

Trustee Questionnaire

Your Name: Jason Gunther

Ward: 1

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Please limit yourself 100 words maximum for each response below.

Brief biographical statement: Hello, my name is Jason Gunther. I was born in Dawson Creek, BC. I have lived in Grande Prairie for almost ten years. I am married to my wonderful and supporting wife Iamerca. We have two children: Tyrrell, who is in Grade 8 at St. John Paul II and Bethany, who is in Grade 6 at École St. Gerard. They are my greatest blessings and I am very grateful for have them in my life.

Questions:

1. What would you want to be the three priority areas of focus for the school board once elected?

- 1) Inclusivity: Students need to feel that they belong without distinctions. Provide the education supports to the students with disabilities for full participation in a learning environment.
- 2) Communication: The school community needs to be informed and involved with our work. They need to know if we are truly representing their trust and voice. Gather information from our schools staff to know how to best represent their needs and to be their support.
- 3) Mental Health and Pastoral Support : Mental health in our school should be a priority, available not just for students but for schools staff too. Pastoral Support should be available for students and staff at any time also.

2. What are your views on education funding in Alberta and especially your view of the school board's role in making funding decisions?

I agree with the way our education funding framework stands on the three pillars: funding, flexibility and accountability. Being flexibility the most important, as it gives us the discretion to use the funds to meet the needs of our students. The school board has an important job making funding decisions, and their principal goal should be to ensure that the education funding is aligned with their priorities and one of the most important would be to improve student achievements and their well-being.

3. Our district currently has a very large surplus and growing needs in our classrooms. What would you do to ensure that education dollars are spent in the classrooms rather than accumulated as a surplus?

I would like to make sure that our education dollar be implemented on more support staff for our teachers. Newer equipment for the older schools. More options or programs for the students. Increase the snack program in our schools to include breakfast. Make sure we have junior and senior high counselors to help them make informed decisions about their future education. I believe that through communication to gather information from teachers, staff and students of the principal needs in our schools and utilize the money accordingly.

4. What are your views about appropriate use of technology in school?

The use of technology in our schools it's important, to enhance the learning experience of our students. However, our schools have a great responsibility with the use of it, our students need to be educate about the ethics and responsible behaviours expected of them online and off. I would recommend for schools to take a better approach to cybersafety education. Cybersafety practices and issues should be included within the school's curriculum and taught explicitly. This will help our students to act in a safe and responsible manner when using digital technologies.

5. How can we make our schools the safest and most-welcoming possible environments for all students, including sexual and gender minority students? What are your views about Gay-Straight Alliances and the issue of parent notification?

Inclusivity is crucial for all students; they need to feel that they belong without distinctions. As a Catholic District we have to follow our Pope's message of love to all people. GSA helps create a support network for students by connecting them. They provide students with a sense of identity within their school, improve their self-esteem, and even provide students with support to come out to their families and peers. Parent notification should be a case by case issue. It should be up to the board, principals, school counselors and/or teachers to use their best judgement to know if it's appropriate to notify parents.

6. What will you do to make Grande Prairie Catholic schools an even better place for students to receive their education?

I would try to make sure they have the latest technology to work with. Offer more options/classes that will better help them in the future or in their careers. Make sure that they feel welcomed and loved in our schools and have them more involved with school functions. Make sure they have the counselor support not just for their issues or concerns but to show them their best options for post secondary education. Installation or improvement of playground or sports areas, not just for elementary but also junior and senior high schools.

7. What will you do to make Grande Prairie Catholic schools an even better place to for employees to work?

I will provide our teachers with more support staff and access to more learning tools. Build a strong school community, where all our school staff work together in a positive environment. Listen to the staff's suggestions and ideas to collect the information to work in the solution of their needs and concerns.