

RE-ELECT

CHRIS GORMAN
FOR SCHOOL TRUSTEE



VOTE
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**Responses to the Central Okanagan Parent Advisory Council
Questionnaire to School Trustee Candidates**

1. What skills would you bring to your role as a trustee?

I have had the privilege of a public school education. It broadened my horizons, introduced me to new ideas and involved me in diverse communities. As a student in the public education system, I was fortunate to be involved in many different aspects of school life. These included taking leadership roles in various extra-curricular clubs, participating in theatrical plays and choral ensembles, and travelling to Japan twice on exchange. I appreciate the value of the educational experience inside and outside the classroom.

Following high school, I continued my education at publicly funded universities where I was well prepared to make the most of my opportunities. I completed a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and History and a Master of Business Administration degree at The University of British Columbia (UBC), a Business Administration Diploma from the British Columbia Institute of Technology and multiple courses in continuing education.

Attending school as a Chinese-Canadian, I have insights into the challenges faced by students who are trying to fit in. I understand what it is like to be bullied at school, to be different and to overcome those situations with the help and support of skilled and caring teachers.

Professionally, I have extensive experience with education governance, having served on UBC's Senate for nine years, and working in senior administrative roles in a post-secondary education setting, most recently at the Faculty of Management at UBC's Okanagan campus.

These educational experiences - inside and outside the classroom - changed my life and have shaped my commitment to public service.

I have two children, one currently enrolled in the Central Okanagan School District and the other getting ready to join her next year. As a parent, I am committed to ensuring that my children attend public school, where they will receive rich and diverse educational experiences that will contribute to their capacity to be productive citizens.

Finally, I have served a term as a School Trustee. I have actively worked with teachers, administrators, parents and students over the past three years. I have an understanding of the fiduciary, legal and political responsibilities associated with the role of School Trustee. Through my diverse experiences, I bring a balanced and informed perspective to the Board of Education.

"Committed to quality public education - today and tomorrow."

2. How do you think we can improve literacy support in our school district?

A commitment to student success lies at the core of our education system. Giving students the best education possible and preparing them for their future are goals shared by parents, teachers, School Trustees and community members.

Some of the opportunities to improve literacy support might include:

- Use data to identify areas in need of change and to confirm that literacy strategies are succeeding
- Support professional development for education professionals to develop proficiency in the areas of literacy support
- Encourage literacy strategies that can be used in all subject areas
- Use information technology to enhance literacy learning for staff and students
- Tap into student interests outside the classroom to enhance literacy learning and help parents understand their important role in supporting their child's learning
- Strengthen relationships with local libraries and community organizations to collaborate on shared literacy initiatives

3. What innovative solutions do you see for the present and future fiscal challenges we face in this school district?

One of the fiscal challenges that we face today and in the future is ensuring sustainable and predictable government funding.

Because funding of our education system is allocated by the provincial government, it is important to maintain effective working relationships with local elected officials to ensure that they are well informed of local issues and have opportunities to interact with students, teachers, administrators and School Trustees.

The current Board of Education meets with local MLAs, as well as the leadership of the Westbank First Nation and municipalities within the School District's jurisdiction, annually. These meetings and relationships are invaluable where School Trustees can be informed about policy, funding and other government priorities – and seek counsel about optimal approaches to engage the Ministry and government to advance the needs and interests of the Central Okanagan School District.

4. What do you see as the future of public education and what steps do we need to take to get there?

I am optimistic about public education in BC as the foundation for strong, democratic and economically resilient communities. Our students are the future of public education and their success and commitment to public education for their children is a testament to the decisions we make today.

To build a resilient and sustainable public education system, we need to:

- Work with the provincial government to secure sustainable and predictable funding
- Collaborate with teachers, parents, and our communities to support student success
- Create and maintain inspiring places to learn
- Exercise good governance and financial stewardship of our resources

5. What do you think about the government beginning career planning with kids as young as grade 6?

It is important to acknowledge that the provincial curriculum development process, which includes consideration of career and life planning, is guided by the Ministry in consultation with School Trustees, teachers, parents and administrators across the province.

Career planning may mean different things to different people. From my perspective, career planning requires skills that can take a lifetime to acquire - the ability to set goals and create a path to achieve them, to make informed decisions, and to develop an awareness of the effect and impact of decisions on themselves and others.

These seem to be reasonable and powerful skill sets, appropriately introduced and delivered throughout the education process, that can create a capacity to live healthy and successful lives.

6. What emphasis do you put on identification of Mental Health issues of our students and what kind of policies would you work toward to see that the earliest intervention would occur including use of all other applicable Ministries in a timely and efficient manner?

Mental health is critical for all members of our society, including students. While appropriate diagnosis and treatment falls into the realm of medical professionals and parental responsibility, our schools are often the places where behaviour and performance issues associated with mental health issues occur.

Boards of Education can play an important role to support teachers and education professionals by ensuring a solid policy framework on issues such as anti-bullying and accessibility, strengthening ties with government and community services, and creating communication channels for teachers to share their experiences with School Trustees to identify high-need issues and explore collaborative responses.

7. How can we improve enrichment opportunities for gifted students?

Meeting the needs of a diverse student community, which includes gifted students, creates opportunities and challenges for teachers, students, parents and administrators.

Developing and implementing Individual Education Plan (IEPs) for our gifted students create opportunities for students to ensure that their learning is inspired and responsive to their needs and interests, while ensuring that teachers have the resources to achieve these learning goals.

The Central Okanagan Board of Education can support creative curriculum options through Board approved courses, strengthening partnerships with educational institutions to support student learning, and create communication channels for teachers to share their experiences with School Trustees to identify issues and opportunities for collaborative response.