



Transcript of the Saanich School Board Trustee Candidates Meeting

October 4th, 2022 at Stelly's Secondary School

Election Day: October 15th, 2022

Election Info:

[North Saanich](#), [Town of Sidney](#),
[Central Saanich](#), [District of Saanich](#)

Electoral Zone	Candidate	Click links to view candidate's statements
District of Saanich (All candidates acclaimed)	Terri VanWell (incumbent)	Opening and closing statements
	Joyce Vandall	Opening and closing statements
Central Saanich (All candidates acclaimed)	Tim Dunford (incumbent)	Opening and closing statements
	Susan Hickman	Opening and closing statements
Town of Sidney (Candidate acclaimed)	Nola Silzer (incumbent)	Opening and closing statements
North Saanich (Contested zone: 2 trustees to be elected)	Keven Elder	Opening and closing statements
	Elsie McMurphy	Opening and closing statements
	Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland	Opening and closing statements

North Saanich Electoral Zone Candidates' Debate				
(Click on each topic to view moderator's question and candidates' responses)				
Budgeting	Climate	Public Consultation	Technology	Indigenous Relationships

Note: Candidate responses have been transcribed verbatim; some discrepancies are possible due to mishearing.

Candidate: Terri VanWell

Zone: District of Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Good afternoon. First of all, I'd like to thank, Central Saanich Community Association, COPACS for hosting and Stelly's for having it here this evening. I'd like to thank the or to acknowledge that we are on the territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations peoples and very grateful to be here this evening. I am representing the South Zone. And fortunately for me, I am acclaimed and this will be my second term. So my first term I came in here, I came onto the board very green, you know, didn't know what to expect. And over the last four years, I have learned a lot, very gratefully, from all the other board members. And I know that first and foremost, the reason why I do this is for the students. I was, you know, the one parent that, that one parent who volunteered for everything. My daughters have been in the BC education system for most of their most - had been - for most of their life, and graduated from Claremont in 2016. And I am so grateful that they got the education that they did. Moving forward, the one thing that I would like to do - governance, good governance, that's a given. Everybody knows that that's what we're one of the things we're there for. Making sure that we, when we make decisions that we involve our stakeholders and working as a team that are on board. But one of the things that I really want to make sure that we do this, for me this term is to include the student voice, because ultimately, the students are the ones that we're doing this for and I want to make sure that they have a good voice on our on our board and in making decisions. So that is going to be my, one of my main focuses moving forward this term. So thank you very much. And I look forward to working with all my colleagues and and the new ones coming forward.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

I would just like to say thank you, for doing this. I feel incredibly grateful to live in this district, and to serve on this board. The people here, the staff, the students, are great people. And it's a wonderful place to be and I look forward to the next four years and seeing what we can do and how we can make decisions that just benefit our students.

Candidate: Joyce Vandall

Zone: District of Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Thank you for inviting me here this afternoon. Nice to see all the students out there. I'll give you a little lesson to start because I'm an old retired teacher. My name is Joyce Vandall. And when I taught grade 12 and university classes I'd walk into the classroom and onboard I did put in big letters V A N D A L L underline the two Ls. Then below it, it would be V A N D A L with one L and then below that, vandalism and vandalize. Then I would say you know the difference? The ones with one L are bad.

They're the ones who steal, destroy property, are in the newspaper for all the wrong reasons. So a Vandall with two Ls is good. I will tell you why I'm good. I really believe in education. It is so important. It's the biggest gift in a developed world. And we are so very, very fortunate that our population gets to enjoy this privilege. I believe strongly with proper programming, students will succeed, be happy, will thrive, and will enter a journey in their life, where they embrace education for the rest of their life, which makes lifelong learning very, very important. We live in a very different world. Some of our kids know more than some of us when it comes to technology. And the world will - look at the kids smile out there. And it's very important that we have strong strong literacy skills, but democracy will only work if we live in a well educated society. And as a board member, I believe that I will embrace the governance of the model, I will ask questions, and I will do my best to get them to bring about the best, the very best education we can give our students, 'cause you guys are the most important. Thank you.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

It sure is nice to see all the passion around the room here, what a privilege it is. I didn't mention much about my past history that was a bit long in the tooth in the education field. And I have two great years teaching in West Africa, in Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in the world. And that has taught me so much. And that has brought the passion to the table tonight. And I want to acknowledge that passion, because education is very strong. And I hope you guys, all of us realize the importance of that public education, that that passion will drive us forward. And thank you.

Candidate: Tim Dunford

Zone: Central Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Thank you, my name is Tim Dunford and I represent Central Saanich on the school board, thank you to COPACS, to the STA to Stelly's school and to the Central Saanich Community Association for coordinating hosting us this evening. By way of introduction, my wife and I have lived in Central Saanich for 37 years. We raised our three children who were educated in Saanich schools. And like Nola, I practiced law in Victoria for 44 years, and retired from that at the end of last year, which permits more time for my duties at the board. My role, or my involvement in public education in the district and the province spans some 25 years, including going to PAC meetings when the kids were younger, and in school, sometimes three in a month. Moving on to the district PAC, where I served as chair from 2000 to 2003, at which time I was appointed to the then College of Teachers, which was the professional regulatory body for certification and regulation. Now the Teacher Regulation Branch. I was there from 2003 to 2010, returning, and came to the board and Saanich in 2011 and was reelected in '14 and '18. And so this will be, as acclaimed, my fourth term, and I get to join some very special people as Elsie and Nola said as we continue that work. When one of the council candidates learned that I was acclaimed, he said, Well, you can say anything you like. That's not strictly true, but there are a couple of things I want to mention. Over the years of my work, I've noted the incongruity of the fact that the local government, provincial government and federal elections received far more

attention than the education system does. Which is a shame, because education is what unites us. It's the basis. Shared education is the basis for a thoughtful patient and healthy society. And in fact, our mandate as trustees is to ensure that there is improved student achievement in our schools, which results in collective and individual success and a healthier community and a stronger society. The fact of the matter is that we ought to be honoured to be politicians in this most important of the field. The other thing I would say in my last 30 seconds is that as Nola has mentioned, relationships are the most important feature. However one comes to the board, it doesn't matter. But we all have to grow to become corporate, collaborative and collective in our decision making and supporting one another. This is not an individual thing. We're not, we are team players. And in addition to that, our relationships with staff and with our partners in our provincial organization and with our regional organization are critical. Thank you.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

Thank you. Elections are exciting times. I love elections, even though I'm acclaimed this time. For the first time in four terms haven't had to campaign. They are a time where we reassess our role, where we examine our work, we decide what's important, we offer ourselves for public service. And so I'm excited to be here with these quality people. We're going to have a good board regardless of who is elected in North Saanich, a nice combination of incumbents returning along with some new people. So that continuity is there along with the fresh perspectives. It's a corporate board, it makes decisions collectively. We are and will be a team. I bemoaned when we started this the fact that the community doesn't recognize this excitement and the importance of what we do. But the fact is, that may be a good thing, it may mean that essentially in Saanich we have a healthy system. We are not ideological, we are not particularly controversial. And so I look forward to continuing the next four years with whomever is elected in North Saanich with the others of us who are acclaimed for that incremental improvement in student achievement, in the healthy students, in a healthy, productive, thoughtful society that results in the work that we do.

Candidate: Susan Hickman

Zone: Central Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Okay. So good evening, and thank you to COPACS, Central Saanich Community Association and Stelly's Secondary School for hosting this event. My name is Susan Hickman and I've lived in Central Saanich for 35 years. I have four grown children who have all attended school district 63. I was very involved in the school path when my kids were in school. I spent four years on the executive with two years as the chairperson. I spent the last year and a half attending board meetings as a member of the public, observing the process and what the current board was focused on. One important project completed last year was the school district 63 strategic plan. I was encouraged to see how inclusive the board and executive administrators were in bringing students, parents and guardians, staff,

Indigenous partners and other community partners into the process of creating the strategic plan. The four key goals identified were literacy, Indigenous learners success, mental health and wellness and global citizenship. The outcome, I believe, is a living document that helps guide our educators to focus on what has been determined as important areas of our children's educational experience. The reason it's a living document is that it isn't sitting on the shelf collecting dust, there are ongoing checks and balances to determine how are we doing. Specifically with these goals in mind, there is a regular, I believe quarterly, report called Framework for Enhancing Student Learning. This identifies how we are doing in regards to improvements in these four areas. The beauty of this report is that the board and senior management have hard evidence showing that they're trending upward or downward in any of the four areas. This provides opportunity to adjust as needed and future reports we'll get clarifications if the adjustments are working, or further modifications are needed. I also observed the budget discussions and the passion that the trustees have when it came to making hard decisions. I was heartened to see the care and concern with all members of the board when trying to minimize the impact of budget constraints directly on students. However, I'm very troubled where the budget is concerned. Twenty years ago, when I was very involved in the PAC, I learned how the Ministry of Education's funding model was flawed. Fast forward and it still does not address the real funding issues that school districts are facing. That is all my time and I want to thank you for letting me share my observations and thoughts.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

So I want to thank everyone for giving me the time to share my views with you this evening. I'm excited to see what the next four years as a school trustee will bring. I believe in the public school system and that it's every child's fundamental right to an education that fits their personal learning style and needs. I feel strongly that a good board is made up by a broad spectrum of citizens and experiences bringing robust dialogue when decisions need to be made. Having spent the time observing the process and activities of the current board, I believe that my work and life experiences - probably life experiences the most - will make me a valuable member of the next group of Trustees. Thanks for your time.

Candidate: Nola Silzer

Zone: Sidney

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

My name is Nola Silzer and I'm the incumbent school trustee in Sidney. I'm grateful to have the honor and privilege to be acclaimed to serve our Saanich peninsula community on the board of education for a second term. My husband and I moved to Saanichton and 33 years ago spent 24 years in North Saanich, where we raised our daughter in school district 63. We lived in Sidney for almost five years now. I'm retired from the practice of family law for the past nine years. Why do I want to continue to be a trustee? Well, I believe this is one of the most meaningful ways in which I can spend my time and energy to contribute to our community. It's very satisfying work. And now I go into this term, the second term, with experience. Going forward, I'm particularly excited about the following initiatives.

First, the rollout of the new strategic plan. I want to see how our schools implement and give priority to the four aspects of the strategic plan, literacy, Indigenous student learning, mental health and wellness, and global citizenship. The board has an oversight role to play in these priorities implemented throughout the district. Second, I'm interested in the district incorporating childcare into its operations as now mandated by the ministry, especially with the exciting prospect of having a new nature based Early Learning Center in Central Saanich. Third, I'm committed to the board's quest to increase participation of the WSÁNEĆ people at the governance level. The strategic plan consultation made it abundantly clear that there WSÁNEĆ peoples are passionate about the education of their children. They want their students to see themselves in all aspects of our school system, including their board cable. Overall, I'm motivated to seek and to serve another term as a school trustee, to continue working alongside truly exceptional people. Relationships are of utmost importance in every aspect of Saanich school district. And it's a great privilege to be part of this. I believe my responsibility as a school trustee is to focus on students and their well-being at all times, be well prepared and informed in making decisions and act in the best interest of the school district as a whole. And to represent public interest and to accomplish what the school district needs. Thank you.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

Well said, and I agree this is a time for renewal and recommitment. And what my promise is, is working as a school trustee, I will commit again, to do my work with diligence, respect and collaboration with my colleagues in service to our community. Thank you.

Candidate: Keven Elder
Zone: North Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Thank you, Terry, and thank you to our COPACS, STA, CSCA and Stelly's hosts, and to all of our in person and virtual audience members as we gather on the traditional territory, the WSÁNEĆ people. I'm honored to be a candidate for trustee. My wife Karen and I first moved to the peninsula 42 years ago, we lived in this area from Royal Oak through Land's End for all the years since. We're still here, we raised our children here, they went to school here, in school district 63, and two of them live here in North Saanich with their families, and two grandbabies are on the way in the course of next year. My 40 year career included 32 years as a teacher and administrator in Saanich schools. I started right here at Stelly's a long time ago. I was superintendent of schools and CEO from 2005 to 2017. So I've worked with hundreds of school district 63 colleagues, worked with, taught, and coached 1000s of school district 63 students, multi generations. It's been an honour, I plan to build on all of those relationships with adults of all ages in the community, especially in North Saanich where I represent. And I'll be here to listen and be the voice of the table. My vision for public education has always been placed in a safe and inclusive, welcoming, honoring of First Nations supportive of children with vulnerabilities and children with risk, and LGBTQ2S+ students and staff that always supported innovation. And I know that we can be fiscally responsible with solid and collaborative and transparent budget processes, and still focus on what is best for students, for parents, their community and for employees. So my commitment and priorities as a trustee would focus on that

vision and those experiences. If you know me, and know that I'm all about relationships, engagement and consensus. I've shown that through, literally hundreds of committee and community meetings, many of which I've facilitated. I served on the Victorian and Esquimalt Police Board on the board of directors of the BC Superintendent's Association for two years as president, and I've been honored to work as a consultant with the WSÁNEĆ school board and the four nations. I have served also as a consultant for many boards, on senior staff hires, best governance practices, strategic planning, and more. All of that prepares me for this role. Beyond that is my belief in public education as a foundation for a strong and healthy society, and my belief in the importance of the voice of parents, students and community members at the board table. So I'll use my time tonight to explain what I would do as a trustee to address the important topics that are being raised tonight. Rather than rebutting or speaking in opposition to statements made by my colleagues here, their statements will stand on their own. We are, after all, seeking the same thing. That's the voice at the table as advocates for public education and supportive children, families, communities, and our valuable staff. Thank you again, for tonight. I'm sorry for breaking the only rule that I see posted here tonight, which is no eating or drinking on the stage. Thank you.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

I just want to take my time to make sure people know what my platform is. I'm all over social media. My website is kevenelder.ca. I think people can find me on my platform. It really has six points in it. Advocacy for a public education system that is adequate and responsibly funded to meet the needs of children. Serving as a voice for children and families and community at the board table. Supporting board decisions that provide all children with every chance of success, including serving children with unique needs and vulnerabilities as well as those who pursue excellence. The fourth thing is engaging First Nations, ensuring a culturally responsive education for children and families of Indigenous ancestry. The fifth is ensuring that our staff have the supports and resources they need to do their jobs effectively. The sixth is ensuring effective planning and budgeting processes involving our staff, parents, students, partners, and the broader community. That platform of mine is posted and easily accessible. And anybody at any time, my phone number and email address are everywhere as well. I have a very long history of serving children, families, community, and staff staff in school district 63, teaching and leadership roles. I also have extensive experience in government. So I know how to serve in that capacity and not step into things administrative. I have the experience and passion, the vision and the connections to get this right. And I hope that the electorate sees it that way on October 15. Thank you, again, for a great evening. I appreciate it.

Candidate: Elsie McMurphy

Zone: North Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Well, good afternoon, everyone. And thank you for coming out to join this wonderful panel this afternoon. My name is Elsie McMurphy, and I'm seeking reelection from North Saanich to the Spanish Board of Education. I acknowledge with gratitude that we are gathering on the traditional territory since time immemorial of the WSÁNEĆ peoples that I'm very grateful that COPACS, the Central Saanich Community Association and the STA are providing this opportunity for school board candidates and acclaimed trustees to provide their perspectives on public education and school district 63. Apart, I begin by telling you a little bit about myself. I don't remember my preschool years. But since then, it seems that almost every aspect of my life has involved going to working in activism on behalf of schools, including my role as a school trustee, working for public education. And I see my role as a trustee on the board of education to be a continuation of that lifelong support of one of our society's most treasured gifts, public education. I've lived in North Saanich for more than 40 years, I've taught in Spanish and also saw our schools through the eyes of my husband, teacher, and those of our three kids, all of whom attended Saanich schools from kindergarten to grade 12. The Saanich Board of Education has an annual budget of about \$100 million, with around 1000, full and part time employees, from teachers to trades, from bus drivers to business officials and many others. My job as a trustee is to see that your tax dollars and the efforts of those employees are dedicated to achieving success for the 8000 precious children that you send to our schools, as well as being one of the largest employers on the peninsula and creating a huge economic benefit. Clearly it is in our collective best interests that we provide a quality education for the next generation of citizens who will be making the decisions that affect all of us, young or old. My commitment to you as a trustee, if I'm reelected, is to do my best to ensure that we continue to search for and implement strategies to improve our schools and enhance student learning. In addition to the important three R's, I affirm my support for the objective of developing well rounded, healthy, happy, successful students who will take their places as productive citizens in our democratic society. I will continue to advocate for equity in our system and increased funding for our public schools. I have endeavored to give voice at the board table to issues that affect our students and involve our community, such as Indigenous education, mental health, the environment, food security and climate change. And I hope you will continue to contact me with your concerns.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

Thank you, everyone for being here tonight, I want to emphasize that I guess, in going forward, if I'm reelected, I'm going to maintain the principles that I hold dear about public education. One is that it should be free. And I know it's not. But it's something I continue to work on to try to get rid of all these fees and charges and textbook rentals and all the other things that we are constantly dinging families for. That's one of my goals. I want to keep our system accessible to all students and non discriminatory. And I want to emphasize the fact that we need to look at our public education system as having both an individual and a collective good focus. So we're doing it for the benefit of the individual, but we're also providing this public service as a benefit to our society. And I think we have to keep that in mind as we go forward as a board. If there are any North Saanich voters here tonight, I would be honored if you would again, place your trust in me as your trustee on the Senate Board of Education. And if I'm reelected, I look forward to working again, as we have in the past with our important education partners, the STA, COPACs, Saanich Administrators Association,

CUPE. And once again, thank you to STA and COPACS and the Central Saanich Community Association for sponsoring this evening tonight. It's been great. Thank you so much.

Candidate: Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland

Zone: North Saanich

Opening statement (3 minute time limit)

Good evening, everyone. So I'm Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland and I'm asking you to let me serve our children, community and district as your school board trustee. I was raised and continue to live on the Saanich Peninsula. This is my community. This is our community. My husband and I live in our family home in North Saanich, where we raised our two children. And we continue to enjoy this beautiful community on the traditional territory of the W̱SÁNEĆ people. And I'd like to acknowledge the W̱SÁNEĆ people as the traditional caretakers and steward of this land. I'm very sorry that I could not be there this evening. Unfortunately, I had another commitment. And I really appreciate the support of COPACS, and particularly Tristan, in facilitating my virtual participation in this event. I've chosen to run for trustee because I'm committed to public service and making a positive contribution to my community. I care and I'm willing to act. As a public servant of 32 years my fundamental role and character has been to serve. I was privileged to serve as the Deputy Minister of Advanced Education, Comptroller General of the Province of BC, and Associate Deputy Ministers of Finance and Environment. I'm an experienced board director of 15 plus years of professional accountant for more than 25 years. And recently, I completed my master's in global leadership with Royal Roads University. So I truly do believe in lifelong learning, and you're never too old to learn, and we can learn from everywhere and everyone. Having recently retired from the public service, I still maintain my desire to serve and use my experience and knowledge to the benefit of our community. As a parent and a former parent advisory committee member, I understand it takes a community to educate our children. I believe in the importance of balanced and aptly resourced public education. I have a passion to champion an effective, positive, inclusive education system that serves all of our children. This means appropriately resourcing and supporting our teachers, our students, our parents, and guardians, and engaging with our community partners. It means providing support for diverse pathways, as I personally know that success looks different for each person. This means ensuring all of our children can arrive at school with the confidence that they are safe and that they belong. My vision for the future, I suppose, is not so dissimilar from the strategic plan of the district. But I see a future where education is integrated and community centered, the learning environment embraces innovation, is balanced with nature, and reflective of the rich and diverse cultures and people that thrive in our inclusive community, the educational supports and resources are available for students, teachers and parents, students are positively and constructively challenged to build their self esteem their confidence in solving problems and their ability to embrace the dynamic and as we all know ever changing world and become compassionate, productive societal members. I am concerned about the financial sustainability of our public education system. We cannot take this for granted. This is extremely important. We're a growing community and a dynamically changing society. And we have growing needs within our community for education. There's significant competition for taxpayers'

resources, and public education needs to remain a priority. I see this challenge as an opportunity for creative engagement.

Closing statement (1.5 minute time limit)

Thank you, again, to COPACS and the STA and Stelly's, for hosting this evening. It's been really great to actually hear the dialogue. And I agree with others that have said that regardless of the outcome of the election, I believe that you will have a good board. There's a good diversity. But I would like to put in one of the reasons I'm doing this is I really do believe in public education. It's the foundation of our democracy. It touches everything. And one of the things that I've seen is that people are not always aware of the impact of education. I had some voters say to me, Oh, they don't know anything about what's going on with the school board trustee election. And yet education touches our children. It's our future. It affects everyone in everything we do. Our education is so foundational to creating the community, the culture, the future that we want. And it impacts our most precious, and I mean, most precious children. So it's really important to me. I believe that there is a need for a focus on the funding. I'm very concerned about the funding, and ensuring that we have adequate funding going forward. I believe my experience and background offers a unique skill set at this particular time that would complement many of the members and I would be able to work productively as a team member to advance our collective goals within the district. I do understand that successful advocating and stewardship are key. I have many experiences, networks, and knowledge that I would leverage to the benefit of our children, our district and our community. It would be an honor to serve in this capacity. And I would just like to thank you again for the opportunity this evening.

Q: The budget last year saw the elimination of several behavioral specialist positions in our schools. What balance and principles would you use in budget decision-making when tough decisions must be made to distinguish price versus value?

Primary Respondent (2 minute time limit)

Keven Elder: Thank you. Very few decisions are clear cut and without consequences. especially tough calls at budget time. The values that are going to these processes start with integrity, and with our belief in a process that allows people to have a voice, especially those people who are going to be the most affected. In addressing a question like this, my value that surfaces is prioritizing children with unique needs and vulnerabilities, and being open and honest and transparent in addressing those issues, including how to deal with the matter of behavioral specialists, in particular, as asked. The principles, well, it starts with an ethical decision making framework. And that value analysis, to me, is the right lens for finding a solution, finding your way out of a dilemma, because it's never easy. It's always one good solution versus another good solution. And using an ethical decision making framework, it's a principle that I ground my practice on, and do in governance as well. There's always a cost, I'm sorry to say, in real terms to real people when decisions have to be made. So I support an open

	<p>process that gives people a chance to weigh in with options and potential consequences. Our process has to be and from my experience here, and I believe it still is this way, to be open, transparent with early sharing of the challenges and other the options to address those challenges and the consequences and implications with a really respectful process and active listening, and then having the courage as trustees, making that decision to make the tough calls, having considered wisely the input from everybody and remembering that at the end of this process, the most important thing is the impact that these decisions have on children.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Elsie McMurphy: Thank you. Thank you very much. I'm appreciative of this question. Because if I'm, I don't know, probably don't know this. But I was in fact, on the losing side of the budget debate, last spring. I actually moved an amendment to what was proposed to protect some of the positions that were being eliminated. Unfortunately, I lost that on a three-two vote. So I think it's clear that I know how to make the tough decisions, I just don't always get the outcome that I want. But I think the important thing for our budget process is to make sure that it is consultative. And then we - I think we have done that. We have attempted to reach all our various audiences and give them an opportunity to participate, from students to to staff, to parents to the community. But in the final analysis, I think the basis for the budget decision making budget, making decisions, budget decision making sorry, has to be the impact on the students and whether or not it is the best alternative that we see that we can possibly provide. Given that we have limited resources to the students that are in our care. Thank you.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland: Thank you. So I think that in the context of what others have said, I agree. It needs to be about having a really solid process. My number one priority, obviously, would be the well being and quality of education for our children. And I'm a real champion for inclusivity, which means, in some cases, it would mean, prioritizing those programs for inclusion. I don't personally agree with the budget decision that occurred last year. But that's my personal opinion. And I would be part of a board that would make these decisions. And I think number one is, the process needs to be about listening. We would be there, we're there to listen to you and to express your voice and your priorities within those decisions. And so yes, there needs to be early consultation upfront. If there's challenges that needs to be disclosed, how those challenges and how those considerations are made. We need to be open and honest about the feedback and the input we've received. And it also means being very transparent about our decisions. So not just just disclosing the decision, but what decisions we made and why we made those decisions and how the feedback was considered in those decisions. And I think that's part about being very transparent, and very engaged. But for me, first and foremost, it's the overall well being and education for our children and protecting that.</p>
<p>Additional Respondent:</p>	<p>Tim Dunford: I chose this question as one that I might try to contribute to. Because I think it's demonstrative of the quandary that trustees often find themselves in, which is, as has been said, by others, there are no easy answers. Having served as chair for the past three years, and before that, Chair of the Finance Committee and the Budget Advisory Committee, I truly am well versed with our processes in budget development and consultation is critical to it. But</p>

	<p>that's only part of it. In the end of the day, the buck stops with the elected public trustees. And the reason that in this example, the decision made, was voted the way it was, was because the advice was that if we don't do it this way, there's going to be greater cut and more loss in future years. And that's been borne out. That's a whole other discussion about advocacy with the Ministry, and and grants. But in fact, that is, when we look forward to these decisions, we have to look beyond the immediate for the greater good as far as we can.</p>
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Q: We are in a worsening climate emergency. The word climate does not appear once in the SD63 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. How important a role does the Board play, and what means will you prioritize, to prepare children, educational infrastructure and curriculum to dynamically respond to the challenges of the changing climate?

<p>Primary Respondent (2 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Elsie McMurphy: Thanks very much. I acknowledge that the word climate doesn't appear specifically in the strategic plan. But when we were going through this, the process of developing the strat plan last year, we were, when we were initially presented as trustees with three suggestions. One was the literacy, the mental wellness and the Indigenous education. And some of us fought very long and hard and consulted widely to include a fourth bullet, a fourth plank in our strat plan, which was the notion of citizenship, and is within that notion of citizenship, that we see our system and our responsibility to addressing the great challenges that confront us with regard to things like climate change. Then within the school district, we are literally trying to address things like that, that don't appear sort of as under the heading of climate change. But for just one small example is we are moving to electric buses for our for getting the kids to school. So there's just one tiny example of how we're acknowledging that we understand the importance and the significance of things like climate change. So in our planning, and our transportation, and even things like joining with, with parents encouraging the Safe Walk to School, so that parents are not driving all the time with their kids. Kids are learning to be climate, good climate citizens themselves. So there's a whole range of things that we're doing in the district that aren't specifically under, headlined in neon "climate change". But believe me, we are very cognizant of it and are working to see what we can do as a system and as individuals to address that that need.</p>
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<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Cheryl Wenezeki-Yolland: Yes, so I think as trustees, we have opportunities to influence our priorities when it comes to our infrastructure. Elsie spoke of the example of school buses being converted. I also think within building infrastructure, there's opportunities. I've seen discussions around heat pumps. So while this strategic plan may not have it explicitly, I think there still are opportunities. And I do believe there was some line, in one of the plans that I read about climate. I think the other aspect is within our educational programs. So within science, and different avenues, there's opportunities in the educational programs, to have those types of discussions. My daughter was on the Healthy Schools Committee, which initiated several different types of green initiatives within the school when she was there. So there are certainly opportunities to encourage student leadership within the environment. And I think it's something that we need to be cognizant of. I also think that there's huge opportunities with</p>
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	<p>our Indigenous partners, and through the Indigenous education to explore our connection to the earth, as we are all connected, and so I do see opportunities, potentially in discussions with them about how we can leverage that within our within our schools</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Keven Elder: Thank you. That's a great question. Our work on climate issues starts with creating a learning environment where people hear the truth, as hard as it might be to hear and commit to, to change. And we are indeed in a climate crisis. I will support the elements of the capital plan that speak to co2 reduction in terms of transportation facilities and paper. And I would also support the very strong and very detailed energy sustainability plan that was developed by a consultant and is already being implemented. I would support at the board table, anything that I could that would lead to more energy and climate action awareness as part of curriculum or beyond with clubs and programs like any teams, and I would expect and look forward to receiving regular updates on the progress being made toward the aggressive and I would hope attainable targets for co2 reduction by 2030. I think this is a program that's in place in the school district that can be sustained and be successful, and I look forward to supporting it at the table and working with schools to help them, to talk with students on these issues.</p>

Q: If elected, what would you do to ensure that youth voices are represented in decision-making and further support parental voices in decision-making, particularly families who face barriers and challenges in sharing their perspectives?

<p>Primary Respondent (2 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland: Okay, I think I heard the full question. So for ensuring that youth voices are heard, I think that that's absolutely critical within our education system, our students are the whole reason and our children are the whole reason that we are here and providing that education and their future. And I think the only way we truly know how effective the education system is, is to actually listen and hear their voices. And I've always found youth to have extremely insightful ideas, and solutions. If we can take the time to do that. Now, there's many different ways in which we can do that. Then one is through various committees. And I think one of the trustees talked about student voice as being a priority, for her. I would join her in advocating for that. I know for my own children, they chose to take up various leadership roles within the community, and they had the opportunity to have voice with the school board, trustees, and they really valued that opportunity to be heard. So one, I would champion student voice. Two, I would seek opportunities for that either through committee engagement through reaching out. It also means being cognizant of where there's barriers and being really intentional and thoughtful, to ensure that we're not putting up barriers that limit or restrict that voice, that we're actually removing any barriers, whether they're conscious or unconscious, to ensure that all voices can be heard. Thank you.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Keven Elder: Well, youth voice is critical in decision making. And I've always believed so. When I was superintendent, I created the superintendent, student leadership group of students from middle and secondary schools across the district. We met four times a year for all 12 years I was superintendent. I'd expect to see similar kinds of outreach happening today. And I hope it is. We would take to those groups of students, whether it's that kind of group or student voice set up in the</p>

	<p>schools, important questions, policy and budget, it's not just have chats about how things are going in school, but I'd have the same outreach, would expect a continuation of the same outreach, to parents through callbacks and PACs, and importantly, through ongoing engagement. And I will support school leaders and teachers, support staff, student advocates, and reaching out to families who may have lost interest or are having a hard time getting their voice to matter. In many cases, their voices matter the most, because they're the ones who are at the moment somewhat disenfranchised. So reaching out to students, student voice, parent voice, I'm a hundred percent supportive of this critical aspects of our work at the school board.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Elsie McMurphy: Thanks, in addition to what the other team have said, I'd just like to add a couple of points. One is I think it's really important, not only to invite people to join us in the process of decision making, but also to ensure that we as a board, as trustees, and as our staff, and staff are going out to seek that kind of input. And I'll give you one example. As we go through the budget process, we have typically gone to all the secondary schools and met with groups of students to hear their views on what their priorities or their needs and wants would be on the budget. And that's just one example of how I think it's important to go out rather than just sit in the Board Office and hope that someone will come and talk to us, because a couple of other things I think are really important. And that is the question is to particularly for families who face barriers and challenges. I think this is an area where the schools particularly can have a leadership role, because they know their parent community better than we would, for example, at the Board Office. And I think if we can encourage school staff and school administration, as well as working through COPACS to get that kind of two way communication and make sure that you're hearing and you're being heard. I think that's the important thing to do. Thank you.</p>
<p>Additional Respondent:</p>	<p>Tim Dunford: Thank you. I wanted to give the district and the board, at least in my time, a pat on the back for some of this work, because in Saanich, we talk to everybody. My colleagues who have spoken in have highlighted some specifics about it. When it comes to families and parents, we know that PACS and the COPAC are enshrined in the school act and legislation, and are entitled to give you input on decision making in the school in the district. As others have indicated, when we have budget development, we consult with our partners, teachers, administrators, parents, and students. When we developed the strategic plan last year, we consulted everybody at length, including students. And so there is a tradition in the district for going out and taking advice or hearing advice, not necessarily taking it all the time. But it certainly goes into the formulation of the decision the board meets, and all of these important things. I'm proud of the tradition that we have in this district as opposed to perhaps some others for doing this</p>

Q: The use of modern technology can cause harmful impacts on the physical and mental health of children and adults alike. In children and youth, specifically, the use or misuse of technology has been linked to depression, feelings of isolation, a lack of empathy, and reduced physical fitness, to name but a few effects. On the flipside, technology offers important learning aids, promotes problem-solving, and is a keystone in many future career opportunities. What principles and frameworks do you feel are critical for safely navigating this balance? Do we have the right checks and balances in place regarding the use of technology in schools? If not, what do you see as important steps to put such principles in place?

Primary Respondent (2 minute time limit)

Keven Elder: Well, we had no idea decades ago - I went to the unveiling of the Macintosh, at Camosun College, in 1980-something - Thank you. What drastic changes would be in terms of the computer information technologies or the effect that handheld devices would have. We didn't know that it'd be twice as many handheld, intelligent phones than people or that 92% of people have such a device. It is everywhere. It can be profoundly negative in terms of the effects that you're describing. But it can be profoundly positive. And the principles and frameworks that we can use to safely navigate that balance. I think I've been in place in school district 63 For a long time. The keys are thoughtful, intelligent uses of devices, with teachers and support staff playing key roles and helping young people understand the double edged sword, and learning safe and appropriate uses of these important tools. I don't know where else that would happen. It can happen in some homes and it can happen, even, through social media. There are some really strong teachings about this. But school is uniquely positioned to work with all children to help them navigate this world from a very young age and come into adult ready to be safe from the harm and accessing the benefit. So we all students included need the wherewithal the system needs to create the wherewithal to be thoughtful, intelligent, curious, skeptical users of technology, and school is the place where that can happen. I would support that entirely at the board level. And I've supported that in my working role over the years, including as a technology consultant. And as a leader within the system. We have to get this right, because we have to keep children safe from harm. And we have to make sure that we have young people emerging into adulthood, ready to embrace new technologies and safe and helpful ways.

Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)

Elsie McMurphy: Thanks. Kevin has said what I would have said and probably said it better than I could anyway, but I just might like to make a couple of extra points. And one is I think we all had an object lesson in technology and the benefits and harms thereof through the last two years of COVID. And we saw I think what it was like to live in basically a technological world where we didn't have contact with a lot of people and I think we saw the downside of technology and it has given us great information and a great basis from which to move forward. That reminder that we need to balance the wonderful aspects of using technology with the more detrimental side of it which tends to be isolating, and then also limiting to people's physical well being. I think that for students with unique needs, particularly, the use of technology can be wonderfully beneficial. But we have to be careful, I think that we make sure we have equality of opportunity and equality of access. Not all homes are created equal when it comes to technology. And not all schools are created equal when it comes to technology. And I think as a board, we have to be vigilant and ensure that there is some modicum of parity and equality in the way we

	use technology in our schools.
Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)	<p>Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland: Yes, so thanks. I think building on what the others have said, ethics in technology is a significant discussion from a societal perspective. At this point, there's so many benefits that can come from it. I think one of the key priorities is that when we're introducing technology into the classroom, it needs to actually improve the learning environment, both for the teachers and for the students. I think introducing technology, it's really important that we're not creating another barrier to participation. Technology can be expensive. There's, as Elsie was saying, different abilities or different affordability levels within different homes. So we need to ensure that where we're adopting this, it's accessible to all that it is actually improving the learning environment. I think ethics around use of technology would be a great place to engage our students and have a discussion about building perhaps a code of ethics around the use of technology within the school environment. We've seen many circumstances of cyber bullying, there's so many potential risks. But what a better way to actually build a future society that embraces technology in a healthy way than to do it within our own school system. And I see that as a great opportunity to engage a broader discussion about what would be the criteria or the ethics that people would like to see. Obviously, there's significant privacy considerations, as well. So those are some of my thoughts. And I'll finish within my time.</p>

Q: How would you assess the strength of the working relationship between the Saanich School Board and the WSÁNEĆ Leadership Council and other representative bodies of the Indigenous peoples on whose traditional territory we live, learn, and teach? If elected, what would you do to foster partnerships between Saanich schools and Indigenous communities?

Primary Respondent (2 minute time limit)	<p>Cheryl Wenezenki-Yolland: So I think based on my understanding, from observation, and reading, that there's actually quite a strong relationship that has been established over time between the WSÁNEĆ Council, and the school district and the partners. I can actually speak to my own personal experience as a student when I took Aboriginal Studies. And the elder David, Dave Elliot came at the time, and he shared the story with us of the salt water people. So I know that this relationship has been building over a very long time, relationships are slow to build, if they're going to be lasting. So I do think that we are building a good relationship, and that there's many strengths, strengths to build on. I think, for me, being a new member of the trustees, it'll be really important that I take some guidance from those that have been involved directly within the relationship. I certainly wouldn't want to charge in with great ambition and disrupt a relationship that has been positive so I would have some learning to do. I have had quite a bit of experience with working with indigenous leaders, both in education and within community, particularly as I advanced the Aboriginal post secondary education policy, which was a co-created policy with Indigenous leaders. post secondary, K to 12 and government levels. That was the first time that Indigenous people said that government had actually developed policy with them, rather than for them. And so I what I would say is my principle would be to do things with and to take guidance and leadership from our indigenous partners</p>
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	<p>in how we can take And you to build that relationship. Thank you.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Keven Elder: Thank you, I would see assessing this as a matter for the board and working with the community, including male to senior staff and working with WSÁNEĆ nations, as opposed to being a job that I should do, I know what my role is. And I know as a superintendent it would be one thing, as a trustee it would be another. I think this starts with the acknowledgment that we are settlers, we are visitors on this land, and that includes the entire school system, which is colonial in nature needs to constantly be re-examined. The assessment of how things are going starts with conversation and analysis of relationships. How are we as a school system in relationship with each of the nations with a WSÁNEĆ school board with WSÁNEĆ nation in general? And what are we doing as an organization, to reach out respectfully, humbly, learning from the nation, and being better at the entire agenda of Truth and Reconciliation by starting this truth, and towards reconciliation. And to do more of that kind of action that we're talking about means having all of our staff engaged and seeing this as a critically important issue. And having all of us focused on having the respectful, humble, strong relationships, the best that we can create and sustain because we I believe, as I heard already, those relationships are in a good place. And we have to build on them and make sure that remains the case. Humbly and with respect.</p>
<p>Secondary Respondent (1.5 minute time limit)</p>	<p>Elsie McMurphy: Thanks. I was thinking about, not this question, but some similar question. Last week, I think we saw the partnership in action with through the work of Stelly's School, hosting with the WSÁNEĆ leadership and the tribal school, the walk from here down to Pioneer Park in in, in Brentwood, I had the opportunity to join that walk. And it was incredibly, incredibly powerful, moving and profound. But I think more and more than that, it demonstrated exactly what the question was asking is what kind of a partnership can we can we look forward to to developing, in order to address some of the issues that exist with our colonial structures, with our way of being and living and acting in relation to our Aboriginal Indigenous neighbours? Just two things. One is the board, I think, is very clear that this is a priority, because it's one of the major planks in our strategic plan. And that is Indigenous education. And there's all kinds of evidence that says why, for example, the graduation rate for all BC students is about 90%. But for Indigenous students it's about 72. And I must confess with some shame that I don't think our numbers here at Saanich are even that good. So we've got a lot of work to do. But I think we're committed to walking to walk the walk as we, as some couple of us did this week with the couple of trustees did this week. And I also I just want to acknowledge the tremendous work that our staff is doing in the school district to ensure that those relationships are developed and enhanced. Particularly our principal for Indigenous Studies, I just want to get her name in: Melissa Austin.</p>