

## DSBIA Questions to School Board Candidates

Bob Holmes

1. What do you think are the three top issues affecting Surrey Schools today?
  - a. Living in a growing city – addressing our capital shortage, moving our students from portables to classrooms.
  - b. Inclusiveness and safety – ensuring our schools embrace diversity and provide safe and caring learning environments for ALL students, as well as teachers and support staff.
  - c. Community involvement – engaging and including our community strengthens our schools.
  
2. What are your priorities if elected and how will you implement your plans.
  - Building more schools – continue working with government to get ahead of growth and reduce the use of portables. The capital project office and the 7,300 new seats we've received commitments for over the last 4 years are a good start, but this momentum needs to continue, and increase. Continue to lobby government and work with all levels of government to remove barriers to solving this problem quickly.
  - Expand choice programs – while our growth has provided challenges to accommodate choice programs, new school construction may provide some new opportunities. We have asked district staff to provide the new board with ways we can use this new space to expand our offerings.
  - Advocate to government for increased funding in areas of greatest need – we find that the areas where we fall short in terms of funding are often our most vulnerable students. A new funding formula is anticipated to be announced in the spring – once this happens, we'll need to determine if there are areas that need improvement, and continue to advocate for what we need, as we always have.
  
3. Surrey has too many portables. What is your plan to reduce the use of portables within SD36?
  - To expand on my answer above, our board recently passed a motion to meet with the Minister of Education to come up with a workable plan to reduce portables in Surrey as quickly as possible. Our work with government over the last 4 years has been yielding good results, and we need this to continue and accelerate. We need to continue working with the government towards this goal through staff-to-ministry discussion, our capital project office, and Board-Minister of Education and MLA meetings. We would also continue to engage our community in these efforts, so they can advocate for our students' needs, as they have done so well for the past several years.
  
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?
  - I very much support the use of our schools as public and community space. In the past year, our district signed over 1500 agreements to allow for the use of school space by our community, and I look forward to the opportunity to increase this use in the next 4 years.