

2018 Trustee Candidate Survey for School Districts 61, 62 and 63

As part of the upcoming municipal election on October 20 2018, the Victoria Pride Society reached out to all trustee candidates in school districts 61, 62 and 63 to better understand their stances on several key issues affecting LGBTQ2+ students.

We look forward to working with those candidates elected and others throughout our local school system to continue the work of promoting full inclusion and support of LGBTQ2+ and questioning students in our community.

School District 61 - Greater Victoria

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Nicole Duncan

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“I do support SOGI 1 2 3 resources. Access to more inclusive learning resources is an important part of supporting all staff and students in our District to create a safe and inclusive learning environment.”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“My sense is that we can do more. As a Trustee I would endeavor to engage with our educational community but especially to students, parents and staff to find out more about where we are in this regard and what improvements should be made.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“I do support Board Policy 4305 on Gender Identity and Gender Expression.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I will focus on advocating for more supports in the classroom, initiatives that enhance student well being and using technology in a way that respects the privacy and security of those that learn and work in our District.”

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Vincent Gornall

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“SOGI provides resources for teachers to help students understand the diversity that surrounds them, as well as policies to enhance the safety of students in schools. I'm happy that I live in a community that provides these resources and enforces these policies, which enhance all of our lives.”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“My sense is that the School District could offer more programming and support for LGBTQ2+ students.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“Yes. I unequivocally support Board Policy 4305.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would like to consult with Gay Straight Alliances across the District to ensure that they have sufficient resources and support. Improving the level of resources and support might involve providing funding and finding ways to ensure that there are teachers who are willing and able to sponsor GSAs.”

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Angie Hentze

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

"I absolutely support the SOGI 123 resources. I've had a look through most of them, and I think they're excellent."

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

"My children are in grades 3 and kindergarten, and this is my first time running for trustee. As a result, I don't have much of a sense of the current level of programming and support for LGBTQ2 students. If I'm elected, it is a question that will be near the top of my priority list to look into."

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

"Absolutely! I think it's vital to have policies in place that ensure all students and families feel safe and respected in school."

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

"Again, this is not a topic I'm very familiar with yet. I need to look into what is currently in place in schools, and find out from LGBTQ2+ students what they need or want, or what they feel is lacking. Then I would work with students, other trustees, teachers, and school admin and staff to set in place whatever changes or initiatives are necessary or lacking."

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Diane McNally - Incumbent

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“SOGI 123 resources already are approved for use by teachers, by the Ministry of Education. Yes, I'm in favour of their use as an approved resource. The resources are helpful for creating safe and inclusive classrooms and schools.”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I'm not sure what additional "programming: might look like. I'd like to hear from students and staff who identify as LGBTQ2+, in the spirit of "nothing about us without us". SD61 has done Policy work to commit to supporting diversity.”

“Given the statistic on the SOGI 123 site - that 64% of LGBTQ+ students feel unsafe at school - clearly more education and support are needed.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“Yes. I voted consistently in favour in Committee discussions and at the final Board vote. I stood with pro-SOGI students, teaches support staff, parents and others at the Victoria legislature this last spring and again at the end of September when anti-SOGI groups came from the mainland to protest SOGI 123 and to spread misinformation.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would like to see Provincial SOGI educator networks strengthened and supported, and increasing in membership. 55 of 60 BC School Districts participate; we need 60. I support Trustee education at BCSTA events, and if none is offered in the upcoming Academy for new Trustees / all Trustees I will advocate for development of a workshop that is not a one-off. Ambit could be a great resource for the Provincial meeting.”

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Ryan Painter

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes, 100% and unreservedly.”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“My sense is that the district has worked hard to ensure that supports and resources are available to students who need them. I think we have moved forward in a positive way, and with resources like SOGI123 we can continue to create safe spaces for LGBTQ2+ students.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“Yes, and it is my belief that this policy makes SD61 a leader provincially on this issue.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“If the recent anti-SOGI rallies have shown us anything, it's that bigotry and stigma about being LGBTQ2+ is still prevalent in our society. While we are making progress, this stigma can have significant mental health implications. I want to make sure the SD61's public awareness about access to mental health resources is easily accessible, when a student needs it, where they need it. We also need to ensure that we have easily accessible electronic information, and ensure that those who have lived experiences with mental illness and LGBTQ2+ stigma are made available to students so they have someone easy to relate to and connect with.”

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Rob Paynter - Incumbent

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes. I have reviewed the SOGI 123 resources and have concluded to my own satisfaction that their focus is on helping to teach acceptance, understanding and empathy; values that I believe every student would benefit from.”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I believe that there are always opportunities to improve programming and supports, in particular those who identify as LGBTQ2+. I don’t want to suggest that I have a voluminous understanding of the need however; this is where I look to students, members of the community and advocates to raise issues or offer suggestions about what we can do to improve our current model.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“Yes, I support Board Policy 4305 and was proud to vote in favour of its adoption.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“The statistics regarding LGBTQ2+ youth and mental health issues (depression, anxiety, attempted suicide) are particularly concerning to me. I would be interested in exploring options that would see increased counselling support to these students, whether as part of GSA activities or on an individual basis. I can imagine that this may require working in partnership with external organizations to generate the necessary counselling capacity. As I previously mentioned, I am also eager to hear from students, staff and the community regarding possible initiatives or positive changes that could be introduced in our school district.”

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Zul Rajabali

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“One of my Agendas is to have a diverse and tolerant school system where all students have equal opportunity, and no one is Marginalized as they are perceived to be different. SOGI is just one part of the Greater Picture. SOGI may be a good initiative but I feel that we need to look at all initiatives inclusive of all types of Discrimination, before we fully implement any program within the School curriculum (The Program should include the BEST OF ALL INITIATIVES including PARTS OF SOGI).”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Since I am a new candidate for School Trustee I feel that I would need to spend more time at the school level before I comment. My understanding is that all schools are at different levels and that needs to be addressed first”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“YES”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“As mentioned, I am a new candidate, so I would need to spend more time in the Schools and in building consensus so that I can make an informed decision on the Long Term Changes that are needed.”

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Jordan Watters - Incumbent

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“I am unequivocally in support of SOGI 123 resources being used in all of our schools”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Our school district is currently a leader in our approach to supporting LGBTQ2S+ students, however we still have a long way to go before we can rest on our laurels. Over the last two years, we have focused on providing professional development to our teachers and staff, as well as providing education for our parents and families. We have also ensured that each of our schools has at least one gender inclusive bathroom. We are still working on ensuring gender inclusive change rooms in all our schools, although all have some space dedicated to this purpose not all are ideal.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“I wrote this policy in consultation with students, parents, teachers, and LGBTQ2S+ community members, so yes I support it! In combination with Regulation 4305, it is the most progressive Policy of it's kind in the country.”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“SD61 has set a high bar for inclusion, now we have to ensure that we meet it each and every day, and that will take continued work. At it's base, we are changing culture, so we need continued focus on professional development opportunities for our staff. I want to know that every adult in our school buildings understands why LGBTQ2S+ inclusion is important, and what authentic inclusion should look and feel like. The degree to which gender non-conforming children and youth are visible in our schools, is an indication of the degree of safety and inclusion we have created within the building. When students aren't free to be themselves, their learning is deeply impacted. As we move forward, I hope that we will centre the voices and experiences of students and that we judge our success by their success. Other intersecting initiatives I look forward to championing if re-elected, include incorporating consent within k-12 curriculum, and developing a district-wide strategy in support of healthy relationships and the prevention of sexualized violence. I believe SD61 can be a leader in these areas to the benefit of not only our students but our communities.”

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Ann Whiteaker - Incumbent

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School District 61 - Greater Victoria

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Without hesitation – Yes!”

2. What is your sense on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“We are making progress but have a ways to go. In general we need to better fund all areas of student wellbeing programs and supports. Improving access to wrap around supports for all students will support all diversities in our schools.”

3. Do you support Board Policy 4305 Gender Identity and Gender Expression?

“Yes”

4. Are there any changes or initiatives that you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“What is good for one is good for all. Building on the work we have already done on gender identity and expression, and dress code next steps need to be in creating and introducing age appropriate consent education for all students.”

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Cendra Beaton

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Our district has already approved a policy for safe schools and the use of inclusive materials such as SOGI 123. But, I'm absolutely in favour!”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I believe in always wanting to be better tomorrow than we are today, I have a growth mindset. I would love to receive up to date research based evidence reports and suggestions from those that are experts in all areas including our LGBTQ2+. Anything that we can do to support students and staff to feel safe, included, and have a sense of belonging is important to promote as a trustee.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would again always want to grow together and continue to build on our success. Having access to evidence based research and suggestions from expert would be something that I would value and encourage. It is important as a trustee to promote and provide safe and inclusive schools for all students and staff. I feel that in doing so, it will also continue to reflect positively in our society. We're all in this together! I would definitely be an advocate for positive changes where needed!”

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Bob Beckett

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes I am.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I have two children enrolled in school and I must say that the diner table discussions about diversity, bullying, inclusiveness etc., is positive and leads me to believe that the children are learning about respect, inclusiveness, love and support.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“We need to ensure that our communities are learning and supportive, not just the students, staff and teachers if we are truly going to be effective in supporting each other.”

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Russ Chips

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

Chief Russ Chipps requested a meeting with representatives of Victoria Pride to discuss these matters.

We were not able to arrange this before the publication of this survey but he did say he believes *"every child matters and we are all human beings" and that "we all need to be supported and to treat each other equally. Conversation is key"*

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Ravi Palmar - Incumbent

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Absolutely, as a trustee, I must strive to ensure that all classrooms are safe and inclusive environments for all students. I am proud that our School District unanimously approved our updated SOGI policy earlier this year.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I think it is still a work in progress. SD62 was one of the first school districts to join the SOGI network, now we have a SOGI leader in every school and workplace in the district, and we also have a district SOGI coordinator position. All of these amazing people have an action plan to make their schools and worksites inclusive for everyone. The board will be receiving regular updates from our senior staff on how we can support these individuals and the critical work they do.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“There is more that we can do. It is scary to think that a statistic on the SOGI123 education website showed that, 64% of LGBTQ2+ students feel unsafe in school. SD62 has been completing Compass survey reports which gather data about our students and their school experience; I hope that our statistic is a lot smaller but it is an area of work for all school districts.”

“The proudest moment in my four years as a trustee was our district participating in the Victoria Pride Parade. I have been the trustee rep with the organizing committee since our participation began three years ago. This year we had participation from all of our partner groups, (trustees, teachers, support staff, management, parents and students!)”

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Dianna Seaton - Incumbent

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes. I strongly support teachers having the approved resources for SOGI 123. I am very proud that our Board of Education during the past term unanimously supported policies and initiatives that provide an inclusive, welcoming, learning environment for all students and staff.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“At this time SD62 has programs and supports for LGBTQ2 students. However, I would like these existing programs to be enriched and expanded as more evidence-based information becomes available.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“LGBTQ2+ students should feel that their voice is being heard. I will advocate for our students to be included and consulted so that I may better understand and support programs that meet their needs. I will continue to advocate for an inclusive, welcoming, safe, culture and learning environment for our students.”

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Blair Sloane

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes. How can a classroom be inclusive without resources to ensure every student feels welcome.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“I am an educator who was a high school teacher for 35 years--25 in SD 62 Sooke. I trust my colleagues to present the curriculum professionally, intelligently, and with care and attention. All curriculum--like the learners-- will evolve and change if improvements are needed.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would encourage LGBTQ2+ students to recommend changes as the curriculum is presented. Presenters will gather and compare notes and strategize and make appropriate changes.”

“There are going to have to be many more people involved in a classroom. Teachers, educational assistants, counsellors, health care providers, psychologists, social workers and other support staff.”

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Trudy Spiller

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School District 62 Sooke - Belmont Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

"I am absolutely in favor of SOGI and SOGI 123."

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

"Judgement? I believe that SD62 has provided some amazing resources to help teachers. Is the current level of programming and supports for students who identify as LGBTQ2+ adequate? With the questions I have received as a candidate both welcoming and threatening, I believe we can learn from this and increase the amount of resources."

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

"I think that on top of SOGI 123, we have "leads" in each school but if more identify, more counsellors than we already have should be in place to provide a safe place for all students that identify as LGBTQ2+?"

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School District 62 Sooke - Milnes Landing Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes. The SD 62 Board of Education unanimously passed Policy c-340 Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression on April 24, 2018. We are fully committed to the Ministry of Education SAFE SCHOOLS initiative. The ARC Foundation SOGI 123 resources are included in our plans for safer and fully inclusive schools.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“My “job” as a trustee is to first insure that our schools and programs, in terms of policy concerning LGBTQ2, are compliant with both the federal and provincial Charters of Rights and Freedoms. Frankly, I wouldn’t see myself as a “trustee judge “. Rather, I support the SD 62 model whereby our staff conduct extensive consultation and research work with the Ministry of Education, other BC School Districts, and particularly our SD 62 staff and parents. From this process, our Board would receive progress outcome assessments and resourcing recommendations. My decisions would be based upon how SD 62 is performing in relationship to other School Districts and “best practices “data.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I think I basically answered this question in #2 above. SD62 is constantly aiming to “grow” our relationship with Island Health. I believe there is more to be done to support child and adolescent identity formation/development and resiliency for ALL the diverse challenges faced my modern youth.”

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Neil Poirier - Incumbent

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School District 62 Sooke - Milnes Landing Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

"I am completely in favor of SOGI 123. Our board has already added SOGI to our code of conduct and our staff begun the process of getting it into the classroom."

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

"I believe things have improved greatly over the last decade and will only get better with the SOGI 123 resources and training for our teachers. Please feel free to monitor our progress and let me know if you think of a way to improve programming."

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

"In the school system I will wait until SOGI 123 is finished being implemented before looking for ways to improve thing. As for outside of the school system, I intend to advocate with the provincial government to strengthen our laws around conversion therapy and our MP to work towards a national law prohibiting it."

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School District 62 Sooke - Milnes Landing Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes. Resistance to SOGI, from what I have seen, comes from a place of fear and not knowing. The learning curve is preempted with “not knowing what you don't know”; it begins when one starts to “know what they don't know.” Curriculum changes need to reach out to and inform the parents, even in the face of resistance. Unmanaged fear in an uninformed vacuum can be a dangerous thing.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“SD62 has been supportive of LGBTQ2+ programs, events (eg, a strong presence at Pride Victoria), and spaces, and I'm very pleased with that. Can things be done better? Probably. The feminist movement has been trudging along for a century now and the possibility of a Handmaid Tale future is becoming ever-more likely, every single day, in the country to our south. We have to keep the gains we've made, and continually move forward. What I can promise you is an open mind, open ears, and an eye to an inclusive future.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“Yes. We need to become better at managing technology, specifically social media, which can be a forum for pure misery. Social media has pushed shaming to an extreme, where there can be a massive pile-on for one single wrong. The price of that is the loss of real-time processing of ideas. One can not longer shift from not-knowing to knowing in a public space, because the not-knowing has such a high price if one gets it wrong. Adults and youth need to travel together in understanding and managing technology, it's a new world. We need children to grow up and become analytic thinkers and not just sound-byte managers. To see my full platform, visit BrittSantowski.com”

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Margot Swinburnson - Incumbent

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School District 62 Sooke - Milnes Landing Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes I support SOGI 123 resources being approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Support can always be increased. At present, I think the current level of support varies in each school. Our Board has been supportive of LBGTQ2+ in policy and tone.”

“We do have dedicated administrative time for working with schools to implement SOGI and SOGI materials.”

“A real positive in the last few years is that we have gotten a Wellness Center in one High School, have increased Island Sexual Health times in schools, and have family docs and at every one of our high schools (We have 3) and our alternative school weekly.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“Schools need to be safe and inclusive for all students. As a trustee who is also a nurse, I advocate for and will continue to advocate for the most vulnerable. Our Board has now a comprehensive school health plan and Initiative with attached line funding in the budget which is addressing some of the needs. We continue to advocate with the Health Authority for increased (And effective) health services for our schools, and have a close working relationship with the Ministry of Children and Families.”

“Personally, my goal is to encourage, increase and enhance relational practice in all staff so every child in our District can point to at least two supportive adults in their school they can go to. I want staff in schools to be comfortable with sometimes difficult conversations, and if they feel they are not, to be able to access or refer someone who can, including professionals from other areas. As a Trustee, I do not believe I can force that with top down, but I can approve budget funding to help with these initiatives, and as a Trustee, and a member of the last Board, I think we have and will continue to do so.”

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Allison Watson

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School District 62 Sooke - Milnes Landing Zone

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes, I wholeheartedly support SOGI 123.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Firstly, I want to acknowledge the professionals and students who have done incredible work in providing a more inclusive environment in our schools. So, with respect to the work that has been done I do feel there is more we can do to ensure LGBTQ2+ students feel welcomed and have access to adequate and applicable education.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“Listening to students would be my priority. I would like to work on a partnership with students by creating opportunities for them to design a learning environment that adapts to their current needs. The idea would be to engage and empower students in their own sexual health with the intention of reaching all students. In addition, I would like to advocate for an award system for participating students such as course credits.”

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School District 63 - Saanich - District of Central Saanich

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes, I'm in favour of our district's approval of the SOGI 123 resources. It's important to provide a proven framework for educators to discuss these topics with their students. I want to see all students treat each other equally and with understanding, and this requires talking with students in classes while they are in a safe space at school so they can carry these values with them into the world. It also opens dialogue so students know they can seek additional support and resources from the teachers or other educators in the school.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Our district has amazing educators who support our students. Of course, curriculum can always be improved and as with any program, educators will network and share feedback with each other and the program will become stronger the longer it's used.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would advocate for a proven initiative if it could improve upon current programs. Building and maintaining strong inclusion and anti-bullying cultures in the schools is the most important element to ensure all students are comfortable and can focus on their success.”

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Timothy Dunford

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School District 63 - Saanich - District of Central Saanich

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“As a Trustee my role includes applying the law within the public school context. The 2016 amendment to the Human Rights Code legislated protection from discrimination for gender identity or expression. As law, this reflects societal values, which are also to be reflected in our education process. Moreover, the School District’s strategic plan confirms, as a core value, compassion and respect; its vision includes a society that is inclusive, honoring and respectful.”

“With respect, this discussion is much broader than sexual orientation or gender identity, which is one element of the respect and inclusion required for all people, including all vulnerable learners. SOGI (as a general focus on cultural change) is one element of that process, and SOGI 123 (the learning resource) is a subset of that.”

“I regret the polarization that has occurred around the discussion of this one issue when in fact it should be focused in a much broader way. That said, SOGI is a Ministry-directed initiative and SOGI 123 is one step in its implementation.”

“If SOGI 123 is not utilized, then what alternative will Districts use? Is SOGI 123 the best tool? I am aware of specific concerns with SOGI 123 and believe we need clarity of understanding. Education about the larger question of inclusion, and about SOGI specifically, is the key to implementation.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“With respect to the adequacy of programming and support for LGBTQ2+ students, the inclusion, belonging and respect of which I speak involves cultural change and an evolving process. Where there is a sense of isolation the approach can always be improved. Some schools involve gay-straight alliances, clubs and organization which provide these supports. Beyond that, I believe that further appropriate processes will develop with the support of the Ministry, District and society generally.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“As to changes or initiatives, I think we have enough to deal with in SOGI at this point. There is value in a steady, deliberate approach that promotes education and understanding.”

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Alicia Holman

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School District 63 - Saanich - District of Central Saanich

1. Are you in favour of having SOGI 123 resources approved for teachers to use to create inclusive classrooms?

“Yes, I am in support.”

2. What is your judgement on the adequacy of the current level of programming and supports for students who may identify as LGBTQ2+?

“Yes, I believe there is a need to do more to support, celebrate and respect all children.”

3. Are there any changes you would advocate for that would affect LGBTQ2+ students?

“I would add my efforts to support the district's leadership, teachers, and stakeholder groups to help further the Strategic Plan 2020. I'd also like to hear your/others thoughts and ideas.”

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