



SD 61 TRUSTEE CANDIDATE SURVEY 2011 Municipal Elections

CANDIDATE NAME:
Catherine Alpha

1. Do you support a fully funded budget that meets the needs of all students? (a 'needs' budget)

YES - I do.

2. Will you vote to submit only a fully funded 'needs' budget to the Minister of Education?

YES - I have, repeatedly and yes, I will.

3. How will you vote when the Superintendent's Report on Class Size and Composition is in violation of Bill 33?

REJECT – I have never voted to accept the report.

4. Some districts send the Superintendent back to use surplus funds to improve class size and composition. Will you vote to send the Superintendent back to produce a revised report that uses surplus funds to improve class size and composition?

YES

5. What is your position on Foundational Skills Assessment (FSA) testing?

REJECT - I brought a motion to the Board to write a letter to the Minister of Education requesting that we have a two year moratorium on FSA's and it passed. I also brought a motion to the Board that principals respect parent letters withdrawing their students from taking the FSAs.

6. How will you engage and improve parental and citizen participation in public education issues?

Long ago I decided it is up to other adults to look after their own life and their responsibilities. When parents and citizens come to participate, I will listen and respond with respect, providing support and information whenever I can. I will endeavor to provide venues for participation that are welcoming and well advertised. I have worked to support people in the past who wanted to present to the Board, encouraging them when they felt shy.

7. Will you accept invitations to go visit a classroom regarding specific problems?

YES - I will and have in the past.

8. If you are an incumbent trustee have you ever been invited to visit a classroom regarding specific problems?

YES – I have.

What did you do?

VISITED – I visited.

9. Do you think that special education is adequately funded?

NO – adamantly not!

If “NO”, what should change?

Targeted funding was more effective than this funding formula is. In our meetings with the Ministers, I have made this my top issue to advocate for.

10. What should be done with the current District Strategic Facilities Plan? (Stantec Report)

Scrap the report! It was required by the provincial government and it is just another way of pushing districts to do what the government wants. I think that the Board needs to point out the “cut and paste” bits to Stantec and I think that the Board needs to make it clear to the provincial government that this report makes recommendations that are in contravention of the School Act. Given that, the Board should be developing Facilities plans based on the real needs of our students and our school communities in consultation with all the stakeholders involved with the community.

11. How many hours per month will you commit to the role of Trustee including meetings?

It varies. Some months require a great deal more time than others. Budget time and Bill 33 are examples of issues that require a big time commitment. Generally about 15 to 20 hours except in the heavy time commitment months.

12. What are your thoughts and comment's on user fees that parents pay for, such as academies, sports equipment, math workbooks, technical equipment, planners?

No answer provided.

13. What is your experience in parliamentary procedure and committee work?

Seventeen years using Robert’s Rules of Order as a union activist on my local executive (Sooke and Fort Nelson) or at the BCTF AGMs and RAs or serving on the Professional Issues Advisory Committee to the BCTF Executive (6 years). Three years on the Greater Victoria Board of Education.

14. Do you live in the SD 61 boundaries?

YES - I do.

15. If you have children, what types of schools do they or have they attended?

PUBLIC – all my children attended public school – for many years in Victoria – also Saanich and Fort Nelson.

16. What methods would you use to provide accountability & transparency?

I worked to limit the scope of items that could be discussed “In Camera” when the policy was being developed. I am available for any questions or concerns the public has.

17. Would vote for a motion to have all votes recorded and published annually?

YES – I would.

18. How else would you inform the public about your positions and actions on issues?

I have done interviews on the CBC, CFAX and with Rob Wipond of Focus magazine. I have written letters to the Times Colonist and answered email directed to me as a trustee.

19. Do you support Kindergarten/Grade 1 split classes?

NO - I don't. The curriculum for Kindergarten is very different from the one for grade one. Kindergarten is supposed to be more play-based in focus. Grade one should have a large element of this but there is a requirement for literacy and numeracy curriculum that is more extensive in grade one. I advocated repeatedly for EA support for the classrooms.

20. What are your thoughts on the involvement of private corporations in the public education system?

They do not belong in our public school system. Involvement of private corporations generally comes with strings. However, if they want to make donations without strings attached, that is fine. An example would be Thrifty's. They have often made donations for various events such as Dry Grad.

21. Please tell us anything else you think may be important or relevant to your candidacy for School Trustee in SD 61.

No comments provided.