

RETSD Trustee Election Candidate Information

All RETSD trustee candidates who had available contact information were contacted. They were sent the same questions and given approximately two weeks to respond. We asked that each answer not exceed 100 words – the responses that follow were received by RETTA as of the publishing deadline (October 7th). If a candidate chose to not respond to any or all of the questions, we indicated that with “Did not respond”. We thank the candidates who took the time to respond to our questions for sharing the planks of their platform with us. We hope their responses will help to inform you, the voter.

General Civic Election Information:

[City of Winnipeg - Election 2022](#)

[Rm of East St Paul - Election 2022](#)

Ward Maps:

[RETSD Wards 1-4](#) (Winnipeg)

[RETSD Ward 5](#) (East St. Paul)

WARD 1 (Two candidates to be elected):

Colleen Carswell and Sheri Irwin were both acclaimed

WARD 2 (Two candidates to be elected):

- 1. Why should you be elected to the school board, what motivates you, and what do you bring to the table?***

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: I’m a parent and teacher (now self-employed in the arts) who is passionate about children’s welfare and education. I want students in our community to see our schools as welcoming places where they can get what they need and feel supported. I want to connect with teachers and parents and hear about what is important to them. In addition to three professional degrees, I have over a decade of experience working in education at the university and public school levels, as well as for academic unions (former graduate student grievance officer, Equity Committee chair, among other roles).

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I am a long-time resident of the school division, I am a mother of 3 who is very passionate about their education. Two of my children have learning disabilities and I have experienced many difficulties with the school system in getting the help they require. I needed to be an advocate for them in their time of need, just like many other children need. I believe that children are successful if they know they are valued and have the right tools. I will bring that same passion to the table.

GLENN BUFFIE: I have always had a strong sense of community and commitment to working to advance youth initiatives, to better their lives and programs that enrich their future. I was raised in a large family where emphasis was put on our school studies and my father was teacher. I have a extensive resumes of working on boards locally in River East and across the city and province in leadership roles and I would like to continue that as a RETSD Trustee.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

2. What is the most important responsibility of a school board?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: I think the CCPA has it right when they call trustees a “vital bulwark against partisan political control of education,” but to do this we also need to be transparent as members and with the communities we represent. As other research has shown, school boards can also have a significant impact on reducing the effects of poverty on students’ educational outcomes by pushing for increased funding and the right innovations and programming.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: To listen to the community to further help develop school programs to improve student achievements while also collaborating with the senior administration/teachers to ensure a positive outcome - all the while keeping fiscal responsibility in check

GLENN BUFFIE: Our role as trustees is to ensure we listen to parents, students and stakeholders and ensure that we present their issues to the boards and administration. We scrutinize and be accountable for the safety, quality, and cost of education.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

3. What issues do you believe RETSD needs to address in its programming and offerings? What changes would you recommend?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: Did not respond.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I would like to see more student support programs including mental health and the inclusion of social-emotional learning programming (emotional self-awareness, motivation, respect, kindness, cooperation, etc) in the schools.

GLENN BUFFIE: I believe that we need to ensure that the entire division be united and focused on ensuring that our student outcomes is our top priority and come together on curriculum and process to achieve goals in the Report and Planning for Student Success. There has been gains but we still fall short and must do better to prepare our students for their future.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

4. How would you support RETSD educators in their role teaching children about topics such as human sexuality and mental health?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: I taught in a community with high rates of child abuse and the highest suicide rates in all of Canada, where I regularly applied for approval and funding so that I could bring in mental health and sexual health-related workshops to my students. I believe age-appropriate education on sexual, emotional, and physical health are vital for raising healthy, happy children and young adults and would enthusiastically support teachers in this capacity. As someone who was opted-out of school health curriculum for religious reasons, I also fully support parents' right to choose to opt-out, but do believe the majority of parents look to schools to supplement their role in teaching their children about these topics.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I would want to review the information being used currently and work with specialists to ensure the programs are inclusive and engaging for both the staff and students for the best possible outcomes.

GLENN BUFFIE: I am an advocate for ensuring that all students, teachers, support staff and administration are treated with respect, equitably and fair regardless of their situation and would support SOGI and Human Sexuality at an age appropriate time and according to the curriculum needs and specialists recommendations. I have a lot of experience in mental health issues in youth and adults and feel that it is vital important that it is a strong part of our support and teachings to ensure a safe and welcoming environment in our schools.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

5. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: I'm a huge fan of universal breakfast and lunch programs as I have seen firsthand how essential they are to basic student learning. We cannot expect hungry children to do well on standardized tests. But \$2M does not buy unlimited breakfasts, so we need a long-term solution to food insecurity within our schools and ongoing funding for programs like these so that they are sustainable. After teaching in Nunavut where there is an ongoing struggle to preserve the Inuktitut language, I would also like to see more funding towards supporting Indigenous language-learning. Students feel an intense pride in themselves and their culture when they see their language used in their schools.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I have a few ideas which would require further thought and calculations - these include enhanced lunch programs, enhanced breakfast programs, and programs to help with EA shortages to name a few.

GLENN BUFFIE: I would want to get as many voices to look at this situation and spend it as best as we can so that it becomes a legacy for present and future needs. My focus would be equipment for the

trades and technology areas to ensure that the students are learning on the latest industry needs and supports for teachers for teaching technology and equipment.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

6. RETSD currently spends the lowest amount of money per pupil in metro Winnipeg. What are your thoughts on this?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: With current rates of inflation, child poverty, our low graduation rate among Indigenous youths, and the desperate overall economic position of many families with children, I think this is abysmal and that funding for schools and students should be growing, not shrinking. I am very open to hearing RETTA's thoughts on how our board can better advocate for funding increases in our division.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: This is a bit of a double-edged item - I heavily encourage fiscal responsibility, so the lowest spend is good from that perspective, however, I also know other divisions have additional programs that RETSD does not, so it is not a 100% fair comparison either.

GLENN BUFFIE: We need the ability to raise levies and work with the provincial and city to better fund the RETSD so that this financial inequity is rectified and we have the funds to properly educate.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

7. The provincial government has removed the power of school boards to levy taxes to support the educational priorities of their school divisions. How will you advocate for funding to support the educational priorities and needs of the RETSD?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: According to the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives, the proportion of education funding in Manitoba "from local property taxes has grown steadily over the past 40 years from under 20% to over 40%, because provincial funding has not kept up to either inflation or changing needs, such as the sharp increase in technology costs." While I absolutely agree that trustees need to advocate and liaise with the provincial government, especially when it comes to demanding a transparent policy standard when it comes to funding education and increasing funding in our division, I have no easy answer on how we can achieve this. But I am highly invested in improving it for the good of all kids.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I would work with the different levels of government to show them plans that we would like to implement and work to get funds for new programs for the schools.

GLENN BUFFIE: I have worked tirelessly in the past with governments of all political backgrounds to get funding, make our case for a fair share and put forward our priorities to the betterment of the organizations I have worked with. The government must make education their very top priority and fund it fully well past the annual cost of living increases and I would advocate for that along with the rest of the board vigorously and respectfully.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

8. How would you advocate supporting students with diverse learning profiles in RETSD?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: This is a subject I am very keen to hear from educators and families on. If the situation in Manitoba is anything like what we faced as teachers in Nunavut, then there is likely an ongoing need for more educational assistants, better supports, training, and funding for those assistants, and solutions to address safety issues in the classrooms.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I have 2 children with disabilities that required specific support in school and I have witnessed that there are many children that also require additional support, I would like to set up a better way of helping parents and teachers meet the needs of these children.

GLENN BUFFIE: Having 4 children go thru the RETSD program and graduate I was witness to the struggles that each of them had at times along with their friends and we must ensure that we have funding in place, support staff and mechanisms to identify these issues and create better learning outcomes for them.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

9. Who do you see as stakeholder groups and how do you see yourself working with them?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: Everyone in our community has a stake in public education, though I know many do not see it that way. We are all taxpayers who contribute hard-earned income to the educational system and who should want children to succeed for the good of our communities as a whole. You have only to look at the current panel of trustees to see that grandparents have an invested interest in education in our neighborhoods as well. From talking to community members, many seem to desire greater openness and transparency from our school boards (not only in RETSD but around Winnipeg). I fully support things like recorded / open board meetings, making sure the public always can attend and ask questions of board members, the recording of voting history, etc.

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: I feel that all people are stakeholders as everyone is involved at some point, including parents, children, taxpayers, teachers, and administration are all a part of the process. Being able to navigate the needs through discussions will bring the best outcomes.

GLENN BUFFIE: Everyone has a place in the RESTD success that includes teachers and their associations, parent groups, provincial curriculum advisors, school administration and consultants. I have always been part of a mindset that we ensure that all voices are heard and thru consensus, due diligence and ensuring we are doing the right thing for the right reason we can have success.

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

10. Is there anything else you'd like voters to know? Where can we find more information on your platform?

AMALIA SLOBOGIAN: You can learn more about me via my website: www.freshchalk.ca

I look forward to hearing from RETTA members about what they hope for in an incoming trustee and about the issues they believe are the most pressing in our division. Please reach out at any time!
amalia@freshchalk.ca

ROD GIESBRECHT: Did not respond.

SHERI HANSON: These are a few items I will take care of if I am elected into office:

- Be accessible to you to hear your needs and be your voice at the table
- Make inclusion to be more caring and respectful of individual needs
- Avoiding any tax increases
- Safe school zones for children and motorists
- Better lunch care initiatives including food security
- Clean & safe learning environments which would be reflected in antibullying, clean air & anti-racism awareness programs
- My Facebook page is <https://www.facebook.com/SheriHansonTrustee>

GLENN BUFFIE: My website is glennbuffie4restdschooltrustee.com and I believe that I have proven experience have lived in RETSD Ward 2 for 30 years raising 4 children, all graduates in RETSD. I have intimate knowledge of the challenges that students, teachers, and parents encounter in the school system. I am committed to ensuring fiscal accountability and a strong funding model, better outcomes on our educational priorities in the RETSD Report & Planning for Student Success along with strong mental health supports. I understand the importance of strong public education for our students and considers myself a strategic and inclusive professional with a collaborative leadership style, complemented by a strong work ethic known for driving positive and long-lasting change. Throughout

my board and volunteer work I have made myself available to meet, discuss and address concerns with the community, working with youth and parents alike.

Past Volunteer work

Instructor, Red River College Continuing Education

Board Member, Valley Gardens Community Club

President, River East Minor Hockey Association

Vice President, AA Winnipeg Minor Hockey Association

President, Manitoba Print Industry of Manitoba

Treasurer, Manitoba Community Newspaper Association

Adjudicator, Manitoba Residential Appeals Board

Board Member, Manitoba Inline Hockey Association

Board Member, Canadian Inline Hockey Association

Board Member, Steinbach Chamber of Commerce

Regional Director, PC Party of Manitoba

CURTIS BILEWITCH: Did not respond.

WARD 3 (Two candidates to be elected):

1. Why should you be elected to the school board, what motivates you, and what do you bring to the table?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: I have over 40 years of proven experience in public education. I have been in the trenches and I understand what staff, students and parents are experiencing. I am motivated by my passion for public education. I have spent my entire career in the field. I strongly believe I still have something of value to offer. I bring my experience, knowledge and deep understanding of the education system to the table

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: I am a mother, advocate, and resident of the ward I seek office for with a child that attends school in RETSD. I have the experience and educational background (Hons. BA/ MA) to effectively serve my community for the betterment of public education. My dedication to public education comes from my upbringing in a working-class family and honestly, public education saved me. The support that I received in public education from teachers and staff motivates me to pay it forward and ensure that public education is high quality and ensures all children have a brighter future. I bring my passion, experience, and determination to serve my community with integrity, honesty, and respect

2. What is the most important responsibility of a school board?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: The most important responsibility of a school board is to provide support to the individuals in the field. They are the experts and can provide the school board with rational for directions within operations. Trustees need to listen, ask questions to deepen their understanding and trust in the capabilities of the people they have hired to do the job.

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: All roles the school board serves are important. School boards are advocates for a public education system that ensures the betterment of students & the interests of the broader community. It is important to serve our community and the needs of our students & staff to ensure a high-quality public education system.

3. What issues do you believe RETSD needs to address in its programming and offerings? What changes would you recommend?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: Programming and offerings are operational and as such, do not fall under the direct purview of governance. I would strongly argue that professionals in the field should not want those in governance – especially those without any direct hands-on experience in education – to address issues

regarding programming and offerings. Trustees need to listen to the recommendations from the professionals who have the expertise and a global view of the system.

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: We need to address recent underfunding provided by our provincial government that is leaving our programming and offerings in a precarious position. Therefore, to make positive changes we must start with increased funding from the provincial government.

4. How would you support RETSD educators in their role teaching children about topics such as human sexuality and mental health?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: Educators and administrators know what is needed in these areas to deliver provincially approved curricula. Trustees need to educate themselves regarding divisional directions by listening to the professionals. Once suitably informed, trustees can address questions that come their way from the public providing thoughtful answers that as framed by best practices and the needs of students

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: The pandemic has increased the demand for supports for students, staff, and teachers in our division, including but not limited to, increased mental health supports that are readily accessible and inclusive. I will continue to be a vocal proponent of increased resources and support to aide in the teaching & learning on the issues that matter to students and their families.

5. If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: Currently, RETSD is demanding an addition 'tax' from only a portion of the division's parents. Only parents of early years students are required to pay anywhere from \$1.00 to \$2.00 a day for lunch supervision. This is due to the age and immaturity of the students. I believe to be an unfair and discriminatory practice. I would advocate to have the newfound funding used to cover lunch supervision fees

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: No one trustee has the authority to act alone, and any proposals would go to the board as a whole for consideration and debate. With that said, I would want to ensure the gradual roll out of full day every day kindergarten since research continues to indicate positive outcomes for students.

6. *RETSD currently spends the lowest amount of money per pupil in metro Winnipeg. What are your thoughts on this?*

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: I have never considered this fact as something to be proud of. It is true that the division has exercised financial practices that have maximized efficiencies while maintain very solid programming and opportunities for students. Nevertheless, I am left asking, “what are our kids doing without?” Ultimately, what is occurring in RETSD is that certain opportunities for students are provided on a ‘fee for service’ basis. Costs are passed onto parents whereas other divisions who have a higher cost per pupil figure cover expenses through budget lines and general tax revenues. Examples of this are lunch supervision fees, transportation fee for service, Band program fees and field trip transportation fees. Some other divisions cover all those costs. Thus, ALL children have equal opportunity to experience a wider variety of programming and services. Opportunity for kids is not adversely impacted by a family’s ability to pay. Public education is supposed to be a level playing field for all. Ultimately, that is not the case in RESTD

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: The current funding being received from the province is lending itself to challenging time for school divisions, in order to increase the amount of money spent per pupil additional funding must be allocated to the division by the province since we are unable to secure additional revenue through taxation.

7. *The provincial government has removed the power of school boards to levy taxes to support the educational priorities of their school divisions. How will you advocate for funding to support the educational priorities and needs of the RETSD?*

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: This has already begun. The board has provided the committee developing the new funding formula with its recommendations and a listing of our significant concerns regarding some of the directions being proposed. I was part of the Review committee for RETSD and I am committed to continue with efforts to educate the government regarding our needs and advocating for funding that, at the very least, maintains what we have established as a division. As a trustee, I will continue to take a vocal, political stance with government to protect the interests of public education. We have seen what has happen in the public health sector. We need to ensure that such is not repeated in education

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: I have and will continue to be a vocal advocate for increased funding for public education. I am an education advocate and will continue to push for additional funding through our formal role around the board table such meetings with the Minister of Education, local MLAs and other government officials. Additionally, I would continue to educate and listen to our community on the financial situation facing our community to apply additional pressure on the government to increase funding. As we have demonstrated through the demise of Bill 64, when we work together, we can see

results and it is imperative we continue to work together to ensure our education system remains public and well-funded.

8. How would you advocate supporting students with diverse learning profiles in RETSD?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: I do believe we do a commendable job in this area. RETSD has a strong team that has established a best practice driven direction for the division. My position on issues such as this are stated in answers to both questions 3 and 4. Support the experts to the best of my ability.

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: I have and will continue to advocate for additional funding, resources and supports for students with diverse learning profiles in consultation and dialogue with parents, and other key stakeholders

9. Who do you see as stakeholder groups and how do you see yourself working with them?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: I would argue that every group, every individual in the community and society are stakeholders in public education. A school trustee is an elected representative for all those people. As such, trustees need to be accessible to the public. I would continue to listen to the opinions and concerns of stakeholders in a respectful manner. I would also respectfully provide my position on the issue at hand. And, in many cases, provide people with the position of the board and division and strive to help them understand why we do what we do. Also, we can never dismiss the idea that stakeholders may actually have a better idea on how to do things than those currently prescribed by divisional policy. We need to actively listen to truly hear those ideas

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: I believe in open door policy with my constituents and stakeholder groups. I am accessible to parents, staff, teachers, students, community members and all levels of government, any resident of RETSD who would like to speak about items such as the division, their school, or public education. I believe in increased communication from the board of trustees through the development and implementation of more thought exchange surveys, virtual and in person town halls and increased activity through social media channels and traditional media outlets. It is imperative to ensure we listen and learn from each other to better serve our entire educational community.

10. Is there anything else you'd like voters to know? Where can we find more information on your platform?

MATTHEW PARKINSON: Did not respond.

KEITH MORRISON: I do believe that I bring value to the board table primarily due to my experience.

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Twitter: [@KeithMorrison88](https://twitter.com/KeithMorrison88)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100082302651308>

Instagram: [morrison4ward3](https://www.instagram.com/morrison4ward3)

BRIANNE GOERTZEN: I would like to thank RETTA for the invitation to participate in this questionnaire. And strongly encourage folks to check out my website at briannegoertzen.ca, Facebook ([/electbrianne](https://www.facebook.com/electbrianne)) and twitter ([@brigoertzen](https://twitter.com/brigoertzen)). Please remember to vote and thank you for your time.

WARD 4 (Two candidates to be elected):

1. Why should you be elected to the school board, what motivates you, and what do you bring to the table?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: I care about our children's future. It is important to me that children have a quality education. I have nephews enrolled in the RETSD and want them, and all children to succeed. I am also a parent with two sons who graduated from River East Collegiate. My knowledge and skills are beneficial to the school board. I have experience in the communications, social responsibility, and non-profit areas. I am an effective leader and understand governance and fiscal responsibility. I make informed decisions and focus on reaching goals that have been set. Serving with integrity, accountability, empathy, and respect are values of mine

BRENDA BAGE: I want to make sure we are setting ALL our kids up for success. To me, this means supporting the classroom properly with support staff and literacy/numeracy programs, supporting parents properly by administering before/after care, lunch programs and bus transportation, and supporting students properly with breakfast programs, mental health support and extracurricular programs. I am an Educational Assistant working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students and a parent of 2 in school, so I feel I have a good handle on the issues both in the classroom and at homes.

2. What is the most important responsibility of a school board?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: It is to ensure that students are given a quality education and achieve success so they can thrive after graduation. The Board oversees the division to ensure that innovative engaging programming is provided in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment. Teachers are an essential part of this responsibility. I have supported the decision to include more teachers as our student populations increases and their needs continue to rise. All employees including educational assistants, library technicians, bus drivers, custodial staff and school and administration employees, play an integral role in ensuring the division is successful.

BRENDA BAGE: To me, the most important responsibility is to ensure the success of the school system. This means our kids are graduating with full comprehension of math, reading, writing, and critical thinking as whatever career they go into they will need these skills. It is the responsibility of the school board to make sure each school is prepared and equipped to do this. It is our responsibility and our duty to make sure that each gift is nurtured and challenged so that it grows and flourishes.

3. *What issues do you believe RETSD needs to address in its programming and offerings? What changes would you recommend?*

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: The pandemic had an impact on our students and employees. Mental health supports should continue. We need to assess the gaps between how our students' outcomes were prior to the pandemic, and what they are after the pandemic. Our virtual thought exchange initiative with parents and the community, provided trustees with valuable information. They indicated that students need to have a variety of opportunities including, exposure to music, art, languages, and extracurricular activities. Teaching financial literacy and critical thinking skills would also be beneficial to children. As trustees, we need to collaborate with teachers, parents, and administration to develop programming

BRENDA BAGE: I feel that RETSD needs to address the amount of support staff and specialized programs available. I have heard several stories of parents needing to move or choosing homeschool or private schools due to lack of support for additional needs. I also want to make sure that we are offering the programs and supports parents need, such as lunch programs, bus transportation and before/after care. I have heard multiple times that full day/every other day kindergarten still isn't working for most families. I want to look into the studies regarding full day/every day and see if the research supports it.

4. *How would you support RETSD educators in their role teaching children about topics such as human sexuality and mental health?*

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: I would support educators by providing information and training to them about these topics. I would recommend that we employ professionals/consultants in these areas to assist teachers and educational assistants.

BRENDA BAGE: Our schools need to be a safe place for all students and staff, and we need to teach our kids that it is perfectly fine to disagree with someone and still be friends. I don't know what the right solution is, but we do need to make sure that whatever approach we are taking leaves room for opinions from different religions and cultures. We do need to provide our staff and students multiple methods and techniques for managing mental health. I want to make sure that each school has regular and consistent access to a properly trained guidance counselor.

5. *If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?*

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: These monies would be allocated to teachers and the classroom. The classroom encompasses all educational programming that is required to meet our needs. I would ask the teaching professionals what they would require so that they continue to educate our children in a in an inclusive, innovative, and caring environment to accomplish student success.

BRENDA BAGE: I think I would hire additional support staff. I know the benefits of inclusive education. When kids are exposed to those who are “different” than they are, EVERYONE thrives. But if teachers are stretched to thin to manage all the varying needs in their classes, no one will benefit and we risk losing valuable staff to burn out. With more support staff in classrooms, teachers can focus on teaching, and the kids can return to learning from each other.

6. RETSD currently spends the lowest amount of money per pupil in metro Winnipeg. What are your thoughts on this?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: We were very efficient in developing the RETSD budget with the allocations we received. This year our funding from the Province of Manitoba government was cut, and it has become increasingly challenging. I will continue to advocate to the province for additional funding so we can continue providing a quality education to our students.

BRENDA BAGE: While in theory this sounds great, we also have some of the lowest provincial math scores and aren't able to adequately meet the needs of many students with additional needs. Fiscal responsibility is important and one of the duties of a school trustee, but I believe making sure our schools are equipped to teach and nurture our students is more important.

7. The provincial government has removed the power of school boards to levy taxes to support the educational priorities of their school divisions. How will you advocate for funding to support the educational priorities and needs of the RETSD?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: I would continue to work as a team with the trustees. Communicating with the Minister of Education and our local MLAs is key. Throughout the past four years we contacted the Minister's office numerous times. We also had an in-person meeting and virtual meeting with local MLAs. The Minister needs to be provided with the necessary information about the division and its funding. The Minister also needs to know what would or could happen if funding was not increased

BRENDA BAGE: I don't have a fantastic plan for this. However, I think we need to go to the government consistently and regularly with our funding needs, with evidence and facts to support it. I also think we need to take a good hard look at our spending and make sure we are being as responsible as possible, and then we are in good standing to report to the government that we need additional funding.

8. How would you advocate supporting students with diverse learning profiles in RETSD?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: This area is so important to me. Children and students of all abilities, from all backgrounds, genders, and ethnicities need to be treated equally. Every student should be accepted, respected, and valued. Everyone is unique and can achieve success in their education.

BRENDA BAGE: As I've said, I want to increase support staff to ensure that every child, regardless of their learning profile, is getting their full education. I would also like to see if there are instances where it would be in the child's best interest for them to attend a school other than their catchment, so that we can pool resources, perhaps even to a neighboring division. I can see this being particularly beneficial for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, as culture and community are very important. The isolation from not being able to chat with classmates can be very damaging.

9. Who do you see as stakeholder groups and how do you see yourself working with them?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: Stakeholder groups include our employees (including teachers), parents, caregivers, parent councils, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg, and our general community. I am very collaborative and accessible. I have always stressed that engagement with our stakeholders should be something trustees do on a regular basis, over and above our regular board meetings

BRENDA BAGE: School staff and parents. I currently work well with our school staff as a member of the parent council, and as an Educational Assistant, I see the school point of view as well. Parents generally want to be involved in the education process. By being proactive and including both groups in the consultation process BEFORE decisions are made, I think we could eliminate a lot of the frustrations and issues we have seen in the past years. I think I could be somewhat of a "bridge" between these groups, and also administration.

10. Is there anything else you'd like voters to know? Where can we find more information on your platform?

PETER KOTYK: Did not respond.

ROB GIGIEL: Did not respond.

SUSAN OLYNIK: I was honored to serve as a trustee in RETSD Ward 4 over the past four years and would like to thank the community. I hope that you will vote for me again on October 26. I will continue to be your advocate. You can find more information about me on: Facebook:

www.facebook.com/susanolyniktrustee/ the City of Winnipeg election website: [Registered Candidates - Election 2022 - City of Winnipeg](#) and LinkedIn: <https://ca.linkedin.com/in/susan-olynik-888a5b26>

BRENDA BAGE: I am on [Facebook](#) and Instagram ([@BageforRETSD](#)) and my email is brendabage@gmail.com.

I value your input and experience, and if elected I will make sure you are part of the process going forward, and that your voice is heard at the board table.

WARD 5 (One candidate to be elected):

1. Why should you be elected to the school board, what motivates you, and what do you bring to the table?

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: I have been a very active volunteer in RETSD schools since 2006. I have volunteered at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and love to support our students and teachers! I have a lot of experience sitting on boards and committees and run a not-for-profit association as my current occupation. I strive to leave every board that I have sat on, stronger and more efficient than when I started. If elected, I will bring the same drive, energy, and passion that I have brought into schools as a volunteer to my role as a School Trustee.

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

2. What is the most important responsibility of a school board?

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: I would expect that the most important role of the School Board is to create and work within a balanced budget. This isn't an easy task and there definitely is a need for additional funds from the province which I will always advocate for, but I think that the Board of Trustees should be taking the time to ask those on the front lines, where we can pull additional funds from and where we absolutely can not take away from. We need to hear from those who will be impacted by our decisions. If elected, I will put in the time to listen as well as ask questions to see how we can do better

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

3. What issues do you believe RETSD needs to address in its programming and offerings? What changes would you recommend?

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: Having a student in grade 12 this year, I have observed the type and content of courses being offered in high schools. I would love to see more "practical" programming being offered where our students not only get to experience a variety of career opportunities over their high school years but that the math and English courses reflect that type of programming. For a example, a "Trades" program where students rotate throughout 8 different trades over 8 semesters of high school and learn estimating skills, how to write business plans etc....

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

4. *How would you support RETSD educators in their role teaching children about topics such as human sexuality and mental health?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: In addition to the varying mental health challenges that our students and the staff themselves are facing, there are many instances where religion and political stance have the opportunity to divide people with these topics. I want our students to have critical thinking skills and be able to challenge the information that they learn as well as respond appropriately when faced with a different opinion. I think we need to support teachers in how to facilitate discussions around these sensitive topics and how to handle topics that go against their own views, when they arise.

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

5. *If the school division received a \$2 million grant to use in any way you wanted, what would you do with it and why?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: While there are many different needs that this grant could be used towards, I believe that funding additional Educational Assistant's for classrooms would be the best use of this grant. In order for teachers to provide the best education to our children, they need to be focused on teaching. Additional EA support could provide extra adults in classrooms who could assist in dealing with behavior issues, recovery learning, IEP goals, mental health concerns, ESL students – or any other challenges that take the teacher's attention away from the majority of the class.

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

6. *RETSD currently spends the lowest amount of money per pupil in metro Winnipeg. What are your thoughts on this?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: I am definitely concerned that we are spending less per pupil than other school divisions. Until I learn more and understand the reason for that, it is hard to comment on, but I do promise that I will do lots of listening and learning and ask questions to make sure that I can be a well-informed advocate in the future

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

7. *The provincial government has removed the power of school boards to levy taxes to support the educational priorities of their school divisions. How will you advocate for funding to support the educational priorities and needs of the RETSD?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: With a Provincial election upcoming in 2023, I would expect our current government to be focused on the issues that matter most to Manitobans. The future of our children and the recovery learning that needs to take place as well as the potential access in schools to mental health supports should make education funding one of their top priorities. I think that not only do we need to push all government parties for this but also, we need to encourage our shareholders, as voters and potential voters to make this one of the most talked about “actionable items” of the election

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

8. *How would you advocate supporting students with diverse learning profiles in RETSD?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: My vision for RETSD is an educational system where our teachers, administrators, and families work alongside one another to create an engaging environment where students of all abilities can receive an education as unique as they are. I want to hear from teachers what they need to be able to support the range of diversity in their classrooms. I like the option of multi grade classrooms and split grade classes to allow for a wider range of learning opportunities in each classroom.

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

9. *Who do you see as stakeholder groups and how do you see yourself working with them?*

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: I see the primary stakeholder groups as RETSD staff, RETSD students and the RETSD parents/community. All of these groups have different perspectives which are important to consider when creating policy and procedures and planning budgets. I want to build bridges that give each of these groups, access to our School Board. I would welcome the opportunity to attend Student Leadership meetings, Staff meetings, Parent Advisory Council meetings as well as community forums so that they all have representation in the room where decisions are being made. Increasing communication with stakeholder groups is one of my top priorities.

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.

10. Is there anything else you'd like voters to know? Where can we find more information on your platform?

GREG PROCH: Did not respond.

SHANNON HIEBERT: I would be happy to connect with anyone who would like to ask me further questions or provide me with their perspective. I would love to hear from you! I can be reached at electshannonhiebert@gmail.com or you can follow my Facebook page – [Vote Shannon Hiebert – School Trustee Ward 5 RETSD](#)

MIKE DE SOUSA: Did not respond.