

DSBIA Questions to School Board Candidates

Amanda Smith-Weston

1. What do you think are the three top issues affecting Surrey Schools today?
 - Overcrowding
 - Funding
 - Engagement

2. What are your priorities if elected and how will you implement your plans.
 - My priorities, if elected, will be to collaborate with City, Provincial, and Federal governments to increase per student funding and amend the funding model so that we can expedite school additions, rather than increase portable numbers. I will work with City council so that we can all make informed, holistic decisions with regards to new development and the necessary infrastructure. I will increase the visibility of the Surrey School Board by attending school events where appropriate, networking, and engaging with SD36 stakeholders to find out what concerns they would like to see addressed. I would like to see an increase in the number of hands-on and technical courses being offered to our students, so that they can get a head start on their apprenticeships before graduation.

3. Surrey has too many portables. What is your plan to reduce the use of portables within SD36?
 - Currently, school overcrowding mitigation has included the use of temporary structures (such as portables), catchment shifts, and the moving of choice programs. In order to reduce the number of portables that we have, we need to access funds to create permanent structures that have access to washrooms and running water. It is essential to remember when creating new communities, that families will be a part of them.

4. Children need activities and programs after school. Often recreation centres are too far from residential neighbourhoods and difficult to access. Do you support the use of school facilities after hours for recreational programs and would you advocate for this if elected?
 - Yes, I am in support of recreation programs being held afterschool in school facilities and have advocated for them in North Surrey elementary schools. Extracurricular activities are essential to helping youth feel connected to their school community. Some of my favourite activities afterschool at Royal Heights and Prince Charles Elementary were brought in by community members, and I know that my own children's Scouts, Beavers, and Cadets were held in local school gyms. Sports, arts, and first aid programs have been, and should continue to be, available to our youth. Here in North Surrey, we have children and youth who do not have access to after-school programs or who will spend hours alone and isolated in their homes. These programs will help them to feel like they have a safe space where they can learn and grow. There are afterschool and mentorship programs that are operated by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver and Surrey Parks & Recreation available in some Surrey schools. This should be something that is available to all Surrey students at minimal or no cost.