Strategic Priorities – Cultural and Identity Development

Background Information: Question 2: Teaching and Learning

Mandate of the B.C. School System

To enable learners to develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy.

The Educated Citizen

School districts must assist in the development of citizens who are:

- thoughtful, able to learn and to think critically, and who can communicate information from a broad knowledge base;
- creative, flexible, self-motivated and who have a positive self-image;
- capable of making independent decisions;
- skilled and who can contribute to society generally, including the world of work;
- productive, who gain satisfaction through achievement and who strive for physical well-being;
- cooperative, principled and respectful of others regardless of differences;
- aware of the rights and prepared to exercise the responsibilities of an individual within the family, the community, Canada, and the world.

Prime Goal of Public Education

- Intellectual Development
- Human and Social Development
- Career Development

Reconciliation Framework for Public Education

The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) establishes the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN Declaration) as the Province's framework for reconciliation, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This framework outlines the commitment for provincial government and public education on reconciliation.

Strategic Priorities – Cultural Identity

Responses to Question 2: Teaching and Learning

The District's role is to ensure that students develop a sense of self-worth and personal initiative, that they value and honour diversity, as well the significance of physical well-being, and are leaving school prepared for their future.

How could SD8 foster this?

1. I feel the district needs to reinforce the base needs and try to limit the bells and whistles.
2. IT is the heart of the district; without IT all services are down these days. I think a better investment can be made toward IT, support, and materials. Loads of teachers and support staff require faster intervention on things but with such a limited staff it is hard to comply more timely.
3. Invest way more into information technology, hire more techs.
4. Our district is facing challenging times ahead with declining enrollment. We need to be careful with which areas we make cuts to ensure we aren't sacrificing student education and we'll being for salaries, benefits, and perks while also keeping in mind that these things are an important part of student well-being. If we have happy staff we have happy kids up to a point. We don't want happy kids in crumbling buildings either. This is a very challenging balancing act and I wish the district luck in finding a solution that can have everyone happy.
5. Spend on a ground level not just on improving the board office
6. Consider schools on the outskirts of cities and or towns needing higher bus transportation budget and /or field trip opportunities.
7. Prioritize service and supports in early primary and Inclusion to build the most successful students in the future.
8. By continuing to put the needs of the students in a place of priority.
9. support inclusive education in lieu of the pull-put model
10. It seems like busses and sports fees are the biggest issues. Students should never have to pay to participate in sport at school.
11. Transparency and public engagement. Teacher autonomy
12. Let teachers decide how money is spent... teacher autonomy
13. Have a plan that rotates and purchases new equipment.
14. More money to schools, less money to the district office. Every dollar possible should be spent as close and possible to students. There should be the absolute minimum of positions that don't directly serve STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS.

15. - Decrease the number of people working at the board office. Most educators do not feel that their own practice is improving with having these district positions.
16. Technology and facilities are becoming outdated in schools, and we need to budget for upgrades
17. To move back towards having Pro D face to face and not online. Connection is important amongst staff
18. Each school has a classroom budget that we are allotted.
19. Target more funding towards schools rather than administrative positions at the district level.
20. Put more money into infrastructure upgrades such as technology and facilities
21. More parental involvement.
22. Budget to update the buildings
23. Reduce the jobs at the board office and put more bodies in the classrooms to support kids. Kids need help because they are kids
24. There are way too many district principals and other management not located in schools making decisions that are so far removed from the realities seen in the classrooms.
25. I would rather have 5 EA than one district inclusion principal.
26. Ensure staff are paid industry standard wages. Many staff are very underpaid such as read seal trades. Ensure staff are performing. Take performance management actions against staff who do not "pull their weight". Replace those not able or willing to perform the duties of their job for the hours being paid with people who will. With fair wages, recruitment would be easier as well. There seems to be an increase to highly paid management positions and less actual workers. This also applies to learning support staff. EA's do not have the time needed to provide adequate support. We experienced this directly with a child on an IEP and had to make alternate arrangements to ensure our child could be provided the education experience they required as the school was not capable. The actual staff were fantastic, they were under resourced. I understand you have a budget to balance. If it is unrealistic, speak up to the ministry. Let us know how our voices can help. Our province has the funds. Our public schools deserve more.
27. Spend more money directly in classrooms: school and art supplies, TA's, field trips, sporting events and equipment. District is becoming too heavy with administrative roles.
28. Ensure more funds are spent in the classroom Rather than on administration and planning. Reform HR so substitute teachers do not need to reapply and re interview each year. It is a waste of time and resources.

29. Gathering data related to census to know population trends within the SD8. Is there a possibility of developing investments of a contingency fun to carry through the lean years? This is a long-term vision with ebbs and flows of fiscal expenditures related to the work. Keep in mind what it's all about: childhood education.
30. Expand the budget for more funding
31. Drastically increase classroom funding. Decrease funding at the board level and provide teachers and EAs with the resources needed to actually help the kids in their care.
32. I like how some schools collect money for supplies and purchase the supplies themselves. It makes it simpler for the families and there is a cost saving. Monies should be allotted for special lunches etc., so all students can afford it. Otherwise, poorer families suffer for it. Their kids miss out. Asking families to bring items can be a hardship at times and non-English speaking families with 4 or 5 kids can't do it so their kids feel non-included.
33. Have the staff that is needed to support the learning outcomes and philosophy of the district
34. More staff on the front-line in schools and supporting students and staff, less people in the board office. I wonder why our district is one of the most top-heavy districts in the province.
35. The student's education needs to be put first. They are the future of our society. We need to give the students what they need to succeed
36. More supports - EAs and specialist testing for students. Funding more diagnostic testing.
37. Less senior management roles (specifically speaking to new roles in the last few years) and more EAs, Librarians, Counselors and on the ground support workers who directly work with students.
38. Please look at the amount of electric vehicles that senior management drive. Look at where the money is being spent. How much of it goes to student learning? There are obvious costs such as heating and the upkeep of old school buildings - but the board office is brand new. They have air conditioning while many schools do not. Many schools that have upper floors are incredibly hot in June making learning unbearable.
39. There has been a recent shift in EA support at schools. This has been a source of stress for parents and resentment to staff. Ensure all students have EA support EVERY DAY they are at school. Thx!!
40. By allowing individual schools more flexibility on how they spend their budgets internally. Less bureaucracy provides the opportunity for out of the box thinking.
41. Keeping the through line to students at the center of all budget-based decisions.

42. Focus on increases in school staffing instead of district-level staff.
43. Prioritize budgets (transportation, school budgets) that will more effectively and directly help students and teachers.
44. By having less staff in the Board Office, which would leave more of a budget for each school to hire more staff to provide enough supports to meet the learning, behavioural, and social emotional needs of each student.
45. Less money at the top (board office), more money to the schools
46. Again, less funding for district positions that haven't been impacting the quality of student education and more funding for facilities, front line workers and out of the school building opportunities for students
47. Shorten the week to 4 days.
48. More money allocated to support students in the classroom through human resources
49. Listen to the students and parents
50. I would like to see savings made through streamlining our senior administration. We have so many people in HR and Innovative Learning, and other departments as well. I feel all schools are short on Educational Assistants.
51. We are a top-heavy school district with too many jobs in management and not enough money in the schools. We should be hiring quality management staff who are able to do the jobs they are hired for and hiring less people. Why do we have 8 people in HR? Why are we hiring district teaching positions (like the curriculum support teacher) rather than putting these teachers in classrooms? Why are we losing EA time when they are actually helping students? We need to lay off staff in management and put that money in the classrooms.
52. - Consider a bottom-up approach rather than top-down, with minimal resources going to actual schools and the students
53. Be careful with computer purchases for schools due to their expense. Stop changing reading programs for primary students every few years, if it means buying a whole bunch of resource materials. Aim for online resources for teachers to save $. A book can become outdated after only a few years, as world knowledge is exponentially expanded every day.
54. Slash central office staff to the bone. For every dollar spent the question must be: How will this expenditure directly benefit students. No more million-dollar elevators, no more radical expansion of central office staff (in fact cut it by one third immediately!) First question for every budgetary outlay must be: How does this benefit students?

55. Re-allocate money to go towards students and teachers at the school level instead of people at the board office that we hardly ever see. The people that work at the board office and travel to different schools to support often do not understand the nuance of our school and are not able to contribute useful suggestions due to this. The money would be better spent on EAs, support teachers, training for teachers currently at the school, or assistive technology/resources.
56. Focus on early intervention and support for learners.
57. Make it a priority to have multiple adults in all elementary school classrooms at all times
58. Focus on mental health initiatives for all ages. This starts with self-regulation for early learners
59. Increase support for teens through mental health professionals
60. Schools need to be a safe place for all learners. Other districts have policies in place that teams up each student with a safe adult (teacher or staff). That is the go-to adult the student can approach with any burden. The idea is that there is always someone a child can talk to.
61. Lower expenditures in other areas (such as district staff and trustees) and find tangible ways to support students directly.
62. The district could have less staff at the Managerial level and more support staff at the grass roots level, where the children are. Some priorities for spending you might consider: clean running water at Blewett Elementary, more EAs everywhere, the need is high, but especially at Redfish, high speed internet at Winlaw and Salmon and extra counseling services at Trafalgar where children struggle with bullying and peer pressure the most.
63. Prioritize support equally with instruction. Offer community volunteerism and letters of permission to teach for Indigenous knowledge keepers. Budget accordingly, and remain steadfast in the conviction.
64. More EA support is needed in schools! This must be a priority. The main priority must be creating functional schools where teachers are able to meet the needs of their students and feel supported to create the best learning environment for our kids. All other spending should be secondary.
65. Have a stronger PAC doing fundraising for the school. Hire more teachers and teachers' aides.
66. I don't think that SD8 is ensuring excellence for students.
67. Psych ed assessments are a very long wait, EA support is almost nonexistent
68. Put money into the schools not the board office positions. There should be smaller class sizes and more EA time as that is what will promote excellence for all students.
69. Look at the proportion of district staff to school staff

70. Get rid of the board office and have all staff work in the schools.
71. -Stop trying to fill classes at the beginning of the school year and then making new classes a month in. This is not best practice for the excellence of all students. Instead cut district jobs and reinstate them if the funds are there. Prioritize students and schools and cut budgets elsewhere first.
72. Having greater parent involvement and interest in socio-cultural elements as well as fiscal challenges at the school and district level
73. The building seems ok, but we need more staff
74. Shared specialist resources between schools, including music, drama and other subject areas which are first to be cut in times of budget crises
75. less paid board members and more EA'S in each classroom everyday all day.
76. Prioritize funding for student support, well qualified and inspiring teachers over administration, bureaucracy, fancy offices etc.
77. You will hear that a lot and may think, people do not know how much work it is to administer SD 8. It is certainly a lot of work, but I invite you to pause for a moment and think about all the admin layers that are in place and if things are done differently what can be reduced. Thank you!
78. The board office is top heavy with many redundant and expensive positions. We need more teachers in the schools teaching our kids. I would like to see "teachers" currently with district positions redeployed back into the schools.
79. I'm not sure how this can be done, but the classes need more support. Not Band-Aids, but extra adults to help the students learn skills so they can fully participate with the curriculum.
80. Presently SD8 appears very top-heavy and many of the recent financial decisions have been more for the benefit of the management, rather than the kids (taking over and reno-ing Central School) Better communication with parents, staff and students re: guidelines for spending and/or where spending priorities will be in a coming school year would be VERY helpful (a simple email sent to all parents, along with where they can access further information if they want to). Prioritizing spending on buses so that kids can resume field trips. They have not reaped the benefits of field trips for 3 years now and this is truly to the detriment of the students.
81. Basic needs in classrooms need to be addressed. There should be the same technology and furniture/resources available in each learning space, at each level/subject area.
82. Not sure but I wonder if salaries for sr. staff across the province and the number of sr. staff positions, is taking money out of the classroom and direct service to students. Put it into EA's especially those trained in diverse learning styles.
83. Bring back the altie...

84. Put money into the classrooms that directly impact student learning. The whole purpose of our district is to educate and support lifelong learners. If we are not providing support or ideas that directly impact our students, we need to evaluate why we are doing them.
85. The priority of the district should be student learning. This means properly maintained classrooms and buildings, and funding that supports students, teachers, and operations staffing, not expensive management positions.
86. Cut the positions at the Board office by 2/3rds. These positions are costly and have no positive effect of student learning. As well, when Board employees are moved into other roles such as principal, they should not be receiving a Board office salary.
87. Honestly, I feel that although the board office does important work and create lots of resources, teachers often do not have enough time or energy to even implement what is being done higher up. If teachers and staff are floundering, the fun new thing that the board office put a lot of work into won't get used because we are surviving, not thriving, on the ground. We need to make sure the foundation is doing well before we add all the fun bells and whistles.
88. Making the district more grassroots and moving money from upper management to having more teachers/adults/elders/EAs, etc. in schools would be a better use of money that will end in ensuring excellence for all/more students. Listening to students and staff to plan what direction we move in is critical.
89. Spend the money in the classrooms where students are (both resources and man power). We don't need anyone else at the board office. We need help on the ground.
90. This district is full of staff at the board office. There is no evidence that these people have improved student learning in any way. Most of these high salaried employees could be removed with no effect of students learning and a big effect on the budget.
91. Being honest about the needs of children rather than the funding that is available to them or provided to support.
92. Less upper management staff. The district has too many district positions which are possibly unnecessary...maybe that money can be filtered into classroom teachers and support staff.
93. Provide help for students that need it. It seems at times teachers are missing and substitutes don'**t** know what to teach them
94. Cut senior admin and increase supports in the classroom.
95. All principals and managers with a teaching certificate should be required to be in the classroom as a teacher for half a year every 5 years.
96. Examine how funds are being spent in each school. Particularly how much money goes into higher level administration/trustees compared to things that directly impact the day to day lives of children.

97. By taking money from the executives/politicians and putting it back into the schools where it belongs

98. My knowledge is too limited to comment on the budget in general, but I do have concerns to raise about the amount of transportation budget provided to the schools in the district that are more remote from the urban centres and associated services. These schools require much more budget to enable our students to participate in activities like swimming lessons, ski lessons, and field trips.

99. Reduce the District bureaucracy and put the money into classroom and school staff

100. Redistribute funds from upper-level salaries towards programming, (and buses for remotely located schools, for example. Make public school more attractive to home-based learners by providing a safer environment (specifically for marginalized students), more relevant and compelling school initiatives, more on-site learning, etc. Reach out to families that choose home-based learning and interview the on their reasons for doing so. Craft a plan to address the issues that they raise.

101. At times we seem a little "top heavy". Maybe we could put a bit more money towards classroom workers and less for district level staff. Another idea is making sure teachers are not doing EA work. If teachers are regularly working with less than 6 kids at a time, we need to re-think that assignment.

102. A last idea is to try an avoid the conflict the district gets into with both CUPE and KLTF. The relationship between workers and management is not as it should be and it costs money. We can do better!

103. Less management, more support / opportunities at the school level. There would be more kids in the classes if so, many families weren't opting for home school — I wonder if SD8 understands what the families feel is lacking in the classroom environment, and whether any might return if that was better understood.

104. Stop spending money on leveled readers and Fountas and Pinnell. START spending money on the science of reading, and PD for all teachers. Redo the ELP to represent this so we have an accurate representation of where students are at.

105. Don't be short sighted. Look to future growth, plan for new and exciting programs, and budget accordingly. It's understandable to have tight constraints on budget, that's part of being a government agency but don't fear to be bold. If a program works and is engaging, expand it. Work with other districts to see what works for them. Steal the good ideas and the methods to cost savings.

106. Reduce the administration framework to channel that money into teachers wages and resources for project-based programs.

107. More transparency- share the budget and how it's being spent on the website- ask for feedback and suggestions from parents and students.

108. Find ways to streamline and cut out unnecessary steps and processes to allow teachers more time to do what they are passionate about- teaching students.

109. Invest more into the STUDENTS. Provide funds for the classes that support social emotional well-being (music, art, PE, drama) not STEM everything! THere is more to education than the STEM courses. This district is really lame. SD 20 is doing a much better job in this area. To espouse having an "artistic community" where there is no choir and secondary music has vanished is frankly gross. There are barely 3 secondary music courses in this entire district. Shameful.

110. Stop feeding board office staff for free from the public purse. No more catered lunches, remember it's all about the optics, or so we've been told. The public is very aware how often Alligator Pie delivers. Time to lead by example.

111. Schools are being asked to run on ever-shrinking budgets, and rural schools' budgets are set by the number of students, despite the fact that they have the same basic costs to run a class of 15 as they do a class of 30. Changing the funding formula for rural schools would go a long way toward keeping these schools viable and retaining both students and staff. Teachers are, as usual, picking up the slack in these budgets, and this is not sustainable.

112. It is very frustrating at the school level to be asked to run classes and programs with virtually no funding (and equally frustrating as a parent), while our district board office has one of the highest numbers of people in it in the province. As these salaries are often high (especially compared to the desperately needed EAs) an easy way to be more fiscally responsible would be to trim from the board office to support the students and teachers/EAs in the actual classrooms.

113. Stick to the basics

114. Use data to demonstrate how positions focused on improving learning are actually doing that.

115. Analyze all decisions using the lens of "impacts on student learning". The district budget process can be daunting but clarity is added by keeping student learning at the centre.

116. Ask the children how they would like to spend their time. It is about them after all.