

# School District 20 Candidate Questionnaire

This questionnaire is prepared on behalf of 2SLGBTQIA+ voters and parents of 2SLGBTQIA+ students in SD 20. A by-election to fill the trustee position within Electoral Area 2 (City of Castlegar & part of Electoral Area J of RDCK) will take place on Saturday, April 20, 2024. The questions are based on community input regarding issues that are important to them regarding the by-election. All candidates in the School District 20 by-election 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 March 30, 2024. Thank you in advance for your response.

Email \*

[birkleyvalkssd20trustee@gmail.com](mailto:birkleyvalkssd20trustee@gmail.com)



Your First and Last Name \*

Birkley Valks

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

In my opinion, safety, support and mental health are the big issues facing our queer community members. I would like to make sure that there is adequate funding and resources available to make that happen for students, parents and staff and keep focus on mental health during conversations regarding our current and future Strategic Plans.

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

I whole-heartedly support her statement. SOGI123 is essential in helping to foster a more understanding and compassion generation that will create a better, brighter future for our children and society.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ cultural competency or equivalent training? If not, are you willing to do so? \*

No but, having been out as a queer person for the last 20 years, and having been an active member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, I think I'm set!

Do you support school administrators being required to take 2SLGBTQIA+ cultural competency or equivalent training in alignment with the Education Minister's statement on SOGI? \*

Absolutely. Training is important so all the information received is truthful and not some variation of he said/she said. In order for school administrators to do their job and support students, staff and parents they too, need the proper education.

Homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in BC schools, resulting in significant harm to marginalized 2SLGBTQ+ students. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia in SD 20? \*

I believe that the only way through is more education. Not just for students, but parents as well. Children aren't born with hate, it's a taught behavior. By having the tough conversations and making sure there is proper information available, hopefully we can turn the tide on the awful bullying that happens to children, and adults, in our community.

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? \*

We don't have school dress codes in our district but if we did, I would make sure that the uniform wasn't specific to your sex at birth. Instead, I would fight for the students to be able to pick their style based off of a selection that each individual could choose from. (I'd rather not see uniforms in school at all, to be honest.)

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

I absolutely do. Visibility matters!

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? \*

First things first, gender neutral change rooms. I remember how I felt in gym class when I had to slink off into a bathroom stall to change because of how uncomfortable I was in my own body. It was a terrible feeling. If kids don't feel safe in their own skin, how will they succeed in the things that they are passionate. Just because you're non-binary or trans, does not mean that you shouldn't be able to follow your dreams in athletics.

---

This form was created inside [advocacy-canada.lgbt](#).

Google Forms