

School District 23 Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is prepared on behalf of 2SLGBTQ+ voters and parents of 2SLGBTQ+ students in SD 23. The questions are based on community input regarding issues that are important to them regarding the October 2022 election. All candidates for School District 23 are invited to complete the questionnaire. Results will be published on Advocacy Canada's website as well as on social media. In the spirit of transparency, results will include a mention of any candidates who do not complete the questionnaire.

The deadline for completion is September 30, 2022. Thank you in advance for your response.

Email *

val4trustee@gmail.com

Your First and Last Name *

Val Johnson

What do you believe are the most critical issues for local 2SLGBTQ+ students and their parents? If elected, what work would you do as a trustee to address these issues? *

2SLGBTQ+ students and their families are continuously advocating for inclusive spaces, inclusive language, and inclusive practices both in the education system and in the community. As much as our education system is making strides in the right direction, we can not become complicit or relaxed. We must create spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ students and their families to share their thoughts and ideas, and bring forward concerns. Trustees must listen and work to understand the diverse needs of our community and we must consistently speak up and advocate on behalf of those who need it most.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQ+ cultural competency or equivalent training? *

Yes, in my professional role I have participated in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training with specific focus on 2SLGBTQ+ competencies. As an Early Childhood Educator, I've also had opportunities to take specific professional development relating to inclusive policies and practices in child care spaces. I'm always seeking out opportunities to learn and grow both professionally and personally.

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in Kelowna schools, resulting in significant harm to marginalized 2SLGBTQ+ students. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in SD 23? *

As an elected official, I will continue to advocate for marginalized groups in our community by calling out intolerance, bringing attention to inequities, and promoting programs and services that will benefit those who need it most. I will always vote in favour for policies that support 2SLGBTQ+ students. This is deeply personal for me and I will always provide space to listen to the concerns and requests of others.

Do you support the BC Education Minister's [recent statement](#) on SOGI? If not, why? *

Absolutely. I am infuriated that SOGI continues to be challenged by groups determined to spread hate and intolerance. Our children deserve school spaces that promote inclusiveness, celebrates diversity, and fosters a sense of belonging.

Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?" *



Yes



No

If elected, how will you ensure that school dress codes are equitable for all gender identities? *

Recently, I was at my son's school for a parent/info night. The administration team said it best; if children are wearing clothes they are comfortable in, they are free to wear them! At my son's school, there are guidelines that are not gender specific, with restrictions for clothing with hate speech/imagining, and graphics that promote drug use/alcohol use. As a parent in the district, I hear about inconsistencies in different schools regarding dress codes. As an elected trustee, I want to ensure that we have consistency across our district. Dress codes should only be to ensure that our schools remain safe and inclusive. There is no room for clothing that promotes hate and intolerance.

Do you support gender-diverse media in school libraries? If not, why? *

Absolutely. Our children deserve access to gender-diverse media because it reflects our real world. Our school libraries serve an important purpose, to provide accessible materials for children to develop an appreciation for others, to create an opportunity for dialogue, and to support safe learning environments. Children who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ deserve to have representation and see themselves throughout all our school spaces and especially in school libraries through various forms of media.

Do you support all schools having gender neutral washrooms? *



Yes



No

If elected, how would you support non-binary and trans students' participation on school sports teams and physical education classes? *

I think it's time that we look past traditional athletic norms and support programs, services, and initiatives that promote inclusive athletic and sport settings. Teams and classes only for boys or girls misses a whole group of children who would participate in sports or PE classes, but who might feel like they don't fit into either stream. This is true for some children who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, but also for some children who fit outside the athletic norms that are still prevalent today. Over the years, I've cared for many children who were intimidated by traditional athletics and who would've felt confident and comfortable in more inclusive, non-traditional programs. As an elected trustee, I would support any programs, services, and initiatives that promote inclusive athletic and sport settings.

