situation in many schools is dire, particularly with the reduction in LST staffing. Imagine having bosses who consistently and publicly advocated for proper supports for all students, whether they have special needs or just need extra help? Bosses who, instead of just quietly

providing the bare minimum BCPSEA tells them they legally must do, would call upon the government to increase funding so they can provide students what is truly needed?

It would be such a welcome change if we had bosses who would acknowledge that schools are struggling to meet the needs of students with what is provided.

If you teach in Surrey but live elsewhere in the Lower Mainland, your vote is very important in your community. If you are a Surrey voter, the need for change on the school board is urgent. Four more years of the same is simply not good enough for our students, or for us.

With historically low numbers of voters turning out in local municipal elections, winners are often determined by only a few dozen votes. It truly matters who shows up at the polls.

Every day teachers work to make a difference in the lives of the students in their classrooms.

Voting this October is an extension of that work and, with the right bosses in charge, will ensure that the students we teach don't go through another year of not having enough of what they need to succeed.

Early voting dates in Surrey are October 6, 10, 11, 13 and election day is October 20.



# What do school trustees actually do, anyhow?



## New Election Rules

Election rules have changed, as you know, donations and advertising by unions, businesses, and advocacy groups are limited. This makes it all the more important to motivate people with real reasons to vote. As a union, we are only permitted to directly mail (our endorsements, our position on education issues, etc) to our own STA members, not to the public. Please help us by speaking to your

colleagues, friends, neighbours and family about the importance of electing strong advocates for public education, and of electing trustees who improve teacher working - student learning conditions, in the upcoming school trustee elections.

# STA Political Action/Public Relations committee actions!

We have been hard at work preparing information for our active members about the upcoming school board election.

### For your information, our process this time around is as follows:

- Invite school board candidates to an interview on issues of importance to teachers.
- Conduct in-person interviews with those willing to be interviewed (September 13-18).
- Prepare transcripts and summaries of their interviews.
- Publish the interview summaries as an attachment to our weekly memo to teachers Monday, September 24.
- Distribute the interview summaries to retired STA members, via SRTA.
- Facilitate consideration of endorsing candidates at our special AGM Wednesday, September 26.
- Publish our endorsements on our website, and in memos to our members.
- Share our endorsements with other locals in the Lower Mainland to inform teachers in other locals, who live in Surrey (but are not STA members) about the endorsed candidates, and to encourage voting.
- Encourage our members to vote with voter reminder cards, posters, stickers, Facebook posts, tweets, and information on our website: [www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses](http://www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses)
- Hold voter awareness discussions at our World Teacher Day pub nights.
- Distribute stickers to members, saying "I teach, I vote" and "Early Voter", to encourage early voting.
- Prepare a Special Advocate about the election for our members.
- Use social media to promote early voting and awareness of the election among members
- Prepare a special website about the election on our website - [surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses](http://surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses)
- We plan to organize an all candidates forum on Special Education before the election if we can summon more help from the membership/recruit a bigger committee.

## How did the STA recommend these candidates for endorsement?

These are the criteria that were used by PA/PR and the Executive Committee in determining whom to recommend for endorsement:

1. Aware of, and prepared to advocate for, issues in our district.
2. Demonstrated an understanding of the role/expectation of School Trustee.
3. Impressed with their approach to Truth & Reconciliation, safe and inclusive schools, and diversity.
4. These candidates have a plan to improve relationship with teachers.
5. These candidates are ready for change.

All candidates were considered based on the interview responses and our other interactions with them over many years in the case of the current and former trustees, or as we know them in the community through their advocacy as activists on education issues. The meetings of the PA/PR committee and the Executive Committee were in depth, "in committee" and were democratic. At the General Meeting Sept 26 members were given time consider, discuss, and to ask questions. They then voted without dissent to endorse the recommendation. We include the endorsed candidates' interviews in this publication, and all 18 interviews are available for viewing on our website.



## Who is the PA/PR Committee?



The committee exists to promote the cause of proper funding of public education, and therefore is active during electoral cycles to consider each candidate's commitment to public education. In the past, we have sometimes endorsed candidates, and have sometimes (before the changes to the Elections Act) recommended to the members that we support candidates financially. This fall we have been working hard to prepare for the municipal election where school trustees are elected for 4 year terms. We have a responsibility to help teachers know more about the importance of these elections, and we can choose to endorse certain candidates. Please feel invited to come and lend a hand. The committee is made up of teacher volunteers. If you are passionate about politics and advocating for public education, feel free to let us know you want to join our committee!



WHERE ARE YOU VOTING?  
Teacher locals across  
the Lower Mainland  
recommend these  
candidates:

WEST VANCOUVER

SCHOOL BOARD  
Lynne Block  
Carolyn Broady  
Nicole Brown  
Sheelah Donahue  
Pieter Dorsman

VANCOUVER

SCHOOL BOARD  
Erin Arnold  
Carrie Bercic  
Janet Fraser  
Estrellita Gonzalez  
Erica Jaaf  
Aaron Leung  
Barb Parrott  
Jennifer Reddy  
Allan Wong

RICHMOND

School board  
Ken Hamaguchi  
Sandra Nixon  
Donna Sargent  
Andrew Scallion  
Debbie Tablotney  
Grace Tsang  
Eric Yung

NORTH VANCOUVER

In Process - further  
information will be  
available on [NVTA.ca](http://NVTA.ca)  
in early October.

BURNABY

SCHOOL BOARD  
Suresh Bhayana  
Bill Brassington  
Peter Cech  
Larry Hayes  
Jen Yan Mezei  
Ryan Stewart  
Gary Wong

NEW WESTMINSTER

SCHOOL BOARD  
Anita Ansari  
Dee Beattie  
Gurveen Dhaliwal  
Mark Gifford  
Maya Russell

COUNCIL  
Chinu Das  
Patrick Johnstone  
Jaimie McElvoy  
Nadine Nakagawa  
Chuck Puchmayr  
Mary Trentadue

COQUITLAM

See [coquitlamteachers.com](http://coquitlamteachers.com)  
for survey answers. We will  
also mail to non-Coquitlam  
teachers (but residents of  
Tri-Cities) the survey  
results.

MAPLE RIDGE

TBA - Contact MRTA

MISSION

Not endorsing, but will  
mail survey answers to  
every BCTF member  
living in Mission and  
Hatsic etc. Contact  
MTU for more info.

DELTA

After All-candidates meeting  
Oct 11, and shortly after  
that DTA will endorse. Check  
[www.deltateachers.org](http://www.deltateachers.org),  
for info.

SURREY

SCHOOL BOARD  
Sonia Andhi  
Cindy Dalglish  
Charlene Dobie  
Niovi Patsicakis  
Mary-Em Waddington

WHITE ROCK

SCHOOL BOARD  
Laurae McNally

LANGLEY  
TOWNSHIP

SCHOOL BOARD  
Megan Dykeman  
Suzanne Perrault  
David Tod  
Marnie Wilson

LANGLEY CITY

SCHOOL BOARD  
Marshall Austin  
Shelley Coburn

ABBOTSFORD

See [adta.bc.ca](http://adta.bc.ca) for  
more info.

CHILLIWACK

SCHOOL BOARD  
Dan Coulter  
Kelly Janveaux  
Peter Lang  
Jared Mumford  
Michael Prill  
Willow Reichelt  
David Swankey

Teacher  
voters can  
make a real  
impact across  
the region!

endorsing for  
first time!

# STA Endorsed School Trustee Candidates’ Interview Summaries

Candidates for Surrey Board of Education were invited to in-person interviews at the Surrey Teachers’ Association offices. Eighteen candidates agreed to be interviewed. All candidates were asked the same ten questions, and all had the opportunity to consider the first six questions in advance. From the transcripts and recordings, we offer these two-page summaries, in which we have tried to capture the essence of the candidates’ answers, while cutting out some repetition or off-topic comments. This issue of the Advocate includes the summaries of all of the candidates that our membership voted to endorse at our Special General Meeting held September 26. All 18 interview summaries can be found on our website at: [www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses](http://www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses)



## Sonia Andhi

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### 1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?

I want to be trustee because things really need to change. I am a social worker and family counsellor. Way too many kids are falling through the cracks, as well as teachers and support workers are also suffering. I’ve been a community organizer and activist for the last 30 years but I just felt I needed to take my work to a bigger platform where I can have have a bigger impact on kids and the teachers. I care about the schools, that is the base, that is the foundation, and if our kids are not getting the foundation, what are we doing? Our society is doomed.

### 2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?

Trustees are the ones who are managing the budgets, and looking at the needs of the schools and the students. I wanted to get involved and run because the [current] school board seems disengaged and uninvolved. The school board needs to look at developments coming up, and ensuring there are enough schools to provide for the kids. How many developments have been approved, and how will the needs of the kids provided for? What about basement suites where families are living, is there room for them in the schools?

### 3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?

Back home one of the things that would happen ... was they would have housing for teachers. Was it subsidised or was it like a hostel etc., I’m not sure, but can we create something like that? People tell me their friend is a teacher but they moved away because it is to expensive, but that is my out-of-the box idea, provide housing for teachers.

Also, why are BC teachers the lowest paid in Canada? We need to recruit good, effective teachers who will stay, and “doing it because it makes a difference” only goes so far, we need to pay people properly, what they deserve, so I would advocate for that equity with other teachers, and look for that balance.

Teachers need more social support, and even for the older ones,

how do we support them as well, it is even harder for them to ask for that support. Keeping up with curriculum change, etc., it is stressful. For me it is about talking to the affected people, I am big on collaboration, engagement, asking them “what would work for you.”

### 4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?

I would make sure that these issues are on the agenda. We need to talk about these issues and have concrete plans around them. We have to go after that, in terms of what is the plan.

### 5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?

I am hopeful that things are not as adversarial as they were for the last 16 years, hopefully the board’s task is a little easier than those days. I am not only there for the students, I am also there for the teachers, so we have to support them first and foremost. I am for the workers rights and advocating for them, let’s come to the table and negotiate for fairness.

### 6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?

The board meetings need space for listening and responding. Parents and groups want to be heard. Not everything can be fixed, but they want to feel heard. They need to know trustees are listening and that they care.

It doesn’t have to only be at parent meetings, could be focus groups, drop-ins, meetings at schools, have a trustee meeting night, and have action plans attached to that.

Social media is big, there are limitations, I can’t over promise and under deliver, but I really believe in being more engaged

### 7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?

I think we have to engage more indigenous voices, not just say those

words. I work with quite a few indigenous families, there are barriers for them to access the school system. It needs to be [improved] from their cultural point of view. We have to not be their voices, but give them the ability to speak up and be involved. [When it comes to] institutions, [there is a lot of ] the fear and apprehension. I have been consulting with a lot of agencies that are involved, FRAFCA, Metis family workers, for example report that people just react badly to the reception they received in schools. There needs to be a lot more education, [of service providers] and that has to be meaningful.

### 8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?

I would support it by ensuring that the resources out there are being used. I would encourage that. We need some discussions and collaborations about how the teachers are handling it, how are biases and beliefs coming up. For example in the Muslim community [some] are saying they don’t want SOGI, I point out that this is also about discrimination, and how that is affecting children. This is not about converting anyone, I don’t think any books have [ever] converted anyone!

### 9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system?

I am hopeful for a good team to be elected this time, that we don’t have status quo.

Workers need to be supported, or the system will crumble. We need the funds and the resources, it is not OK for teachers to be spending



## Cindy Dalglish

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### 1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?

It was born out of necessity. I started advocating for my daughter’s program, and it opened my eyes to all the other issues that we’re having in the District. Our current board has been very quiet. They could do a much better job in terms of advocating and lobbying for our students. It’s actually in the job description and they’re not doing their job.

### 2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?

It all comes down to advocacy. Neighbourhood concept plans are deviated from constantly (NCP), and the developments are amended, but they didn’t amend for the schools. Trustees didn’t lobby for the need for additional schools!

I will continue to be vocal whether elected or not. I’ve established

out of their pockets, it is not acceptable. Also the PAC fundraising , not acceptable.

I have been attending the “wake up Surrey” events, and hear lots of groups asking for money, but then I see gala events of Indian stars being flown in, that is unacceptable. So there is money, just not directed to help people!

### What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?

As school boards we have to try to ensure we have balanced budgets, or we can be fired, but we need to look at the needs as well, It is a tough task, but it is good to go in with fresh eyes.

### 10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey’s communities?

People need to see there is someone there who understands their needs, I bring that lived experience as an immigrant. Also, in some ways we need to challenge old fashioned notions, for example ingrained sexism in any culture can be challenged. It is important to have the voices so we can challenge some of the notions. We can’t walk on eggshells worrying that we might offend some people. We need diversity in terms of loud voices, and not just tokenism. Re: principals and district staff. How are we recruiting from different cultures? Perhaps we can actually add extra points for skills they are bringing, we need to be more vocal and transparent about the value of language and cultural skills.

good relationships, so I can reach out to discuss the issues. I think we need to motivate staff to get creative, in the short term. It’s supposed to be short term. We’re pulling \$8 million dollars out of our operating budget to pay for portables? It doesn’t help that Vancouver gets \$200 more per student. That’s another approximately \$14 million dollars that Surrey students should be getting. Current board hasn’t said anything! It all comes down to using our voices and not being quiet.

### 3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?

It comes down to the fact that we don’t pay our teachers enough. We need to do a better job lobbying the government. Especially with the housing affordability issues. We need to make this an attractive option. Give teachers ability to teach in the areas where they live. [We should be] coming up with ideas that we haven’t thought of before, or fully explored. Let’s be creative and push those boundaries.



Teachers don't have opportunity to give feedback to the district because they're afraid of their bosses. Want to sit in a room with teachers to hear from them what the issues are so trustees can better advocate.

**4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?**

We need to educate the public on the difference between an IST teacher and an LST teacher. It's a source of frustration that they're making an equivalency between the two. So they boosted numbers for IST but they they have not restored for LST. There's a collective agreement and we're bound to it. No ifs, ands, or buts about it. Maybe we need to have an interpretation guide for the Collective Agreement so everyone's on the same page when they leave the room, so we don't have to spend time and resources figuring it out later. We can get started right away.

**5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?**

We talked about this earlier, how do we retain/recruit for Surrey? We need to pay them better; compensation needs to be a priority this round. People will come here and live here if they feel they are being compensated fairly. If this is a place they want to live. Making sure that interpretation guides are there; so we come out of the collective agreements so we can get started right away. If we don't support the teachers, they won't be able to support the students. We have to do better than that. The government needs to do better. As a board, we need to not placate, and not minimize the issues, [and we should] use the media to talk about the issues.

**6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?**

I've been to most of the school board meetings in the last couple of years. It's a source of major frustration to stand up in front of your school board and it's all off the record, and you only have a short period of time for your preamble before asking your question. Then you have to wait weeks or months for an answer.

First thing I would do is make the question period part of the record so that others can hear and see the answers to the questions. You ask the question publicly, but get an answer privately. That needs to change. We created a Facebook page called Surrey School Board Q&A so people could share their answers.

It all comes down to opening those communication channels.

**7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?**

I love this question! It can be something as simple as actually acknowledging the land that we're on at every board meeting, rather than just the first and the last meeting of the year.

We were at a school announcement for the addition for Sullivan, and the person that came to do the welcome did a wonderful job and her voice just reverberated across the entire courtyard. Then Laurie came up and introduced the trustees that were there, and they all stood right in front of her to block her out! I just still

remember the disrespect of that.

There's still a lot of work to be done I don't have all the answers, but I know there are partners out there that can speak to this better, that can help us shape what it looks like for future students that are aboriginal and make it better and make it more inclusive for them.

**8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?**

I fully 1000% support SOGI 123. I've been vocal about that and will continue to vocal. We're working with Dr. Jen Marchbank to run a SOGI 123 information session on the 28th. Not only do we support it, but that we want others to understand it because there's a lot of misinformation out there. We want to do more professional development with our staff that may be struggling to understand the purpose or how to invest purpose that into the classroom. We know it's not curriculum. We know it is a resource. I think that's a really big piece of it, is to incorporate it every day into our daily thought process, our language, how we work with our students, how we make them feel comfortable and safe. We need to support safe, inclusive classrooms. Full stop. If you can't do that, maybe this isn't the environment for you.

**9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system? What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?**

We need more schools, not bigger schools. In bigger schools, student start to get lost because there are just that many more people trying to reach those programs. Use the analogy of the basketball team. 12 team members, in a school of 1000. Add 700 more students who are potentially interested in the basketball team and there's just that many more kids not getting on the basketball team. More schools, not bigger schools.

What are we willing to do to make sure that our foundation is laid now so it doesn't cost us later? We want to see less homelessness, less poverty, less crime. It all starts in the foundation of our children. We can't decide how students arrive at school, or where they come from. We need to be ready and set up to meet the needs of all our students.

I will continue to use my voice and those communication channels. If at the end of the day, we can't get the province to make education a priority maybe we need to force that issue a different way.

Need to see both a balanced budget and a need- based budget. Trustees need to do a better job illustrating what the needs actually are and advocating to close the gap between the two.

**10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey's communities?**

We can start doing some mentoring. We can start reaching out to teachers who seem to show interest in the leadership roles, and start grabbing them earlier, rather than waiting for them to come to us. Students need to see themselves reflected in order to feel safe, secure, invested in. As a trustee, I'm part of the hiring package. If I see the same names on a list that are not getting to the interview stage, I want to start questioning why are they showing interest and why are we not looking to them? [I would be] asking more questions about the process.



**Charlene Dobie**

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**1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?**

I am passionate about public education, I have been an EA for 20 years, I have worked in the public school system, with many teachers, many other staff and many children. We can do a better job, here in Surrey. We have a good school district, I did work in Surrey for 14 years, but when I was elected in 2011 I had to resign and I worked in Delta. I still have that passion that we can do a better job in Surrey.

**2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?**

Yes, I have experience with my 3 years on the board, although at the time I was a rookie, I was vocal. At the time we had some "interesting" ministers of education, but this time, I am determined we can have better conversations with the ministers. We need to work with the MLAs, all of them, and with mayor and council. Trustees need to keep that top of mind, to interact with these other politicians. The District often says that they meet with the City but to my mind that meeting is just one way with the City telling the District what they're going to do. There's no real consultation, no real collaboration. Our team, Surrey Students Now is all on the same page on this and we can take turns to do what needs to be done on this. The last time I was a trustee there were all kinds of plans but this time I want to focus on what we are actually going to do.

**3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?**

It's difficult but I think it is doable. If we strive to make Surrey the best school district in the province, we can attract people to come here. There are things that aren't perfect, but we can look at how to improve it, by asking the teachers! We could also ask the other support staff, we are short of EAs, but how?, let's ask them! Let's talk to HR and see what they can come up with by talking to the actual workers we have.

**4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?**

Having attended every board meeting since Jan 2015 I've heard various people from the STA speak to this issue many times. You know during question period, it seems to me that the district has kind of been playing a shell game, moving positions and renaming positions and then saying those are the LST positions. The bottom line: if students are being denied services then that's not good, and if the collective agreement is not being followed that has to be corrected, immediately.

My best ever classroom even now after all these years as an EA, was in Surrey. That because the teachers were caring and understanding and great leaders. When you have teachers who you've worked with and they've shown the amazing ability to do that, and it's wonderful for the kids and it's wonderful for the staff.

**5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?**

Surrey will have a rep at the BCPSEA table like we did before. As a trustee I will be advocating to make sure that teachers get a fair deal. I work in public education, so I see what teachers do, and I see that teachers go above and beyond what their mandate is. Teachers become parents to kids... they become social workers, they provide food for the kids, and much more, they buy their own resources and bring them into the classroom, it's just unbelievable. Teachers in BC have been at the bottom of the pay scale for too long, so there's one thing that definitely needs to be brought to the table, and that's a pay hike so that BC teachers are no longer near the bottom of pay in the country.

**6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?**

First and foremost, question period needs to become part of the agenda at the public board meeting so that questions and answers can be shared with the public, because as you know, right now they adjourn the meeting, then they have a half hour question period, and the questions have to be written down and passed to the administrative assistant person, and answered in private. That needs to be changed right away. We could have some informal trustee meetings, maybe being able to invite the public in to those kinds of meetings. I think that trustees should attend PAC meetings. Also trustees two or three times a year should go to the staff rooms and have an conversation with the staff. And I know a lot of that does go on, but I think certainly not every trustee does that.

**7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?**

When I was a trustee, I did put forth a motion about stating at every board meeting that we are on the lands of Katzie, Semiahmoo and Kwantlen. That was taken and changed a bit by another trustee and out into a committee, and came out as a watered-down declaration which is stated only at the first board meeting and the last board meeting of the year. How does that make our aboriginal community, our First Nations community feel welcomed? In a recent conversation with the Superintendent, the money put forth is still only for cultural events, has been for the students who identify as first nations, but where can we get some more money so it can be embedded in the curriculum, so that we can have the professional development needed?

8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?

I fully support SOGI 123. That's another place where we need some more funding, some designated funding, to present it to the teachers to work on that. I know that some training has gone on, probably through the BCTF and the through the district as well, but we obviously need to be more. I think that as a trustee I would be supporting and making the community know where I stand. We need to be informing people about what it is.

9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system?

I had a question from a teacher in the summertime and he challenged me to find out how much more Vancouver had than Surrey even though we're a bigger district by about 25000 students or so. So I did, and I took their budget number and our budget and divided it by the number of students. And yes, Vancouver does get \$200 more per student, which is 14 million dollars. Obviously this needs fixing, I think there are ways to do that, by connecting with MLAs, Minister of Education, politician to politician, and say, here it is, and of course to get our Secretary Treasurer break it down some more.



Niovi Patsicakis

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1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?

To ensure that there's the voice of an educator on the board. Because for many years the teaching perspective has been missing. Teachers are the people who really know what is needed in our schools.

2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?

Trustees need to collaborate with all levels of government to ensure that when we build schools or when we develop an area there's enough infrastructure. That includes schools. They need to ensure that the funding is there. Right now we're using operating funds for portables. We should not have to use our operating funds.. The money for portables should be provided by the ministry.

3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?

We need to ensure that the province supports the universities so that we have more teachers trained. We want qualified teachers but we want to expedite the process, but from my experience and what I've heard is that it takes too long for the machine to move.

What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?

I know in the past, this has been a big topic, where districts have put in a needs-based budget and not balanced it, and then been fired. I think we could have an option to do both. Say to the Ministry, this is what Surrey needs, and here is our balanced budget. For example, here is \$8.5M that could be used for operating funds which has been used to take care of portables or get new portables, and that's wrong. Take that 8.5 million and make it separate funding and use it for the resources we need, which is more teachers, more support staff, more programs to help our kids. I think we could definitely do that, have two budgets, and have that good conversation with the politicians, the MLAs, the minister of education.

10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey's communities?

I think about what trustees can do as part of hiring committee for principals and vice principals. I think that those are things that need to be top of mind when we are thinking about diversity, as in women and different cultures which are represented in our community which is very multicultural, getting more and more all the time. I think those things can be top of mind when trustees are actually at the table, encouraging from the top down. I think as trustee we can ask questions, why has this person not been invited?

We also need to have salaries that are not competitive, each teacher remuneration [should be] the same. [Districts] shouldn't have to compete for teachers. It's harder to move whole families, perhaps housing bonus or transportation could be included.

4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?

I would, first of all, look at the budget part, because there have been mixed messages about the availability of money. As far as the ministry is concerned there's enough money there to meet our needs. As far as the board, Learning support and special education are always the ones who don't get support they need. The example of last years 66 cuts, and finding out that no they were wrong and we waited a whole year to get back what was cut. [We need to] ensure that decisions are not always [avoided]; tough decisions [need to be] made at the board level and not continuously being sent to arbitration. Having been a LST teacher, I know that the funding was targeted and since 2002 those children have had less support than what they need. I feel that many of the students (severely disabled/ ELL) are not getting the programs they need in order to learn. If it isn't working well, we need to revamp it.

5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to

ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?

I think that trustees need to stand up for teachers. Teachers are what drives excellence in public education, They need to take a collaborative role with the unions, not an adversarial role. As a body of school trustees across the prov we need to ensure that BCPSEA is there to represent both the provincial government, school board & teachers. For too many years we've had difficulties.

6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?

As a trustee, what I would like to see is, more collaboration in the form of committees. Especially the committee that meets the union & school board. That needs to happen more often. Not only when there are grievances but on an ongoing basis. [The same goes for] parents and the public, [as there is] still a sense schools are not welcoming places, especially with certain cultural groups. So we need to have our schools do more, involve the community more, and the same with the students, involve students in the community, help them to be part of the community.

7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?

More and more we realize that our aboriginal history is important and it's part of our fabric of being Canadian. Lot of truths that have been uncovered. But the work for this can't all be put on the shoulders of teachers, we need the board to ensure that teachers have resources to implement the new curriculum as well as the expertise.

8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?

I would like to see more info on the SOGI 123 program so that there



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1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?

I've been an advocate in community for number of years. I have two children that have attended school in Surrey, one's graduated now and I have a son in Grade 9 so I've been attending PAC meetings and DPAC meetings, and attending Canadian Parents for French. So that's where the advocacy has taken me, and how I met Cindy and Charlene. We've been working together for the last three years... My other passion besides education is environment, and I think that if we can't have a good environment, what's the point of anything else? So I really want to make sure that teachers have the support

are no misconceptions about what the program does and, at the same time, trustees need to work with teachers to make sure that teachers as well are trained and are comfortable with the resources they are provided. SOGI is a program written by teachers, is educationally sound, and supported by the ministry. It's not a debate. It's there to help all children get along and respect one another.

9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system? What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?

For too long trustees have sat back and felt their hands were tied. The meetings that take place provincially only happen or seem to happen during election years. We have a government that is willing to listen, and so even if it means going over to Victoria on a monthly basis, and discussing over and over the issue, it's important to do so to ensure the funding is there.

There are boards that have prepared two budgets; needs based and actual. If all boards did that, it would help gov't understand what it takes to properly fund quality education. We know that we are \$1200 less per pupil in the way funding is received in BC compared to other provinces. So that needs to change.

10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey's communities?

We need to make sure that all communities are welcome and represented in our curriculum. We need to learn from each other. We need to have cultural activities and invite people in.

to raise social justice warriors and I have mad props for Annie Ohana and the work that she is doing, because kids need to be so engaged, because they're just inheriting a big mess.

2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?

When I started with the advocacy a few years ago, we thought we were asking questions about French Immersion and we kept getting answers back about space and capacity, and lack of capital, and portables. Obviously making sure that we have proper space for our students is the number one issue.



**3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?**

[Trustees are] the ambassadors of the District and it's our job to amplify why Surrey is a good place to work. So many families live here, why wouldn't you want to work here as well? Making sure that we have the space and resources and programs and the flexibility and the creativity and the personal autonomy in your classrooms to do all the cool amazing things that different teachers want to do to engage your students and making sure that that is really resonating with new hires.

In French Immersion, we know that we've lost so many teachers to the English stream, so that speaks to the retention. Why are we losing teachers? They're still teaching. But why are we losing specialist teachers in one area, and why are they going to a different area? We need a plan to rectify that and change that.

I've been really pleased to see that post-secondary institutions are opening up more spaces to train more teachers for the teacher shortage across BC.

**4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?**

That really does come down to an advocacy piece, and making sure that we're having conversations with the levels of government that provide funding, but also that the collective agreement is being better looked at and adhered to.

**5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?**

I think that that's a communication piece, and they, both parties, have to really be aware of the decisions that they're contemplating... how that affects students on the ground, how that affects teachers in their delivery, and all the other support staff that are in schools as well. The point is to make sure we always keep students at the focus of our decisions.

**6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?**

I've been frustrated over the years, when I send emails to the trustees and get no response. But also, the whole question & answer periods at the board meetings are just bizarre. They adjourn the meeting, and then the questions come up, and so they're not part of the public record. There's no access to the people; and then staff answer the letters; the trustees don't answer the letters. This is a public meeting, and why are we not engaging with our community, and our parents better in those meetings? I mean that's honestly the simplest little tweak - making it public record. We actually created a little Facebook Page: Surrey School Board Questions and Answers so whenever we do get a letter back, we post the letters and the response on this page and then people can check out the answers if they want, and comment on them - which they do!

**7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?**

That's a great question. We did meet with Joanne Mills (Executive

Director for the First Nations Friendship Centre) because we know the protocol agreement is coming up for renewal this year and wanted to see what she had to say, because again, that's not our personal experience and we don't want to make assumptions about things. And, really had a very good engaging conversation with her about poverty. Usually when we think of poverty, we think in terms of money and assets but she was really looking at it from a suicide rate when people are in their twenties. So it's not enough to engage kids when they're little, we have to make sure that they're fully supported all the way through to grade 12 and some years after. That just really struck a chord with me, to think of poverty in a life cycle like that. So I think there's simple, honorable things that need to be done, like land acknowledgements at the board meetings. The key thing; always just to show respect.

**8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?**

I believe my role is to make sure that schools are safe and inclusive spaces for all students of all genders, colours, whatevers, right? It is frustrating to see that there is so much resistance to SOGI, and I'm shocked that there are 2 candidates running on an anti-SOGI platform for trustee this election. I think the kids are all going to be alright. I think they need to know there is support behind them, and then they're going to drive their destinies forward and create their safe spaces.

**9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system?**

That's what it comes down to. I'm really pleased that we have an NDP government in power right now, and that we've seen some really good progress over the last year, in terms of funding announcements for new schools and for additions, and that's one step, but I think the other, there is a separate advocacy piece that needs to be done with the city. And that has been shockingly and woefully ignored over the last 4-8 years. The politician to politician meetings aren't even happening other than once every three to four years. There's a huge engagement piece that needs to be done with the city. It needs to be done.

**What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?**

A needs based budget is an honest reflection of what it takes to do your job. And a balanced budget is this is the money that I'm going to get, and these are the expenses... so that's where cuts happen.

**10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey's communities?**

We're not seen so much diversity in the admin roles [which] is important because representation matters and it's important for kids to be represented.



**Laurae McNally**

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Laurae McNally answered first 6 questions by email and the last four in a telephone interview which we offered to her because she has a foot injury from shrapnel suffered whilst helping at a Syrian refugee camp in Jordan this summer.

**1. What is your key, or main, motivation to run for a school trustee position?**

I do not view Trusteeship as a "stepping stone" to higher office, or as a job, I view it as community service. My mom always said "you get out of your community what you put into it" How true! I have a passion for seeing students succeed and want them all to like school as much as I did. I am not beholden to any slate; just beholden to people in my community. My "institutional history" helps folks in getting problems resolved. I am willing to put in the time and energy to serve my community one more term.

**2. How do you see the role of the school trustees in addressing the issues with space, overcrowded classrooms, and new school construction in this rapidly growing district?**

Trustees play a huge role here. We need to constantly let other levels of Government know what our needs are. MPs, MLAs, City Councillors have all kinds of issues on their plate ( transportation, crime, budgets, health, etc.) They cannot be experts on everything and rely upon us to keep them abreast of our needs. One meeting a year or more does not do it. It distresses me to see students crammed onto school sites like salmon beneath blocked waterfalls, and it angers me to have to use scarce operating dollars to fund portables, and to pony up money for Capital projects. Those dollars are distributed to us to be spent on students.

**3. Currently, Surrey is short of classroom teachers and teachers teaching on call. What ideas do you have for recruitment and retention?**

This is becoming a problem in many countries. Recruiting needs to occur year-round.

In the short term, I think we could be doing more jointly to promote the District. I was heartened late this summer, to see a "Tweet" by a Surrey teacher encouraging others to come to the District. We jointly could be doing some self promotion. Housing is a huge concern for teachers new to us. A retired teacher I know has opened up a suite in her house, renting to a new teacher here. She feels she can also be a support for this new educator. Together, we could be highlighting such an idea.

Mentoring programs are helping our new teachers, let's not overlook the value of that. We all do better when we work together. In the longer term, teachers need to secure an appropriate wage increase through bargaining! But the government needs to seriously look at what other jurisdictions are doing.

I am familiar with initiatives in New South Wales... \$6000 signing bonuses for new teachers, assisting in paying off student debts, etc. Trustees should be making their wishes known to their BCPSEA reps.

**4. Surrey Schools are still short of Learning Support Teachers. How will you advocate fully implementing the language in the collective agreement so that Surrey students will have enough specialist teachers to meet their learning needs?**

This should remain high on our radar screen. Trustees have a responsibly to address this at budget time. One of my frustrations has been how long it is taking to resolve the outstanding issue of our special education staffing. I know it is in arbitration between BCTF and BCPSEA, I know there are several issues at that table, and I know they need to report by January 31/2019. Do not know if any progress being made, or why folks always have to wait until the very last minute to report out.

**5. In bargaining for a new contract, what actions will you take to ensure that BCPSEA and the Provincial government will reach a fairly negotiated contract with teachers?**

After a long campaign, Trustees are back in the BCPSEA Board. Each Board of Trustees should be meeting to give their desires and instructions to their region's rep.

I am still puzzled as to why bargaining is taking so long to start. Lots of red herrings thrown out, but, in my books, there is a ton of stuff to talk about!

**6. What is the best way for the Board to hear from and respond to concerns from parents, employees and other community members?**  
Where to start! Firstly, one meeting per year with the STA is not enough. I believe we should be meeting more frequently, with just one or two topics on the agenda. How I miss the days when we had joint potluck dinners together and talked about issues.

One example. The STA wrote us a few months ago re refugee funding. Nothing ever happened about that issue. It is an issue near and dear to my heart, having spent considerable time with refugees. With a Federal election coming up quickly, we should be jointly making our needs known to our MPs as they will be doing election planning soon and developing their platforms.

I miss the liaison meetings we used to have with various multicultural communities. ...Arabic, Pilipino, Mandarin, etc. We went out to their neighbourhood schools, we did not expect them to come to us. For me, the input was invaluable. Yes, it was time-consuming. However, if you are not willing to put in the time, you shouldn't be a Trustee.

As the District continues to grow, I think we should have zonal parent mtgs. One big forum at DEC with hand selected participants

doesn't give me the feedback I am looking for from parents. It is more valuable for me to chat with parents at track meets, school and District events such as Fine Arts performances. It is a rare day I am not out at a school, and I find that time commitment useful.

7. How can the Board support the recommendations and calls to action of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission?

Well, we've made a good start in the district but I think there is more we can do. I've been encouraged by the knowledge about the TRC report that I am hearing from students, there is certainly a lot more awareness. It seems schools are taking it seriously. We mustn't stop, we need to continue, it isn't only the students, it is also the parents. I'm thinking schools can do individual PAC meetings with that as a topic, for instance.

8. As school trustee, how will you use your role to support the sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity development of Surrey students?

I think again, we need to support what schools are doing. I don't know how widespread it is, hopefully in every school, but a number of schools have a staff person assigned as the SOGI contact person. I am thrilled with that. Whenever we come upon people who aren't sure what SOGI is about, we need to talk to them about it. We have a role as leaders in our community, to tell people the way it is!

9. As school trustee how will you actively advocate for a better funded public education system?

I alluded to this earlier, but I think we need to be out there talking to the MLAs and other powers-that-be at every opportunity. If you are a city councillor, or MLA or MP, you have to have a grasp of a whole pile of topics, you don't pay attention to schools, so it is our job to be educating them at every opportunity. Sometimes we think they don't care, but they just don't know.

What do you see as the difference between a needs-based budget, and a balanced budget?

A balanced budget is living within the pie that the government gives you. A needs-based budget is what you really believe the district needs to operate.

10. How can trustees ensure that the leadership in Surrey schools reflects the diversity of Surrey's communities?

I think we can encourage our senior staff to go out and encourage a diverse group of people in our district to apply for these positions and to go to some of the leadership workshops that are offered. Tap people on the shoulder. It isn't that difficult.

Upcoming Provincial Referendum on our voting system

British Columbia is having a referendum on what voting system we should use for provincial elections. The referendum is being held by mail from October 22 to November 30, 2018. Voters in the referendum will be asked what voting system B.C. should use for provincial elections. The referendum will decide if British Columbia keeps the current First Past the Post voting system or adopts a proportional representation voting system. If more than half the votes support First Past the Post on the first question, the voting system will stay the same. If more than half the votes support proportional representation on the first question, the proportional system with the most support on the second question will be adopted and used for provincial elections called on or after July 1, 2021.

Did you know?

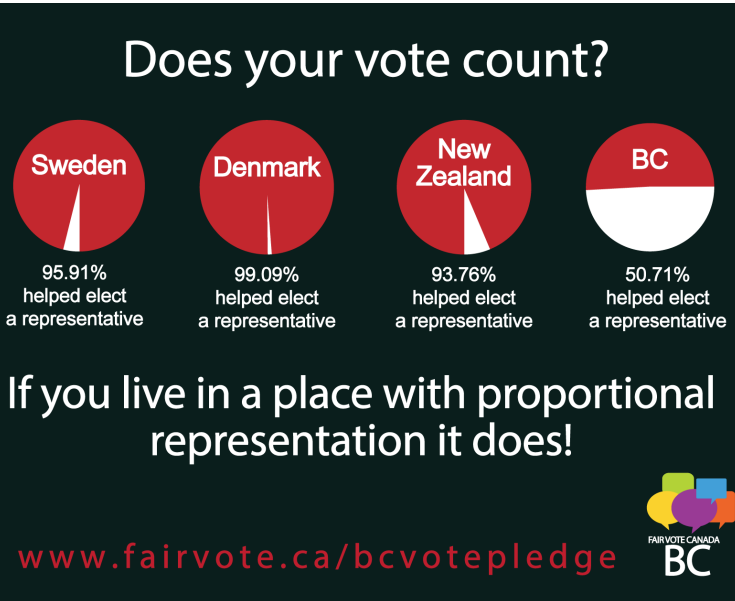
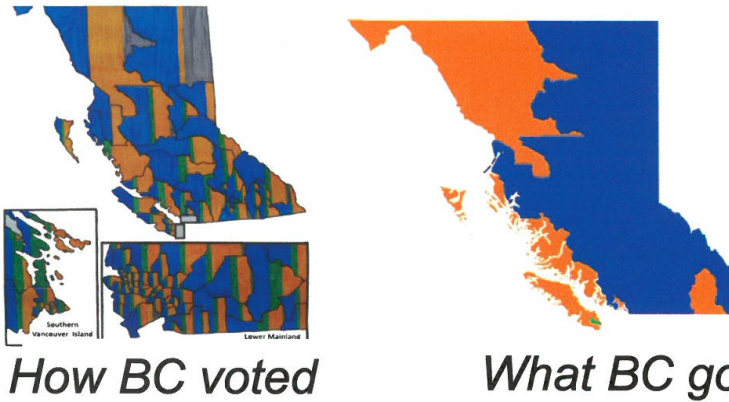
- Over 90 countries use Proportional Representation. 85% of developed countries have some form of Proportional Representation - Canada is not one.
- The total number of MLAs in the legislature will be between 87 and 95 (currently there are 87).
- No region in the province will have fewer MLAs than it does now.
- Another referendum will be held after two general elections to see if B.C. wants to keep the new voting system or go back to using First Past the Post... that's right, if we do not like it, we can always vote to change it back!

Voters will be asked two questions on the referendum ballot:

- The first question asks if we should keep the current First Past the Post voting system or move to a system of proportional representation.
- The second question asks voters to rank three proportional systems: Dual Member Proportional (DMP), Mixed Member Proportional (MMP), and Rural-Urban Proportional (RUP).

Make false majority governments a relic of the past. We need a fairer voting system!

Time for a new voting system!



| Local Representation<br>Who represents you? |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| First-past-the-post                         |  | 1 local MLA   |
| Dual Member PR                              |  | 2 local MLAs<br>(in a 2 seat riding)<br><small>*a few large rural ridings would remain single seats</small> |
| Mixed Member PR                             |  | 1 local MLA<br>(in a larger riding)<br>+ Several regional MLAs<br>(# varies by area)                        |
| Rural-Urban PR                              |  | Urban: Several local district MLAs<br>(# varies by area)<br>Rural: See Mixed Member                         |

fairvote.ca/pr4bc

### What Can Teachers Do?!

We

need

a

new

School

Board

- Vote on one of the early voting dates
- Spread the word - talk to your friends, family, and community members. Let's get EVERYONE out and voting on Saturday, October 20th!
- Get to know the candidates - find out who is running and ask them questions on social media: <https://www.surrey.ca/election/candidates/candidates-for-school-trustee.aspx>
- Support candidates you think will be great trustees - get in touch with candidates to help leaflet, make phone calls, put up signs, promote on social media. How often do employees have the opportunity to help hire their employers? #electingourbosses
- Volunteer an hour or two with the STA PA/PR Committee?
- Sign up for Student Vote at your school



# What is Student Vote?

Student Vote is the flagship program of CIVIX, Canada's leading civic education charity. Since 2003, CIVIX has coordinated 39 Student Vote programs at various levels of elections. In the 2017 provincial election, more than 170,000 British Columbia students cast ballots from 1,100 schools representing all 87 electoral districts. In October 2018, elementary and high school students in BC will cast ballots for the official candidates running for council and school trustee in their municipality. Student Vote provides youth under the voting age with an opportunity to experience the voting process firsthand and build the habits of active and engaged citizenship. The program is an excellent way to create a 'teachable moment' out of the official election.

## How Do I Get Involved With Student Vote?

1. Register your school: The program is open to all schools and there is no cost to participate.
2. Receive materials: Registered schools are supplied with print and online pedagogical materials, posters and election supplies.
3. Engage with the campaign: The activities are intended to inform students about government and the electoral process, encourage research into the candidates and issues, and foster dialogue among students and their families.
4. Student Vote Day: Students take on the role of deputy returning officers and poll clerks, and cast ballots for the official election candidates. The results are tabulated and shared publicly after the close of the official polls.

Website: <http://studentvote.ca/bclocal2018>

Facebook: <http://fb.com/studentvote>



# 2018 School Trustee Elections

[www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses](http://www.surreyteachers.org/electingourbosses)

**Early voting dates vary by city**

**Surrey: October 6, 10, 11, 13**

**Election Day is October 20**

**I TEACH.  
I VOTE.**