

RE-ELECT

CHRIS GORMAN
FOR SCHOOL TRUSTEE



VOTE
NOVEMBER 15, 2014

**Responses to the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Questionnaire to School Trustee Candidates**

1. What is the single greatest personal achievement you have had, that relates to the position of school trustee?

Aside from raising two wonderful children, my tenure working as Executive Assistant to Hon. Peter MacKay in 2006 – 2007, during which time he was serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs, is my greatest personal achievement related to the School Board. This experience gave me a front row seat to appreciate the complexities of our global community, to meet leaders from around the world, to observe true collaboration in the face of crisis and to learn from one of the most skilled politicians in Canada.

I experienced the challenges and opportunities that exist to represent a constituency of citizens, the long hours and hard work required to serve and to make things happen, the importance of engaging diverse opinions to find sustainable solutions, and the passion that is required to be successful in public service and community leadership.

It also highlighted for me the value of my education – my understanding and appreciation for history and political science, along with my interest in business, finance and trade – as it came to life as part of my everyday work.

These experiences have shaped a work ethic that is dedicated to service and has framed my commitment as a School Trustee on the Central Okanagan Board of Education over the last three years.

I have been dedicated to engaging in our schools, with teachers, administrators, parents and students. I have had a glimpse at the world of opportunity that awaits our students if we make good decisions today as part of their education.

2. The business community in Kelowna is critical to our city's economic sustainability. What two new actions would you propose to ensure that our students are prepared for future employment?

A well-educated citizenry provides the foundation for a resilient and sustainable society and economy. This requires ensuring that our students learn how to learn, to be flexible and adapt to change, and to know and pursue their passion. The Central Okanagan School District is recognized across the province for its leadership in innovation, responsiveness and creativity with education partners and program development.

Partnering with industry and post-secondary education institutions, our School District offers innovative programs such as dual credit programs for the trades and other professions, early college participation at Okanagan College and special conferences and career events that provide opportunities for experiential learning. Increasing these existing opportunities for greater student participation would support better student decision-making as they chart the next phase of their life and career choices.

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

Mentorship with local industry professionals and innovators create powerful connections for both students, the business community and community leaders. Working with community partners, such as the Kelowna Chamber of Commerce, could provide rich and valuable connections for students and business leaders to better prepare our next generation.

3. What are the top two items or areas of concern for this school district that you would like to address within this term of office?

In my opinion, there are three important priorities for School Trustees in our School District.

1. Sustained and predictable provincial government funding

As the school system moves toward a 21st century learning environment and as we continually work to achieve greater student success, there will be even more pressure on our limited financial resources that will be required to fund increased infrastructure and delivery costs.

Our students will benefit the most from an education system that is adequately funded. The provincial government must commit the resources to support school districts as they are challenged with meeting these opportunities.

It is essential that the Central Okanagan Board of Education continue to identify and articulate the needs of our School District and engage with government, teachers, students, parents and administrators to continue to advocate for a fully-funded education system in BC.

2. Rebuild relationship with COTA and teachers

It is not uncommon to have tensions that outlast labour disputes. We need to find a way to restore relationships across the education system to strengthen collaborative processes and deliberation to support student learning.

3. Create inspiring places to learn

As a growing School District, there are some significant facility challenges that we need to address. Through our long-term facility plan, approved in 2012, the School District is committed to transitioning to a consistent grade configuration (K-5, 6-8, 9-12) throughout the District, which has implications for our facilities.

The School District needs to implement its long-term facilities plan to meet the facilities challenge in Kelowna, namely the rebuilding of Rutland Middle School, building a new middle school in the Mission, and replacing Glenmore Elementary.

I am committed to continue my advocacy with our local MLAs to seek approval and funding to create new centres of learning for our students. It is my hope that some, if not all, of these priority projects will be approved in the next four years.