

# Wood Buffalo and District Labour Council

## 2025 Trustee Candidate Survey

### Introduction

The Wood Buffalo and District Labour Council (WBDLC) represents unionized workers across our region. We advocate for strong public services, local job creation, and a more equitable economy. We're asking candidates to respond to the following questions to help workers and their families understand your positions ahead of the 2025 Trustee election.

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### Section 1: Your Perspective and Priorities

1. Why are you running as a Trustee in 2025, and what motivates you to serve this community?

After running in 2021, I knew I needed to step forward again, in some capacity. When I looked at the landscape of open seats, it was Public School Trustee that felt right. I've raised a child here, I work here, and I've built a long record of showing up for the community. What motivates me most is ensuring that teachers and staff know they are supported, students have what they need to succeed, and families can trust that the board is making decisions in their best interests.

2. What do you see as the most urgent challenges facing Education today?

Any candidate can (and should) point out the obvious: our public schools are underfunded, understaffed, and overcrowded. You'll hear that from everyone, and it's true — which is why I'll simply add that I stand firmly with teachers and our kids.

What worries me more is the way tension is being manufactured between advocates for student safety and advocates for parental rights. In reality, parents and educators overwhelmingly want the same thing: safe, supportive classrooms where kids can succeed. The noise around "sides" is a distraction from the real, urgent problems — funding, staffing, and class sizes and I want to make sure that we are centering those problems.

3. What does an inclusive school system look like to you? What is an adequate number of students in a classroom? With an educational assistant?

An inclusive school system is one where every student regardless of background, ability, or circumstance, feels supported and respected. I grew up as a kid that needed the hot lunch program, that needed teacher-supported before and after school care, that needed strong coaches and counsellors to be able to survive. That means smaller class sizes, better ratios of students to educational assistants, and adequate resources for diverse learning needs. While the "right" number will vary by grade and program, I believe classrooms should be

sized so teachers can actually teach, not just manage. And an EA should not be stretched across so many students that they can't provide meaningful support.

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## **Section 2: Handling of Education Funding and working with Government**

4. Please give your thoughts on public funding of Education in Alberta. What areas will you advocate for and why?

Public funding of education is not just a line item, it is an investment in the future of this province. I will advocate for sustainable, transparent funding that prioritizes classroom conditions, teacher staffing levels, and supports for special needs education. I also want to see greater accountability on how dollars are spent. Strong governance means strong oversight of budgets. I am good at budgets.

5. Do you, as a potential trustee, plan on standing up to the Minister of Education to advocate for students and staff in this division if need be? Give an example of an issue that you plan to advocate on if elected into this role.

Yes. Trustees must not be silent when provincial direction harms students or sidelines educators. One example I plan to press on is curriculum development. Teachers should be lead participants in designing, reviewing, and approving curriculum changes. The current K-6 social studies draft has drawn criticism for ignoring teacher feedback, minimizing critical thinking outcomes, and underrepresenting Indigenous and diverse perspectives. As a trustee, I will use the board table, the ASBA, and direct communication with the government to push for a transparent co-design process where classroom realities matter. I will challenge ministerial action that undermines educators and call for problematic drafts to be paused and reopened to real consultation. The K-6 roll out of Math, ELA, and Phys Ed was pushed through without alignment, and we need strong voices to prevent that from happening in Social Studies. And even if we lose the fight on curriculum, we need to continue to advocate for supports, training and resources.

## **Section 3: Working with Employees of the Division**

6. In a Trustee role you will be working with CUPE, ATA, Administration, and Out of Scope employees. How do you plan on addressing the concerns of all these groups? How will you be staying in touch with the employees of the division you are running in?

I already work in a unionized environment, and I believe in open, respectful, and ongoing dialogue. My approach will be the same at the board table: create clear pathways for feedback, ensure voices are heard before decisions are made, and meet directly with stakeholder groups regularly. The best solutions come from the people doing the work. Our role as trustees is to listen and act with accountability.

7. How do you feel about being involved in contract negotiations with union leaders? Do you have any experience in union negotiations?

I welcome the opportunity to be involved in negotiations. My career has given me direct experience working alongside union leaders, navigating contracts, and ensuring safety and fairness are respected. I know negotiations can be difficult, but they are also how we secure stable, fair workplaces. I believe in collective bargaining, and I believe trustees must stand behind negotiated agreements.

8. Do you, as a potential trustee, plan on keeping with the current policies to support staff health and safety?

Yes. The climate across Alberta, Canada and North America necessarily requires us to keep a lens on policy related to health and safety, to adapt, and to listen to the people who are meant to be protected by the policies set. But we also need to be careful not to overescalate or over-correct because of the environments around us. The best Health and Safety policies are those created with a collaborative lens.

9. Some school boards have been changing their structure and contracting out more jobs within the school board. As union leaders we are completely opposed to this change. What will you do to ensure all jobs in the bargaining units are kept and workers keep their positions?

I will not support any motion or position that privatizes classrooms, weakens unions, or undermines public accountability. As a trustee I commit to votes that support direct employment of all bargaining unit jobs, oppose budget motions that propose outsourcing or contracting unionized roles and prioritize workforce stability in budgets, including the prioritization of forecasting needs in advance of budget cycles. I will meet often and openly with union leaders and union reps to flag any proposed changes that would affect jobs to ensure that concerns are addressed early. I do need to be transparent that I am on record from previous elections indicating that there are spaces where a P3 is something I would look at - in education, it would be spaces where a P3 could accelerate new infrastructure; if it gets a school in a growing community built faster, I think it's worth a conversation. But teachers, custodial, maintenance, transportation and support workers... non negotiable. Unions prop up quality, safety and quality of life for everyone.

#### **Section 4: Working with Families and the Community**

10. In a trustee role there are many stakeholders. Students, families, the community, staff, and administration. We know that here in Fort McMurray we have many different needs and programs. How do you plan on hearing the needs of all stakeholders?

I believe in accessible, transparent governance. That means holding regular opportunities for families, staff, and community members to speak directly to trustees. It also means showing up, not just at board meetings but in schools, at events, and in the community. Fort McMurray is diverse and dynamic, and the only way to represent it well is to keep listening, keep asking, and keep showing up.