



FMCS D Trustee Q&A

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Shaijan, Peter - No response received

1. What can be done to help 2SLGBTQ+ students and families feel welcome in FMCS D/FMPSD schools?

Barfoot, Dale

It is important to me that 2SLGBTQ+ students and families have a safe space to learn and find community within Fort McMurray Catholic Schools. As a lifelong member of the Catholic church, I do not say this lightly, as I believe that this is the Catholic way - based in love, and in line with the Pope's insights. This starts with a culture of unwavering support and inclusion, and this culture must begin with the Board. If elected, I will work to ensure that every staff member is in line with this vision, and that teachers of all grades feel prepared, both to introduce age-appropriate topics to their students, as well as to support mental and emotional needs. Education should always be our priority, but we can only achieve this if our students' mental and emotional needs are met.

Larson, Cathy

To ensure students and families feel welcome in our school we need to promote a culture of respect where all children are treated with compassion. EVERY student, regardless of cultural background, economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity, reflects the image of God. I believe we are all children of God. We need to create safe welcoming spaces where students feel supported without fear of bullying or discrimination. All staff training needs to be rooted in compassion and dignity echoing Christ's commandment. "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Preshyon-Snook, Misty

I believe Catholic schools can create a more welcoming and inclusive environment for 2SLGBTQ+ students and families by implementing tangible practices that demonstrate acceptance. One important step is providing access to gender-neutral bathrooms while still maintaining individual ones for privacy and comfort. Creating inclusive student groups or clubs is also essential. These groups can offer safe spaces where students feel seen, heard, and supported. Additionally, incorporating topics related to gender identity, sexual orientation, and diversity into relevant classes can help foster awareness, understanding, and empathy among all students. This reinforces the message that we are all equal and deserving of respect, regardless of the path we choose in life. Offering accessible, non-judgmental support spaces is vital—especially for students who are questioning or struggling with their identity. Schools can also play a key role by sharing information about local organizations and resources that



specialize in supporting 2SLGBTQ+ youth. Lastly, programs like Rainbow Space can be used to educate and empower both students and staff. These initiatives not only provide tools to better support 2SLGBTQ+ individuals but also create opportunities for allies to learn, get involved, and advocate for inclusivity within the school community.

Samson, Janeen

Create safe spaces, promote visibility, and provide support systems so every student and family feels valued and included.

- 2. The new Provincial legislation requires school authorities to notify parents when a student requests that teachers, principals and other school staff refer to them by a new preferred name or pronouns related to gender identity, and requires that parental consent be provided for any student under 16 before their gender identity-related preferred name or pronouns are used by any school staff. This may put many 2SLGBTQ+ students who are not safe or ready to be outed to their families at risk, and cause significant distress for gender diverse students if their preferred name or pronouns are not able to be used. How will you ensure 2SLGBTQ+ students are safe and respected at school?***

Barfoot, Dale

School Boards must abide by the Education Act and Ministerial Orders. That being said, the safety and security of students and staff are paramount. Students should know, before they approach a staff member to disclose information about their gender identity, that they will be supported. The burden of proving if a student's family is a safe space should not be on the student. Staff members should be empowered to believe students, ensure that they feel comfortable, and work with them to develop an appropriate course of action. If elected I will advocate with fellow Trustees to remove these hindrances to student safety and education. We all deserve safe places to learn.

Larson, Cathy

Children need to feel safe in our schools and this means prioritizing all students' mental and emotional well-being. Children need to know their voices matter and there are clear and safe pathways for students to report their concerns. As this is law, schools will be required to follow legislation, but I will always advocate for the safe and caring treatment of all children. It is our duty to make sure every child feels safe in our schools.

Preshyon-Snook, Misty

I believe that students under the age of 16 should not be permitted to officially change their name within school records. As someone who is an aunt/ cousin and friend to Two-Spirit



individuals, I deeply respect the journey of self-discovery and identity. However, I also believe that young people need time to explore and understand who they are, and that a certain level of emotional and cognitive maturity is necessary before making significant decisions such as changing one's name. A child's name is often given by their parents as a symbol of love and identity within the family. While I recognize that some students may experience real and significant emotional struggles related to their identity—which can impact their mental health—I believe these challenges are best addressed through strong support systems. Open, respectful conversations between youth and their parents or guardians can play a key role in this process. I don't believe this approach invalidates or diminishes a student's identity. Rather, it aims to protect their well-being within the school environment. For legal and administrative purposes, I believe a student's legal name should be used in official records, while allowing them the freedom to use a preferred name in social and informal settings among peers. This approach provides balance—offering respect for the student's identity while also protecting teachers and staff from unintentionally being perceived as insensitive. That said, I strongly support the importance of educating school staff on how students identify. As educators build trust and connections with students, they will naturally begin to use the names and pronouns that reflect the student's authentic self—offering both respect and recognition within a caring and inclusive environment.

Samson, Janeen

Prioritize student safety by fostering GSAs/OSAs, training staff, and ensuring inclusive policies so every student is respected and supported.

- 3. The new Provincial legislation requires school authorities to ensure students are provided with counselling or other assistance prior to parental notification of a student request to use a new preferred name or pronouns related to gender identity, if the notification is reasonably expected to result in psychological or emotional harm to the student, or at the student's request. In light of this requirement, how will you ensure that appropriate mental health counselling and additional resources are in place to support school staff, students, and parents?***

Barfoot, Dale

Currently, school counselors are available at all Fort McMurray Catholic Schools. I believe that school counselors can be an incredible resource for students who are navigating their gender identity, and we must ensure that they are prepared to provide care that will meet these students' mental and emotional needs. As with all staff members, school counselors should receive continuous education to ensure that they are prepared to meet the evolving needs of students, particularly as they relate to changes in government policy. I want to be elected as a



Fort McMurray Catholic School Board Trustee to be at the table to advocate for increased funding, not just for education, but all the social supports our youth need at this time in their lives.

Larson, Cathy

All children deserve appropriate and quality mental health counselling. This means there needs to be adequate funding in place to ensure children have access to counselling and resources in each school. Counselling needs to be in place to help any children that need extra support whether that be 2SLGBTQ+ issues or children dealing with trauma through grief, bullying, or maintaining healthy relationships. This means counselors need to be adequately trained, staff need to compassionately support students and resources need to be available for parents.

Preshyon-Snook, Misty

I believe it is essential that school counsellors receive adequate and specialized training to support students navigating sensitive issues related to gender identity. This includes ensuring they are equipped to handle conversations around preferred names and pronouns with empathy, professionalism, and awareness of potential emotional or psychological harm. As I mentioned earlier, collaboration with local organizations is key. Schools should actively partner with trusted community groups—such as mental health services, 2SLGBTQ+ advocacy organizations, and local Pride chapters—to create a network of accessible support. These partnerships can help provide both in-school counselling and referrals to external services where needed. In addition to training counsellors, it is important to offer professional development for all school staff. This could include workshops, online modules, or certifications focused on inclusive education, trauma-informed care, and identity-affirming practices. By doing so, educators and support staff will be better prepared to assist students and engage in meaningful dialogue with parents. Finally, schools should maintain an up-to-date list of resources and contact information for local support groups, therapists, and advocacy services. Having these tools readily available ensures that students, families, and staff have clear paths to assistance when navigating complex emotional experiences—especially when parental notification may present challenges.

Samson, Janeen

Embed mental health into school practices, strengthen in-school supports, and partner with community organizations to provide accessible counselling.

4. Given the public health concerns that result from a lack of comprehensive sexual health education, how will you ensure students remain healthy and informed on consent and their bodies?

Barfoot, Dale



As a retired teacher, I am familiar with the Wellness curriculum as well as the resources from the Public Health sector that are associated with it. I believe that these resources, when applied appropriately, can meet the health and safety needs of students. If elected, I will work to ensure that this curriculum is followed to ensure that students are empowered to make healthy decisions about their bodies and their relationships. Teachers should be prepared to address these topics openly and accurately so that students feel comfortable seeking further support.

Larson, Cathy

Catholic social teaching emphasizes the common good and responsible care for our bodies. Comprehensive, age-appropriate sexual health education ensures that students understand how their bodies change. They learn how to set boundaries and respect themselves and each other. Children should be able to ask questions free of judgement. It is vital that the staff in our schools are well informed and a safe environment is created so all children can come to the adults in the school for help if needed.

Preshyon-Snook, Misty

While I recognize that schools currently provide sexual health education, it is often presented through a predominantly heterosexual lens. To ensure students remain healthy and well-informed, I believe it is essential to broaden the curriculum to be inclusive of all sexual orientations and gender identities. Comprehensive sexual health education should reflect the diversity of our student population. This includes teaching about consent, relationships, and bodily autonomy in ways that are relevant and respectful to all students, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. No student should feel excluded or invisible during these lessons. I also believe that with the right training and resources, educators can confidently and appropriately deliver content that speaks to all students. This may involve ongoing professional development, including opportunities to learn about inclusive practices and 2SLGBTQ+ health topics. Additionally, schools should consider bringing in specialists or collaborating with organizations that focus on inclusive sexual health education, to help design or co-teach parts of the curriculum.

Samson, Janeen

Provide age-appropriate, evidence-based education on consent, healthy relationships, and body awareness to keep students informed and safe.

5. Ministerial Order #30/2025 outlines new standards for school library materials and requires school boards to implement policies to support these standards. How will you ensure students will have continued access to diverse representation of identities in school library materials? How will you ensure that the board policies for selecting, managing, and reviewing library materials under these new



standards remains fair, equitable, and transparent in their implementation?

Barfoot, Dale

As a parent and retired teacher who deeply respects education, I do not support censorship, however limiting access to sexually explicit materials for students is justified. The Ministerial Order is intended to prohibit sexually explicit material for all students, as well as non-explicit sexual material for students in grade 9 or below. It is important that this order not be taken as justification to remove 2SLGBTQ+ representation or resources from our schools. Every child deserves to see themselves in a book in our School Libraries, as we all need to be and feel seen. If elected, I will work to advocate on behalf of our schools, to secure full and appropriate funding to make sure we have libraries and librarians in place who have all the resources they need. Our next generation should have access to everything they need to be fully prepared for the future. Literacy is the stepping stone to all learning.

Larson, Cathy

Schools need to celebrate the diversity within our school population. I will advocate that our school libraries contain diverse, age appropriate, quality literature that affirm multiple identities and experiences. Children should read about the diversity in our society. With knowledge comes respect, understanding and less indifference. Educators, parents, and students should have input on what is in our libraries, to ensure no group is silenced.

In summary: I hold firm to the Gospel call of love, justice, and human dignity. By grounding policies in scripture and human rights, schools can both respect legislation and protect 2SLGBTQ+ students' safety, and health. It is the responsibility of the school district to make sure every child feels loved, included, and respected, so they can flourish and be successful in every school. I will try to advocate for EVERY child in our schools.

Preshyon-Snook, Misty

To ensure students continue to have access to a diverse representation of identities within school library materials, it is essential that schools maintain a proactive and inclusive approach to library management. This means regularly reviewing and updating resources to reflect current, accurate, and inclusive educational content. School libraries should prioritize materials that represent a wide range of identities, including but not limited to racial, cultural, gender, and sexual diversity. In particular, it is important that 2SLGBTQ+ voices are included in a respectful and age-appropriate manner. This includes ensuring Indigenous content reflects and supports Two-Spirit identities within the broader context of Indigenous teachings and traditions.

In alignment with the new standards, board policies for selecting, managing, and reviewing materials must be rooted in fairness, equity, and transparency. This can be achieved by:

- Establishing clear, criteria-based policies that guide how materials are selected and reviewed, with input from educators, librarians, community members, and students where appropriate.



- Forming inclusive review committees that reflect the diversity of the school community and are trained to assess materials through a culturally responsive and inclusive lens.
- Collaborating with external organizations and support groups to source up-to-date and relevant content that supports students' evolving needs and interests.
- Providing opportunities for ongoing professional development for staff responsible for library oversight, particularly in areas related to equity, anti-discrimination, and inclusive representation.

By embedding these practices into board policies and day-to-day operations, we can ensure that all students feel seen, supported, and empowered through the materials available to them.

Samson, Janeen

Advocate for fair, transparent policies that ensure diverse library materials remain accessible and representative of all student identities