

2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

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Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

No

What role are you running for?

WRDSB Trustee

What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia continues to exist in our Region and in our schools. As a trustee, my role is to improve student achievement and well-being for all our students. Student and staff well-being is essential for student success. It is harder for students to learn when they do not feel safe or a sense of belonging in our schools. I will continue to listen to the lived experiences of members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community and work with community organizations to help every 2SLGBTQ+ student and staff member feel welcomed in our schools.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?

Professional Development is an important part of the role of trustee to further learning and understanding. I have participated in equity training and look forward to continuing my learning, including 2SLGBTQ+ Cultural Competency Training.

Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?

Every child in our school board should feel that they belong and safe in school. Our board continues to work toward this by hiring System Navigators to support youth from traditionally marginalized communities, gender neutral bathrooms and free menstrual products in washrooms. I will continue to support initiatives that support 2SLGBTQ+ youth. I will continue to combat homophobia, biphobia and transphobia by calling it out when I see/hear it, ensuring Board policies address these issues and providing resources through the budget approval process to specifically support 2SLGBTQ+ students and staff.

If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

I support targeted resources that assist students experiencing homelessness and have long been an advocate for increased mental health resources for students and staff. Recognizing that 2SLGBTQ+ youth are 5 times more likely to have mental health issues, we must target resources to groups that are disproportionately impacted. School boards can support youth experiencing homelessness by funding positions that help youth stay in school and engaged. I will continue to advocate with the Ministry of Education to provide funding for these positions, as well as needed mental health resources.

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

Yes

What is one motion would you bring to council that you think will improve the lives of specifically queer people, racialized individuals and/or marginalized residents and why?

I recently brought a motion to create a staff well-being strategy. This motion was created, in part, due to the hate that is being directed at the queer community, as well as racialized and marginalized individuals, including WRDSB staff. Staff well-being has a direct impact on student well-being. It is my hope that this motion will pass and the strategy will take a holistic approach to well-being. I would like to work with the 2SLGBTQ+ community to bring forth a motion that supports youth, their families and/or staff.

When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?

Yes. Representation is critical for student achievement and well-being. The Provincial curriculum lays out the sexual health lessons that are taught in each grade. Boards deliver the curriculum and ensure resources are in place to do so effectively. Our school libraries also include additional books and resources that include the lived experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ youth. This representation of the 2SLGBTQ+ community must be protected.