



SD 61 TRUSTEE CANDIDATE SURVEY 2011 Municipal Elections

CANDIDATE NAME:
James Holland

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

YES

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

NO

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

REJECT

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?

NO. I will abide by the opinion that I continue to hear expressed over and over by parents and members of the public, to reserve the small surpluses we sometimes have for subsequent year deficits.

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

SUPPORT

I assume what you are asking is not specific to the current FSA, but whether or not I support some standardized tests for students as one way to track our overall success. My answer is, yes I think it can be helpful.

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

I will continue to make myself available to anyone who wants to talk about educational issues, and continue to welcome members of the public to present their issues and concerns at public Board meetings.

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

YES

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

Not personally, no.

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

NO

If “NO”, what should change?

The funding issue has two parts. First is the issue of adequacy of funds. As a function of government educational funding will always be a political issue. If the electorate insists on more money being spent on schools, and if the pressure is great enough the government will respond, as it occasionally has, with more money. From the point of view of those of us within the system, this will, of course, never be enough. There is always more to do and more money needed. The other part is the formula which government uses to fund schools. There is much work that needs to be

done to ensure that funding is not only adequate, but also, and perhaps more importantly, that it is fairly distributed. Trustees have some influence on this, and in the Greater Victoria School District we have always spent more on special education than we have received from the government. I believe that we will continue to do so, as long as there is a less than adequate amount from the Province.

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

It has already been decided by the Board that the Stantec Report is not particularly useful. Essentially, it has already been scrapped.

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

15-20 hours

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?

I believe that public education must be free. I am not opposed to schools providing programs and services outside of the curriculum (trips, sporting programs, etc) that require parents to pay something, as long as these things are not required by the school. In Victoria we have a policy that no student will be excluded from any program with a fee attached because of an inability to pay. Any required material should be supplied by the Board.

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

Here is a list of some of my involvements:

Trustee, Greater Victoria School Board, 2001 - present

BC Civil Court Mediator, 2004 – 2007

Minister of Education Representative, BC College of Teachers, 1997 - 2001

Commissioner, BC Child Care Commission

Chairperson, Greater Victoria Social Planning Council
Chairperson, Victoria Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils
Member, Oak Bay Child and Youth Committee
Board Member, Saanich Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee
Board Member, Victoria Parks and Recreation Foundation
Board Member, Victoria Youth and Family Justice Committee
Board Member, Victoria Crime Alert
Board Member, Victoria Hospitality Awards
Representative, BC Public School Employers Association
Representative, Vancouver Island Labour Relations Council
Committee Member, Mayor's Advisory Committee, Victoria
Board Member, Capital Families Association

14. Do you live in the SD 61 boundaries?

NO

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

PUBLIC
PRIVATE
HOME-SCHOOLED

All three at one time or another, but primarily public schools.

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

Like all members of the Board, I consider carefully whether the items on in camera meeting agendas *need* to be in camera. Otherwise all discussions and votes by the board are held in public and are completely transparent. I am accountable to my colleagues on the Board to conduct myself in an appropriate manner and I am accountable to the public through regular public elections.

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

I would have absolutely no problem with this.

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

I know that some trustees use the media to make their views known. I don't see myself doing that without being requested. I make my positions and actions known by attending Public Board meetings and public consultation meetings (for instance on the Budget).

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

YES

This is a direction that the Board has taken. I understand the necessity for it, and it is my understanding that, while it creates some challenges for teachers, it is generally accepted in the District. Like so many things there are advantages and disadvantages.

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

I believe public education must remain in the public domain. I also believe that schools should be places where there is a great degree of free thought. I would be against any kind of indoctrination of students, whether it be from teachers or from private business. Private business involvement in our schools must be very carefully monitored. However, I am not against some involvement by community businesses in their local schools. Thrifty Foods, for instance, has been very supportive of our schools, and I believe this is a good thing, and that there should be some opportunities for business to provide support to schools.

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

I have served on the Board for 9 years, During that time I have tried to approach each issue on its own merits. I tend not to call attention to

myself but focus on the issues at hand. Serving on the Board for me is simply a matter of public service. I will continue to serve as long as I believe I can make a contribution and as long as the public sees fit to elect me. I bring no personal agenda to my work as a Trustee other than to make decisions that will ensure our schools remain strong and effective.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

I believe that we must maintain our focus in public education on the needs of students. The public system is, at the best of times, a challenging place to work. I can't think of many careers more challenging than being a class room teacher, and the challenge is growing. I do believe that working conditions for our District staff must always be high on our list of priorities, but it should never become the central focus of work as educators and educational leaders.