

Delta School Trustee Candidate Responses

Name: Joe Muego

1. Why do you want to be a school trustee? What do you understand the role of a trustee to be?

Trusteeship is governance, which I see as policy setting through visioning and strategic planning and then fashioning budgets to address the plan – in short fiduciary (public trust) accountability. Of course there are many layers to this but the obligations of trustees to listen, assess and advocate for public education underlies all work. I am running again because I feel we accomplished a lot in the last four years but there is still lots of work and lots of improvement possible. I would like to leverage my experience locally and provincially to keep improving our schools for the students and the staff.

2. Delta staff are committed to including all children and families. How will you support Delta staff in creating inclusive school communities?

While on the board and throughout the community I have been active and vocal for inclusion and kindness. This includes supporting the work of staff in the areas of Justice and Equity, as well as Accessibility. Ensuring these initiatives remain part of policy work and budgets is key.

3. Delta staff are learning about decolonization and reconciliation. How will you support Delta staff in our supportive role?

This is similar to above. Reconciliation is deeply personal to the individual. Creating and maintaining a framework that allows for this personal growth for students and staff alike is non-negotiable.

4. Due to underfunding in the system, violence has become more prevalent. How will you commit to providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment for students and staff?

To be clear – under-funding is one reason, but there are other equally complex reasons why we are seeing so many challenges in the classrooms. If elected I will continue to review data and staffing concerns from District staff but also continue to engage with teachers and support staff. This should not be limited to budget time, so I will commit to as much dialogue (listening) as possible. I see the notion of wrap around support as paramount. This means the on-going assessment of a child and their needs but ensuring they are supported from all side by the appropriate team, whether that be EAs, CYCWs and other specialists.

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5. How would you propose to alleviate the current EA staffing shortage and improve recruitment and retention?

I believe one aspect to examine are the barriers to entry. There would involve a careful review and possibly opening of the qualification requirements for EAs. There are many caring, potentially qualified people out there where the barrier to entry is in the training. Furthermore, the part-time work may be a challenge for others. It is difficult for some families to thrive with one spouse working part time. I would investigate the potential for other related duties within the day to be fashioned together so some full time positions could be created.

6. Given that funding is limited, what are your budget priorities for the Delta School District?

My budget priorities remain: funding the Strategic Plan. As a lay board we rely on the professional advice of our staff. We look to them for pedagogical and operational knowledge to make decisions. We also look to the advice and concerns of our education partners, such as DTA, CUPE, DPAC, DPVPA and rights holders. The key tenants of Graduation for All, Inclusive and Inspiring Learning Environments, Strong Foundations in Literacy and Numeracy, an Engaged and Empowered Healthy Workforce, and Strong Governance and Stewardship of Resources all remain my priority, while leading with data-driven, student-centred decisions.

7. Currently, in Delta, decisions are made by trustees prior to the public Board meeting. Do you feel an obligation to make your decision-making process more transparent to the public and what steps will you take to ensure this?

There may be a misconception here. We engage in a few different types of meetings as trustees. In Camera meetings are appropriate for private or sensitive information, so colloquially issues such as Land, Labour or Law. Another type of meeting we engage in are Planning Meetings. Planning Meetings act more as educational and information gathering for trustees to hear primarily from the Superintendent and in turn District Executive as appropriate. Decisions are not made at either of these meetings that are otherwise presented at the Public Meeting. I would more appropriately credit the leadership to have provided clear, accurate and timely information that allows for an easier consensus when the public motions are advanced.