

# District of North Vancouver Trustee Candidates

## Why are you running for North Vancouver Board of Education trustee?

### Norman Farrell

I have the ability to look beyond budgets and financial statements to analyze spending details. With limited funding sure to continue, I would work to ensure classroom resources are maximized through efficiency and savings in administration and non-instructional areas. By improving cooperation with municipal government, I can encourage better utilization of physical resources to meet parents' needs for out-of-school care. Since human resources are the District's most valuable asset, I aim to promote more effective HR management.

### Behl Evangelista

I am recently retired from my custodial position in the School District 44. I had a ground floor perspective and unique experience that I believe would be valuable in the decision making in the Board. I worked for 28 years in the Board Office and had the opportunity to engage and listen to stakeholders. Using the skills and training I learned while hosting a radio program, I was able to get a fair amount of understanding of how important the role of a School Trustees to the functioning of the School District. I am passionate of giving back to the community; and running for trustee would give me this opportunity to serve in the decision making. To ensure that every tax dollar is spent wisely for every student in the system.

### George Tsiakos

I am running for School Trustee because I deeply value the role that a good education plays in our community, in particular, its ability to create a more engaged public. Public education is an investment in our future. A strong public education system provides the best way for students to reach their full potential and succeed in life. As a District resident, I want to give back to my community and believe I have the education and professional experience to make a positive contribution as School Trustee. We have a strong education system in North Vancouver, but we can make it better. As a father of two young children, I want to advocate for their future education and the future education of all students. Creating a strong public education system is a community endeavour that requires cooperation among parents, guardians, educators, administrators, and community partners. I am committed to bringing people together, listening to diverse perspectives, building strong partnerships, and working with others to make our education system the best it can be.

### Cam Small

I have no kids of my own, but I have 5 nephews in district schools and a 6th will join in a few years.

My candidacy is inspired by them.

### Cyndi Gerlach

I am running for re-election because I believe in the strength of the North Vancouver School District. I have seen our district move positively in a direction of full inclusion for all students, and I want to continue my role of ensuring all students have a voice at the table. And I want to continue advocating for our district to provide appropriate training and supports so our teachers and staff can continue to provide excellence in education to our students. The needs of our classrooms are changing. Supporting and partnering with our teachers and staff is critical to a positive approach to keeping up with those changes.

### Kulvir Mann

I am running for School Board to improve communication, build stronger relationships with all partner groups, visit classrooms to connect with students, teachers and administrators - I want everyone to work together as a team. I want all students to feel a sense of belonging and parents to have someone they can come and talk to about any issues they have and feedback. Also to continue working with the team at NVSD on future projects, policies and implementing more programs for students.

### Edna Ligale

I have lived in North Vancouver for 25 years, raised 2 daughters here and I love this community. I am running to serve, give back, make a difference and to learn from parents, teachers, school, and students! It's all a collaborative effort after all.

### Devon Bruce

I am running for the position of Trustee as I care deeply about our community and have a passion for education. I have extensive experience working in special education as a an EA with SD44 and Kenneth Gordon Maplewood School, and currently manage an employment program for individuals with developmental disabilities at North Shore Connexions Society. I'm excited to offer my expertise and collaborative leadership style to the board on behalf of all students.

## **What processes should trustees establish to ensure all education partner groups have input into board decisions?**

### Norman Farrell

The Board should welcome input from parents and students. But, successful organizations have leadership and employees cooperating to initiate and sustain common goals and core values. Educational qualifications of teachers should guarantee representatives have routine influence over district policies. To attract and keep quality staff, particularly with the North Shore's prohibitive cost of housing, SD44 must be a top employer. That requires commitments by the Board, the executive and school administrators.

### Behl Evangelista

I am an advocate of public consultation when it comes to making decisions that affects all stakeholders in our Public Education. We have to get parents, educators, trustees, and administrators to get involve in the process by getting them informed and encourage to be more proactive.

### George Tsiakos

Two elements are essential here: 1) meaningful consultation; and 2) transparency. The board must engage in genuine and meaningful consultation with education partner groups. At the forefront, this requires that the board treat relevant stakeholders with respect, be responsive to stakeholder feedback, and work collaboratively with stakeholders to enhance decision-making at the board level. Regular standing committee meetings on relevant topics such as special education, primary and secondary programing, academies, Indigenous education, use of school land and facilities, and budget, where partners are invited to participate are essential. Regarding transparency, it is important that the board provide a summary and discussion of these consultations, including any stakeholder recommendations for or against a proposition, at the relevant public board meeting. This process will ensure that the public is better informed as to the work that has been done and what the board considered as part of its decision-making. In addition, the agenda and meeting package for board meetings should be released to the public at least one week before the meeting. This will provide a greater opportunity for relevant stakeholders to review the materials and provide additional feedback, if necessary, during the public comment period. This process should result in a more open and honest discussion about the merits of a proposal or motion that can be properly documented in the minutes for public review.

### Cam Small

Parent surveys. We need to determine whether there is a silent majority that is not being heard.

### Cyndi Gerlach

Currently, all partner groups are able to attend standing committee meetings and provide feedback to any item on the agenda; they are able to come to a public board meeting as a delegation to provide feedback; and all our partners can ask to meet with trustees and provide feedback, either individually or as a group. As a Trustee, I personally reach out to partner groups and ask for input. All of these measures are important to keep communications open and inclusive.

### Kulvir Mann

I think meeting regularly with each partner group and having discussions on what issues they would like addressed and keeping the communication open so everyone is on the same page and collaborating as a team. We all can learn, help and support each other to build strong relationships.

Edna Ligale

Trustees are advocates for schools and more specifically, for students. In my opinion, the most important thing a school trustee can do is listen and learn with an open mind.

Devon Bruce

Connection with students, teachers, faculty and PAC groups are significant in gaining insight and input into board decisions. I will be active as a trustee in being available and engaged with our community so that I can present the the ideas and perspectives of those stakeholders to the board.

## **What can be done to enhance and improve our public education system?**

Norman Farrell

For years, the province had too little respect for public education and its employees. I would lobby for increased funding, particularly for supplementary grants. Government should redirect dollars now going to elite private school to employ more specialist teachers and improve services for children with special needs. Those include students from families living in poverty. Schools must have reasonable levels of discretionary funds to assist with children's necessities. Financial burdens ought not to fall on teachers.

Behl Evangelista

Encourage our educators; like teachers, supervisors, principals and even trustees to learn new skills to be able to meet the new demands of learning new knowledge like, technology, management and personal development. To ensure that our student are able the get their training and skills they need to develop their potentials and become productive in our community.

George Tsiakos

There are many ways to enhance and improve our public education system, but I would like to highlight the following.

### 1) Collaboration

Public education is a shared responsibility and all education partners need to work together to make our system the best it can be. Through meaningful consultations, we need to build stronger relationships with our educators, students, parents/guardians, education partners, and community groups. Public education is truly a community effort and we must foster cooperative working relationships.

### 2) Student Wellness

Student wellness plays a key role in the overall student learning experience. We need to increase mental health awareness and reduce stigma by promoting mental, physical, and emotional health strategies. Recently, the school board has taken important steps forward in this regard, but there is a lot more we can do. In particular, we must place a greater emphasis on early interventions and increase partnerships with community mental health agencies to support student well-being.

### 3) Inclusiveness

We must advance a more inclusive learning environment where all students, regardless of ability, ethnicity, or identity, feel safe and welcomed. Students who feel like they belong at school are more motivated to learn and are more likely to succeed.

#### 4) Complex Learners

We must ensure that there are sufficient resources available for complex learners to thrive and succeed based on their specific learning needs. We all learn at a different pace and in different ways so it is important that we develop equal learning environments for all learners.

#### 5) Technology & Innovation

Schools should be equipped with the latest technological resources to enhance student learning and classroom engagement.

### Cam Small

More funding.

### Cyndi Gerlach

More money is always a great way to enhance and improve the educational experience for students. Additionally, I believe that providing more resources and better opportunities for training for our teachers and educational assistants is key to ensuring they have the skills required to meet the needs of all kids. Ensuring that the workplace is safe for both teachers, support staff, and students is also a priority. Class size and composition are also important, as is ensuring that the right types of supports are in place to reach all learners. My goal is to work with our teachers towards continuous improvement in our schools.

### Kulvir Mann

I think we all need to listen and work together as a team as every partner brings something valuable to the table and we need to collaborate so we can provide the best learning environment and inclusive schools for our students. We should look at what other school districts and countries are doing and see if we can incorporate at NVSD - we need to keep the conversation going with all partner groups. We need to grow with the times and be able to adjust and provide resources and training for our staff as needed.

### Edna Ligale

As a current North Vancouver parent with a daughter in grade 10, What I would want to see improved is inclusivity and acceptance for all students. We live in an increasingly diverse and multicultural community and some students are struggling to fit in.

My other daughter has graduated university and works as an educator on the North Shore with special needs students. She has shared with me that more resources are needed for special needs students especially as they transition from school into adulthood,

### Devon Bruce

As special education and services for those with developmental disabilities has been my life's work and passion, I will be advocating for inclusion of all students. Resources and professional development for teachers is of great importance and I fully support the continued development of inclusive and adapted schooling for those students who need additional support.

**The final report of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission contained numerous Calls to Action related to education, language and culture, and child welfare. How will you respond to these Calls to Action?**

Norman Farrell

SD44 has implemented policies for improvement but a gap remains between aboriginal and non-aboriginal student achievements, as evidenced by graduation rates. Well-designed programs can mitigate disadvantages and they require time and effective cooperation between interested communities. These also need appropriate funding from senior levels of government. SD44 can ensure respectful interactions and recognition of the proud history of Canada's indigenous peoples over thousands of years. This was too long ignored. We should regularly invite leaders and elders into schools to provide indigenous narratives. Decorative arts created by local indigenous people deserve prominent placement in schools and the stories they represent should be told to children.

Behl Evangelista

Implementing reconciliation by infusing Aboriginal history and culture in our School System is first step. Recognizing the importance of their culture, values and teachings and what it contributes to a positive learning experience for every non Aboriginal students. We must provide adequate funding and resources to be able to provide well train educators to deliver quality education to every Aboriginal students. Encourage young children to go to school and monitor their success. Ensure them that they are not alone...we are partners in this process and we will do it together.

George Tsiakos

Reconciliation begins with trust. I will work toward establishing a trusting and respectful relationship with our key Indigenous partners – the Skwxwú7mesh Nation, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Métis Nation of British Columbia, and all other Indigenous people residing in North Vancouver. We need the guidance and insight from these communities to respond effectively to the Calls to Action.

A review of the current Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement is a critical starting point. I would ask the Board to work closely with Brad Baker, District Principal of Aboriginal Education, and our Indigenous partners, in order to assess the actions that have been implemented under this agreement. This review will set the framework on how best to move forward. Some curriculum reform has occurred at the K-9 levels, but there is a lot more that needs to be done. In particular, we need to increase the sense of belonging of Indigenous students. As noted above, students who feel like they belong are more motivated to learn and are more likely to succeed. We need to enhance the learning environment by increasing the presence of Indigenous cultures, histories, and languages in the classroom. This is essential if we are to meet the Calls to Action.

Cam Small

The ministry has made improving the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students a priority. I will seek to implement initiatives at a local level that will help further this aim.

### Cyndi Gerlach

These are all important to me. I sat on the Indigenous Education Committee in our district for the last 7 years, as well as the BCSTA Indigenous Education Committee for the last 2 years. Our board has been meeting with the Squamish Nations Council to discuss education, and we are in the process of finalizing a PROTOCOL AGREEMENT for COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION with respect to the implementation and use of the Enhancement Agreement for Squamish Nations Students. Supporting language and culture in our schools is a critical component. I have personally taken the opportunity to start learning more about how we can improve these relationships. Supporting our Indigenous Student Leadership Council will also provide a strong voice to Indigenous students.

### Kulvir Mann

I will support and work together with teachers and staff to implement these calls to action. It will be a process that everyone will have to communicate and work together so that everything is done positively and incorporated correctly. At the end of the day, all kids matter and should feel safe at all the schools and be appreciated for the unique individuals they all are.

### Edna Ligale

Residential Schools were a dark mark in Canadian History, the effects of which are still felt to this day. According to the CBC, out of 94 calls to action, As of March 2018, out of 10 were marked as completed, 15 were in-progress with projects underway, 25 had projects proposed, and 44 were unmet. The removing of indigenous children from their homes and families, not being allowed to speak their language and being forced to adopt to a different culture resulted in not only cultural genocide but physical and biological genocide as well. At the end of the day, all these wrongs must be rectified and even though the healing has began, we have a long way to go and must work with our First Nations to ensure that the work is done. It is a process and will take time,

### Devon Bruce

I support the Calls to Action in the report as our First Nation's community is a significant portion of our diverse student base. I would advocate for continued content to educate all students about the culture of our indigenous population so that sensitization and acceptance continue to develop.

**Do you believe that teachers have the professional right and responsibility to determine what types of instruction they provide to students to meet the curriculum? Explain how you would ensure this if elected.**

Norman Farrell

Teachers are highly trained and best positioned to determine instructional techniques suited to individual classes. There is no absolute prescription for style and what works well with one group may be inappropriate for another. Successful teachers will employ different methods, according to student needs. Better trained Principals will encourage teacher autonomy and professionalism. Together, teachers and administrators can foster instructional practices that are associated with student achievement.

Behl Evangelista

My understanding of the new curriculum is that its meant to provide more ways for students to succeed, to get an education that will fit them for living and working in today's world. This is an important part of supportive schools. Yes I support this strongly. Of course there will be glitches as it is implemented; but we will need to make sure that implementation is supported with training and resources.

George Tsiakos

Yes, teachers need professional autonomy in their role as educators in order to achieve their pedagogical objectives. Although the curriculum is prescribed at the provincial level, teachers must be able to determine how best to implement. Each community and each grouping of students is unique and the teacher is in the best position to judge which instructional methods would be appropriate for their students' success. Teachers have the ability to use their professional judgement to design instruction that meets the specific needs of their students while meeting the overall goals of the provincially mandated curriculum. In this regard, we must ensure that teaches have the necessary non-instructional time to develop appropriate instructional methods and opportunities for professional development.

Cam Small

Experience, training and continuing teacher development positions teachers to best decide how to achieve the objectives outlined in curriculum.

Cyndi Gerlach

Yes, teachers have the professional responsibility and right to determine the type of instruction a student needs. If a teacher requires assistance and support to address a specific student's learning challenges, there needs to be a qualified support teacher that can help provide the expertise needed. I believe all teachers and educational assistants should have access to better training and resources to help them meet the rapidly changing demands in today's classrooms. I am also encouraged by the increased options that teachers now have to individualize student's educations through the new BC Curriculum, and I support our teachers in taking advantage of these changes to create vibrant and meaningful experiences for all of our students.



Kulvir Mann

Yes I do, as each teacher has a different style and teaching background they should determine how they will provide instruction and implement the curriculum in their classroom. Teachers should collaborate with one another and use each other as resources as well. One of my goals is to visit classrooms regularly to connect and showcase the amazing things our teachers are doing in their classrooms with the new curriculum. I would also like to meet with teachers to hear from them directly about what issues they are facing, any feedback and most importantly build a dialogue so we can communicate regularly with each other.

Edna Ligale

Teachers are in the classroom with the students and they more than anyone know what instruction is required to meet the curriculum. They are the first line of defence so to speak and therefore should be involved and have an input in the curriculum. I think they should sit in on important meetings as they are the ones who see students on a regular basis. As such they need our support,

Devon Bruce

I do believe, within the limits of our curriculum, that teachers have the professional right and responsibility to choose their methods of instruction. We have such diversity in culture, and learning styles in our student base that our teachers need freedom of instruction style to meet their needs. Our education system is ever evolving and I believe the teachers need to evolve in unison.

**What do you believe is the role of a trustee in advocating for increased education spending by the provincial government? If you are currently a trustee, what role have you played in advocating for increased education spending by the provincial government?**

Norman Farrell

The province is accustomed to trustees, the BCSTA, BCTF and other groups arguing for better funding for public schools. Trustees should act to convince all citizens that investments in education are foundations stones of successful societies. Too often, I've heard non-parents ask why they should be taxed for schools when they have no children involved in education. Yet, research demonstrates a direct correlation between general economic success and education levels. Canada has a strong economy and one of the world's better systems of education. The former depends on the latter.

Behl Evangelista

Operational funding is almost completely determined by the Provincial Government. What we need to do as trustee is support excellent financial management resources that we have. Funding for capital improvements is a process of persuading the government of our needs. We need to work with our MLAs and others to make sure our needs are understood.

### George Tsiakos

Trustees have an ongoing responsibility to advocate for sufficient funding that meet the specific needs of their school district. As it stands, the current one-size fits all funding model makes it easy for the provincial government to allocate funds to school districts. The major problem, however, is that this funding model does not take into consideration the specific needs of each district. This is where trustees can play an integral role in ensuring that the provincial government is aware of what students, teachers, and schools need to be successful. Trustees can work with partner groups such as the BCSTA to convey any funding challenges to the provincial government. School districts from around the province need to identify common needs, concerns, and issues and present a united front in dialogue with the Ministry of Education.

### Cam Small

Trustees have a democratic responsibility to carry out as far possible the initiatives demanded by the people of North Vancouver. They must do so with little money for discretionary spending, a legal obligation to pass a balanced budget and an obligation to be faithful to the collective agreements the province has signed with unionized staff. As such, circumstances give trustees clarity as to when they should push for increased funding. They should not shy away from doing so if the situation requires.

### Cyndi Gerlach

This is one of the important roles for trustees: to continue to advocate for more funding. Our budget determines how well we can support our teachers and staff in providing excellence in education, and I believe strongly that all districts in BC need improved funding. As an incumbent, I have supported this advocacy in the forms of letter writing, working with other trustees in Metro to seek increased funding, and personally advocating for appropriate funding for students with complex needs. I will continue to work hard to ensure our provincial government understands the important returns that increased spending will bring.

### Kulvir Mann

I believe we need to advocate more at the provincial level and build a stronger relationship as that will help NVSD get more opportunities for funding. Also, there are many grants that are available from our municipalities and other local organizations that have not been accessed. I would be an asset as a trustee for the NVSD to do this as I am very involved in the community and know all the MLAs and MPs in North and West Vancouver and many organizations.

### Edna Ligale

This is a challenging question as I know from “business stand point” which is how the provincial government allocates funding, certain KPIs (Key performance indicators) must be met by school districts. As trustee, my role would be to go to the provincial government ready to negotiate by showing what KPIs school district 44 have met or exceeded and use that to leverage for more funding. We have to essentially offer something in order to justify getting some thing more.

Devon Bruce

I believe our role would be to liaison with provincial government officials to advocate for increased spending on the behalf of our school district. I would engage with teachers and faculty to gain further knowledge in where they have the greatest needs.

## **How can our district better implement the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada restoring class-size and composition guarantees to our collective agreement?**

Norman Farrell

Districts should consider negotiated guarantees to be minimums, not aspirational goals. Given the competition for teaching staff and the cost of housing impediment faced by potential recruits, SD44 must ensure that working in the district is a rewarding experience. Issues discussed elsewhere in this response are relevant. Staff must be treated as professionals and given respect and recognition. Resources must be made available appropriate for individual class composition. Intrinsic factors for job satisfaction include achievement, responsibility and professional growth. I believe that if SD44 is recognized as a top employer, it will be better able to recruit and retain needed employees. If non-teaching expenses are optimized, more funds can be applied to classrooms.

Behl Evangelista

My understanding is that while negotiations are still underway on a permanent solution, the government have reached and interim deal with the union that includes about 100 million a year for new hires. Now the onus is on us in the District. I believe we have to work with HR to determine how many teachers and support workers are needed. This will help us determine how much funding we are going to get. When get elected I will work with other trustee to make sure we get what is fair and agreeable on both sides.

George Tsiakos

Ongoing open and honest discussions with the relevant parties, including, the BCTF, NVTA, and BCPSEA are necessary. Insight into how the current implementation is working, or is not working, from those affected by the restored language is key to moving forward and ensuring the Collective Agreement requirements are respected. In addition, class-size and composition issues go hand in hand with budgets and priorities. In planning for the next school year, it is critical that the budget process begins at an early stage through the Finance Standing Committee with representatives from the partner groups in order to remedy any potential shortcomings in a timely manner.

Cam Small

Lobby for increased funding.

Cyndi Gerlach

I think our district has worked hard at implementing class size and composition language. If the necessary contract language had not been stripped away by the previous provincial government, I believe we would all be in a better place than we are now. There is much work to be done. However, I firmly believe that by applying a collaborative approach to our upcoming negotiations, together we can ensure we have a contract that properly addresses the issues of class-size and composition to best meet the needs of all our students, teachers, and staff.

Kulvir Mann

I think we need to consult with teachers and administrator staff as to what challenges they are facing and help support them with the changes that were made due to decision. There needs to be more resources and funding allocated to them so that they can adjust and make their classrooms better equipped for the students. I know it has been a big adjustment and it is going to take some time to get everything resolved.

Edna Ligale

By working together: BCTF, board to ensure more teachers are hired so that we have smaller class sizes.

Devon Bruce

Communication with the provincial and municipal government regarding school expansions and additions to accommodate the restoration of class-size and composition guidelines.

**Do you support free collective bargaining for teachers, including the right to strike? How would you help to foster respectful and productive negotiations in the upcoming round of local bargaining?**

Norman Farrell

I fully support collective bargaining and the right to strike. I also believe that employees treated fairly don't readily resort to strikes. These are usually a result of disrespectful treatments of staff over a long period of time. I believe BCPSEA, by reflecting the former government's attitudes, encouraged conflict in education. This is unacceptable. We need effective methods for dispute resolutions and enlightened human resource management throughout the year.

Behl Evangelista

First off...I support free collective bargaining; including right to strike when it is necessary. That said...there are rules and regulations to be followed I believe we are all aware of. In the upcoming local bargaining...I have to listen to understand. I have to work with other trustees to ensure that respect and cooperation will result harmonious and productive negotiations. Teamwork for positive result. I am a firm believer of disagreement without hostility is healthy.

### George Tsiakos

Yes, I fully respect the collective bargaining process and the constitutionally protected right to strike as part of that process. The bargaining committee of the Board must be open to listening to the teachers' concerns in a meaningful and respectful manner. As an administrator who has handled numerous employment matters, I have found that honest, open and respectful dialogue is critical in making meaningful changes and reaching a common ground. I would bring this experience to the Board table. Though we may be on opposing sides during the bargaining process, we cannot lose sight of the fact that we are all part of the same team working toward making the NVSD the best that it can be.

### Cam Small

Yes I would promise to respect the process and promise to implement at a local level the agreements reached at the provincial level.

### Cyndi Gerlach

Yes, I support free collective bargaining for teachers including the right to strike. As a trustee, I can advocate and support respectful and productive negotiations in the upcoming round of local bargaining both through my own intentions and example, and through thoughtful participation in this process. Key to this will be working collaboratively and transparently so that everyone at the table is confident in the process, and committed to creating the best possible contract that respects the needs of our teachers as well as remaining cognizant of the constraints of our current budget and the needs of our students and families. We can take what we learn in this round of bargaining to help focus our goals as a district for our current contract and beyond.

### Kulvir Mann

Yes I support the free collective bargaining for teachers and their right to strike. I would like to work with them collaboratively as soon as possible so we can see what the issues are and work together to come to an agreement instead of delaying and then start negotiations at the last minute. I think all parties should be respectful and come up with an agreement that benefits everyone. Teachers are an integral part of our public education and we need to support and provide a great working environment for them so they can do what they do best - teach and nurture our kids!

### Edna Ligale

Yes, I support collective bargaining for teachers. It is important to keep the lines of communication open and having first hand knowledge of the going's on.

### Devon Bruce

I would work diligently to respectfully engage with teachers to reach the best possible collective bargaining agreement. Teacher's do have the right to strike, but since this comes at a significant cost to our students, I would work to to avoid the situation.

## **What is your position on the implementation of the SOGI 123 principles in public schools? Why?**

Norman Farrell

I favour inclusivity, tolerance and mutual respect. Our society is diverse and every person should feel safe and welcome in schools. Misinformation has been circulated about SOGI but I believe it is a needed and well-intentioned effort to improve children's experiences and understanding of the world we live in. Much better than pretending all people must follow the same narrow path. I am more interested in the quality of a young person's character than his or her choices in matters of love and attraction.

Behl Evangelista

I strongly support SOGI123. It helps students and parents to understand the importance of knowing that there are gender in our society that does not identify as male or female. I think it is a great principle as long as we have staff who are well trained and knowledgeable in how to teach all the principle in an age appropriate tools and method.

George Tsiakos

I fully support the implementation of SOGI 123 principles in public schools because of its focus on inclusion. It is about treating every student with the respect and dignity they deserve. It is about fostering safe learning environments where all students, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, feel safe and empowered. In reviewing SOGI 123, I support its principles and I am pleased that the North Vancouver School District was one of the early adopters.

Cam Small

Providing information about different family configurations is important. Fostering an environment that will help reduce violence against LGBTQ students even more so.

Cyndi Gerlach

I fully support SOGI 123 principles in all schools. I have spent considerable time talking to students, teachers, and community members to learn first hand what they face so I can be a better advocate. No person should be made to feel unwanted or misunderstood at school or in our society. Protecting and supporting all of our students must remain a priority, and I will continue to advocate for inclusion and respect for everyone in the education system, especially students who are in the greatest need of that support. I believe that it is through our schools and our education system that we can have the greatest positive impact on bringing the message of acceptance and inclusion to our own communities and beyond.

Kulvir Mann

I believe teachers are in the best position to determine how they implement SOGI 123 principles in their classrooms. They know their students and are able to assess how to teach and what subject matter should be introduced at each grade level as required. Teachers were involved in the process and understand their role as educators to make every child feel included and valued at school. As parents, teachers, administrators and a school district we

need to provide a safe and caring environment for all students regardless of their ability, ethnicity or gender. As a school board trustee I support this initiative and want every child to feel they are part of the NVSD and they belong because all kids matter. We should celebrate the unique and amazing individuals they are!

Edna Ligale

I believe that all students regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity have a right to learn in an environment of inclusivity and without fearing prejudice or discrimination. All students should be respectful of one another's differences. In my opinion this is the only way. Tolerance and acceptance!

Devon Bruce

I am absolutely for the SOGI curriculum implemented in the North Vancouver School District. I'm a genuine advocate for inclusivity of all students regardless of their sexual orientation or identification and will strongly support programs that deter discrimination and bullying. Education initiatives to teach students tolerance, acceptance and sensitivity is key in our community and helps to develop continued advocacy.