

Delta Municipal Election 2026

Fifteen school trustee candidates face voters at forum

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Fifteen of the 18 candidates running for a seat on the school board faced off in North Delta on Monday night, bringing everything from sharp debates on classroom safety to a brief moment of theatre-room chaos during an all-candidates meeting.

The forum on Sept. 28 was jointly organized by the Delta Teachers Association, the Delta District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC), and CUPE Local 1091.

The hopefuls fielded questions on transparency, violence in schools, truth and reconciliation, and student and staff support.

Running for a seat under the Achieving for Delta banner are Erica Beard, Nimmi Daula, Joe Muego, Rick Ocean, Nenah Sandy, Sagar Sanghera, and Umendra Singh.

Running under the One Delta banner are Jesse Bierman, Tamara Bissett-Laza, Ammen Dhillon, Masako Gooch, Amar Hundal, Gurinder Kahlon, and Val Windsor.

Krissy Eiben, Marcin Huniewicz, Jim McMurtry, and Roman St. Germain are running as independents.

The forum kicked off with a broad question about how candidates plan to regularly engage with parents, students, unions, and community groups while keeping their decision-making transparent.

Gooch suggested a committee with frontline workers to keep communication going year-round, while Daula emphasized that, because public education belongs to the community, the public should understand why decisions are made, not just what the decisions are. She also spoke about hearing directly from students through the Delta Youth Advisory Committee (DYAC).

Kahlon highlighted accountability, stressing that trustees need to actually carry community concerns forward.

Ocean, co-founder of Body Energy Club, was enthusiastic about using his entrepreneurial background and everyday retail customer service experience to improve communication and parent engagement on the board.

As a mother of a neurodivergent child, Eiben emphasized being present in the community, listening to parents through everyday interactions and being authentic in the role.

Muego highlighted his open-door policy and existing consultation structures, pointing to groups like DPAC for parents and DYAC for students as key avenues for community input.

Sanghera pointed to his everyday community roots — from daily dog walks and local sports involvement to his professional experience managing stakeholder relations as natural ways to stay transparent, honest, and accessible to families.

Several others emphasized the importance of face time and being accessible to parents, staff, and community members outside of formal meetings.



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Fifteen of the 18 candidates running for a seat on the school board faced off in North Delta on Sept. 28.

Talk quickly turned to classroom safety and violence, an issue weighing heavily on educators and support staff.

Windsor suggested reinstating the Health and Safety Committee to provide a formal avenue for safety concerns.

Dhillon supported the idea, emphasizing staff safety as a basic working condition, the need to revisit local budgeting and training where pressure points emerge, and the importance of relational continuity with workers who understand the students.

Beard stressed the need to use solid data to understand the underlying causes of incidents, assess whether staffing and supports are adequate, and determine if current interventions are actually reducing repeat incidents.

Bissett-Laza focused on the practical side of staff safety, including ensuring staff can clearly see safety plans, exercising the right to refuse unsafe work, and logging proper incident reports so the district has concrete evidence to take to the provincial government for more funding.

Singh suggested reviewing successful programs in other jurisdictions and potentially bringing those approaches to Delta to help reduce violence against teachers, students, and staff.

Kahlon wanted students to be aware of what is happening in the world, saying schools should avoid blocking students from information or exposing them to misinformation.

The atmosphere shifted during the discussion on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 calls to action.

While many candidates spoke about the ongoing journey of learning and unlearning, and praised existing district programs like the Justice, Equity, Action Plan (JEAP) and local First Nations engagement, tension spiked near the end of the answers.

McMurtry delivered remarks that were critical of schools focusing on reconciliation.

"It's not part of the school's mandate to be doing any of this," he said.

Layering in contentious opinions on residential school denialism and questioning the school walls bearing the progressive Pride flag, the comments

quickly heated the room.

The cutting of his mic's power sparked an immediate outcry from the audience. It led to a shouting match over free speech, a fiery exchange between attendees, and a short break called by moderators while candidates stepped aside to let the theatre cool down.

When the forum resumed, candidates tackled a series of targeted questions directed at specific groups.

On supporting gender-diverse students and keeping schools safe amid rising public pressure, candidates emphasized inclusivity.

Gooch highlighted the district's ongoing JEAP work, noting that students need to see themselves reflected in their schools and that addressing facility concerns like accessible bathrooms remains a key priority.

When asked how they envision a better welcome for vulnerable new immigrant and refugee families, candidates focused heavily on practical resources.

Hundal stressed the importance of expanding English language learning (ELL) support and introducing multilingual options to help families bridge the communication gap until they are comfortable speaking English.

Building on that, Tamara Bissett-Laza noted that strengthening inclusive teaching curricula and directing mental health resources to newcomers is essential to ensure every student has a fair shot at success.

Muego answered the question regarding how he would improve working and learning conditions by noting that staff safety requires addressing gaps in workplace ratios through targeted budgets, while student learning can be boosted by addressing recent dips in literacy and numeracy through expanded literacy screening and math programs, leaning on frontline educators for guidance.

Windsor pointed to the district's Justice, Equity, Action Plan (JEAP) as a vital tool for ensuring all students feel welcome and safe, emphasizing that proper staff training and resourcing are key to helping children thrive.

Dhillon stressed the importance of staying accessible, listening directly to diverse community needs rather than making assumptions, and ensuring trustees continue their own education on inclusivity.

General Voting Day is on Oct. 17.